

# **The Life of the Apostle Paul**

**Including Most of the Seventy Apostles**

**And Including Key Excerpts from John Chrysostom's Commentary on Paul's Epistles**

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## Table of Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Paul’s Early Life .....   | 6   |
| Paul’s Education .....  | 7   |
| The Stoning of Stephen .....  | 9   |
| Paul’s Role in the Death of Stephen .....                               | 10  |
| The Scattering of the Saints after the Death of Stephen .....           | 14  |
| Paul Begins Persecuting the Church .....                                | 16  |
| The Road to Damascus .....  | 17  |
| Paul’s Conversion by Ananias .....                                      | 18  |
| The Role of Ananias in Damascus .....                                   | 21  |
| The Date of Paul’s Conversion – 34 AD .....                             | 23  |
| 34 AD to 37 AD .....  | 23  |
| 37 AD to 45 AD .....  | 28  |
| Barnabas Receives Paul after His Conversion .....                       | 30  |
| Barnabas was sent to Antioch by the Church in Jerusalem .....           | 31  |
| Barnabas Leaves for Tarsus to Get Paul .....                            | 32  |
| Origin of the Name “Christian” .....                                    | 33  |
| Agabus the Prophet Warns of a Famine .....                              | 34  |
| Alms for the Jerusalem Church .....                                     | 37  |
| Distinguishing Characteristics about the City of Antioch .....          | 39  |
| Barnabas and Paul Take Their 1 <sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey .....   | 40  |
| Mission to Cyprus, Barnabas’ Homeland .....                             | 44  |
| John Mark Abandons His Apostleship in Pamphylia .....                   | 45  |
| The Church of Antioch in Pisidia .....                                  | 46  |
| The Church of Iconium in Galatia .....                                  | 48  |
| The Churches of Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia of Galatia .....           | 50  |
| Ordaining Elders and the Report Back to Antioch of Syria .....          | 54  |
| Barnabas and Paul at the Council of Jerusalem .....                     | 56  |
| The Issues in Jerusalem, 48 AD .....                                    | 60  |
| The Result of Barnabas’ and Paul’s Actions .....                        | 62  |
| What is the Place of the Mosaic Law Today? .....                        | 65  |
| Peter and Paul’s Ruse; Barnabas Gets Carried Away .....                 | 69  |
| Barnabas Goes Back to the Church on Cyprus .....                        | 72  |
| Paul’s 2 <sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey with Silas .....              | 74  |
| The Churches of Syria and Cilicia .....                                 | 74  |
| Paul Probably Wrote to the Galatians at this Time .....                 | 74  |
| Some of the Seventy Accompanied Paul and Silas from the Beginning ..... | 79  |
| Visiting the Churches from the 1 <sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey ..... | 81  |
| The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey Moves to Macedonia .....         | 83  |
| The Church in Philippi .....  | 84  |
| A Spirit of Divination .....  | 85  |
| How Does Demon Possession Occur? .....                                  | 86  |
| Why Would the Fortune-Telling Slave Girl Proclaim God? .....            | 88  |
| Servants of the Most High God .....                                     | 89  |
| The Way of Salvation .....  | 90  |
| Paul and Silas Began “Night Watches” .....                              | 92  |
| Orthodox Midnight Prayers Compared to Paul’s and Silas’ Prayers .....   | 93  |
| The Prisoners Were Listening to Paul and Silas .....                    | 96  |
| The Jailor Was Listening to Paul and Silas .....                        | 97  |
| Evangelism Methods in Philippi .....                                    | 99  |
| Paul and Silas Took a Beating for the Philippian Christians .....       | 100 |
| The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi .....                   | 101 |
| Others of the Seventy Worked with Luke in Macedonia .....               | 101 |
| The Church in Thessalonica .....  | 103 |
| The Reaction of the Jews .....  | 104 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| The Church in Berea .....   | 108 |
| The Beginning of the Church in Athens.....                                  | 111 |
| The Church in Corinth .....   | 114 |
| Paul Worked with His Own Hands in Corinth .....                             | 114 |
| Silas and Timothy Arrive from Macedonia .....                               | 116 |
| Paul Has a Vision to Become Bold; Extensive Miracles Occurred .....         | 117 |
| Faith is Required for Miracles to Occur.....                                | 118 |
| The Jews Create a Disturbance Again.....                                    | 119 |
| Paul Writes Epistles from Corinth to the New Church in Thessalonica .....   | 120 |
| Silas Remains in Corinth as Bishop .....                                    | 121 |
| Paul's Return to Antioch.....   | 121 |
| Paul Leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Charge in Ephesus .....                 | 122 |
| Paul Takes a Vow.....   | 124 |
| Paul's 3 <sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey .....                             | 125 |
| Members of the Seventy Accompanying Paul .....                              | 125 |
| Visiting the Churches Already Established.....                              | 127 |
| A Change in the Bishops of the Churches.....                                | 127 |
| Aquila & Priscilla Encounter Apollos; Paul Encounters John's Disciples..... | 129 |
| Paul's Return to Ephesus .....  | 142 |
| The Jewish Exorcists and the Magicians.....                                 | 146 |
| The Controversy over the Temple of Diana .....                              | 148 |
| The Widespread Renown of the Apostle Paul .....                             | 148 |
| The Riot over the Temple of Diana .....                                     | 150 |
| Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus .....                       | 153 |
| The Founding of the Church at Colossae .....                                | 153 |
| Paul Sends Aquila and Priscilla to Rome .....                               | 154 |
| Paul Writes to the Church in Rome .....                                     | 154 |
| Eighteen of the Seventy Apostles in Rome .....                              | 156 |
| Others of the Seventy Who Were with Paul in c. 55 AD .....                  | 156 |
| Paul's Epistles to Corinth.....   | 156 |
| The Church in Colossae .....  | 161 |
| Paul Leaves for Macedonia.....  | 162 |
| Parallel Developments at Mt. Athos.....                                     | 163 |
| Paul Picks Up Luke in Macedonia .....                                       | 164 |
| Epaphroditus Also Joins Paul in Philippi.....                               | 165 |
| The All-Night Teaching at Troas.....  | 166 |
| Paul Heads for Antioch.....   | 168 |
| The Emotional Meeting with the Presbyters of Ephesus.....                   | 169 |
| Paul's Message to the Presbyters at Ephesus .....                           | 171 |
| Paul Arrives in Judea .....   | 175 |
| Paul and His Companions Stay with Deacon Philip.....                        | 176 |
| Agabus Prophecies of Paul's Imprisonment.....                               | 176 |
| Paul Arrives in Jerusalem .....   | 177 |
| History of the Jewish Zealot Party .....                                    | 178 |
| Paul Meets with Bishop James.....   | 179 |
| What Was Bishop James' Methodology in Jerusalem?.....                       | 179 |
| Other Issues in Jerusalem.....  | 181 |
| The Jewish Zealots from Asia Start a Riot.....                              | 182 |
| Paul Addresses the Rioters .....  | 185 |
| Paul Speaks to the Sanhedrin in Front of the Barracks .....                 | 188 |
| The Murder Plot against Paul.....   | 190 |
| Paul was Taken by Night to Felix the Governor in Caesarea.....              | 192 |
| Paul's Testimony before Felix .....   | 193 |
| The Accusation of the Jewish Zealots against Paul .....                     | 193 |
| Paul's Response to the Accusations .....                                    | 194 |
| Paul Reasons with Governor Felix for Two Years .....                        | 195 |
| Festus Succeeds Felix as Governor .....                                     | 196 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Paul Appears before King Herod Agrippa II.....                                      | 199 |
| Paul Speaks Boldly to King Agrippa.....   | 201 |
| Paul’s 4 <sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey – As Prisoner to Rome.....                | 206 |
| The Beginning of the Journey to Rome .....  | 206 |
| Paul Lost at Sea in a Storm.....  | 209 |
| Paul’s Shipwreck on Malta .....   | 210 |
| The Maltese Receive Paul with Kindness .....  | 214 |
| Paul Gets Bitten by a Snake .....   | 215 |
| The Chief Citizen of Malta Receives Paul Kindly .....                               | 216 |
| Paul Arrives in Rome.....   | 218 |
| Paul Speaks to the Jewish Leaders in Rome .....                                     | 219 |
| Members of the Seventy Apostles in Rome with Paul .....                             | 223 |
| Paul Wrote a Number of Epistles from Rome.....                                      | 223 |
| Paul Met Onesimus in Rome.....  | 224 |
| Paul Wrote to Philemon in Colossae.....   | 230 |
| Paul Wrote to the Colossians .....  | 233 |
| Paul Addresses Archippus of the Seventy in Colossae .....                           | 236 |
| The Mission of Epaphroditus to Paul in Rome .....                                   | 237 |
| Paul Wrote to the Philippians.....  | 242 |
| Paul Sent Tychicus to Ephesus and Colossae.....                                     | 244 |
| Paul Probably Wrote to the Hebrews at This Time .....                               | 245 |
| Paul Refers to the Heretics in Israel .....   | 247 |
| The Murder of James the Lord’s Brother in Jerusalem .....                           | 247 |
| The Mosaic Law Sacrifices Continue in Jerusalem, but the Saints Are Struggling..... | 250 |
| Paul Wrote to the Ephesians.....  | 251 |
| The 5 <sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey – After Release from House-Arrest.....       | 252 |
| Paul Visits Spain.....  | 253 |
| Paul Visited Titus on Crete .....   | 253 |
| Jason and Sosipater Evangelize Corfu after Paul’s Release.....                      | 254 |
| Paul Wrote to Timothy the First Time .....  | 256 |
| Paul Wrote to Titus.....  | 261 |
| The Apostle Paul’s Preparation for His Own Death .....                              | 262 |
| Paul Wrote to Timothy Again .....   | 263 |
| The State of Things in Ephesus c. 67 AD .....                                       | 267 |
| The State of the Church in Other Places .....                                       | 270 |
| Paul’s “Thorn in the Flesh” .....   | 272 |
| Simon Magus’ Last Dealings with Peter and Paul in Rome .....                        | 274 |
| Simon Tries to Return to “His Father in Heaven” .....                               | 277 |
| Nero’s Reaction to Simon’s Death: the Martyrdom of Peter and Paul .....             | 281 |
| Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9 .....   | 284 |
| APPENDIX A .....  | 286 |
| Paul’s Missionary Journeys - Overview .....   | 286 |
| APPENDIX B.....   | 289 |
| The Seventy and Other Apostles.....   | 289 |
| APPENDIX C.....   | 327 |
| Source Data on the Identity of the Seventy Apostles.....                            | 327 |

Peter and Paul are commemorated together on June 29<sup>th</sup>, the approximate day of their martyrdom. This can only be an approximate date, since Paul, being a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29) merited a quick death and was beheaded. Peter, who was not a Roman citizen, merited no special favor and was crucified (upside down at his request) and may have taken several days to die.

The Gospel for this Feast Day (Matthew 16:13-19) refers to Peter but not Paul; the Epistle (2 Corinthians 11:21-12:9) refers to Paul but not Peter. Peter and Paul are remembered only on June 29<sup>th</sup>. To remember their sufferings during their lifetime, the Orthodox Church prescribes a fast<sup>1</sup>, called “the Apostles’ Fast”, prior to their Feast Day.

Some surprising things from a detailed study of the life of the Apostle Paul are the amount of effort he spent in working together with the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy Apostles. From a casual reading of the Scripture, one may get the idea that Paul is out evangelizing the earth, while the Twelve are kicking back in Jerusalem enjoying a cold one. Such is hardly the case! Even though the Seventy Apostles are mentioned throughout the Scriptures, we don’t know who they are without help from other documents outside the Scriptures. What is startling is how often Paul ends up working with various members of the Seventy and directing their activities.

As we get into the details of Paul’s life, we find him going well out of his way to keep the details of the Mosaic Law himself, even though he was working with Gentiles most of the time. We need to understand why he did this!

A much underrated aspect of Paul’s work was the influence throughout his life from the members of the Jewish Zealots political party. For the Zealots, circumcision was viewed as Jewish national identity; after all it was given to the people of God in the days of Abraham. Thanks to the work of Jesus’ step-brother James, now Bishop of Jerusalem, many of the Jewish Zealots had become Christian. But even after the Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15), the Zealots were not willing to give up circumcision. Later during the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans – when the Zealots ruled Jerusalem – we get to see the true colors of the Zealots. These “colors” were exhibited also during Paul’s Missionary Journeys, but we need to pay attention to recognize them.

Another startling thing occurred at the height of Paul’s ministry. On his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, people brought handkerchiefs and aprons that Paul had touched and used these items to heal the sick (Acts 19:12). The demons seem to go out of their way to avoid him as was seen by the reaction to the Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:13-18). Rather than go to other countries to further spread the Word, Paul went to Jerusalem, knowing that chains awaited him. He spent the next four years in captivity, two years in Caesarea (Acts 24:27) and two years in Rome (Acts 28:30).

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<sup>1</sup> The length of the Apostles’ Fast varies depending on whether Pascha (Western Easter) is early or late that year. Traditionally the Apostles’ Fast begins a week after the Feast of Pentecost. If Pascha is late, the Apostles’ Fast may be just a few days. If Pascha is early, the Apostles’ Fast may be over three weeks long.

Why would Paul do this and seem to waste four years of his extremely valuable ministry? What did Paul know that we tend to miss?

## Paul's Early Life

Paul was born into a family that was of the Tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5, Romans 11:1) and had his homeland in the town of Giscalis in Judea. Jerome states<sup>2</sup> about this, "When this town was taken by the Romans, his family moved to Tarsus of Cilicia." We might ask when was this town taken by the Romans?

Perhaps the event that Jerome referred to was the bloody suppression of a revolt of the Pharisees in 4 BC by Herod Archelaus<sup>3</sup>. Archelaus<sup>4</sup> was the son of Herod the Great, who murdered the 14,000 babies in Bethlehem and vicinity (Matthew 2:16); it was Archelaus that Joseph feared on his return from Egypt, and which caused him to settle in Nazareth (Matthew 2:22-23). The question is whether Paul was born in Giscalis before 4 BC, or whether he was born after the family moved to Tarsus. Paul stated, "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3). With this conflicting information, we probably need to conclude that Paul was actually born in Cilicia after his parents moved there, and after the revolt of the Pharisees in 4 BC, but that his roots were in Giscalis. This date lines up better with the statement that Paul was still a young man (Acts 7:58) at the time of the stoning of Stephen in c. 30 AD. The term "young man" generally referred to someone less than about 20 years of age<sup>5</sup>. Alfred Edersheim stated<sup>6</sup> regarding the customs of the day:

"Before the coming of the Messiah, marriage was looked upon as of religious obligation. Many passages of Scripture were at least *quoted* in support of this idea. Ordinarily, a young man was expected to enter the wedded state (according to Maimonides) at the age of sixteen or seventeen, while the age of twenty may be regarded as the utmost limit conceded, unless study so absorbed time and attention as to leave no leisure for the duties of married life. Still it was thought better even to neglect study than to remain single."

If Paul were 20 to 25 years old at the time of the Crucifixion of Christ, he would have been born in Cilicia between 5 AD and 10 AD. The Scriptures don't hint anywhere that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin, but there is a hint that he was well-regarded by the Sanhedrin

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<sup>2</sup> Jerome, *Illustrious Men*, Chapter 5.

<sup>3</sup> See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_Archelaus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Archelaus)

<sup>4</sup> From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_Archelaus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Archelaus), Archelaus received the Tetrarchy of Judea by the last will of his father, though a previous will had bequeathed it to his brother Antipas. He was proclaimed king by the army, but declined to assume the title until he had submitted his claims to Caesar Augustus in Rome. Before setting out, he quelled with the utmost cruelty sedition of the Pharisees, slaying nearly three thousand of them. In Rome he was opposed by Antipas and by many of the Jews, who feared his cruelty; but in 4 BC Augustus allotted to him the greater part of the kingdom (Samaria, Judea, and Idumea) with the title of ethnarch (not king) until 6 AD when Judaea province was formed, under direct Roman rule, at the time of the Census of Quirinius.

<sup>5</sup> Others have suggested that the term "young man" could refer to someone as old as 40. However, if Paul were that old, he would not have been considered a junior member of the Sanhedrin as he seems to have been ( ). A more reasonable age for Paul at the time of the stoning of Stephen would be 20-25.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994, p. 136.

(Acts 7:58-8:3). Paul said that he “cast his vote in favor of the death of some Christians” (Acts 26:10), but this doesn’t imply that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, probably because he was a little young at the time.

Since Paul was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6), the revolt of the Pharisees in 4 BC affected Paul’s family considerably. Since Paul was born a Roman citizen, this implies that his parents were Roman citizens before his birth. Being able to pack up and move quickly to Cilicia implies that Paul’s parents were also well-off financially. This is confirmed by Paul’s statement that he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, whom Jerome calls<sup>7</sup> “a most learned man”.

### **Paul’s Education**

Jewish children were educated in their homes by their parents<sup>8</sup> until they were about 6 years old. About age 6, children were sent to the local synagogue school. At age 16 or 17, boys who proved themselves capable students were sent to an academy. It was probably at this age that Paul was sent to Jerusalem to study at the academy run by Gamaliel.

As was customary, all Jewish boys learned a trade as part of their education. This trade was taught while the boys were young, before they went to an academy. Paul’s trade was tent making (Acts 18:1-3); this would prove very helpful later on (Acts 20:32-35, 1 Corinthians 9:6-12).

Those parents who could afford it sent their children to Jerusalem to be educated by the top Rabbis. Since Paul had a sister who lived in Jerusalem (Acts 23:16), one might assume that he could live with relatives while he was in Jerusalem. We are not told whether Paul’s sister – who was probably older than Paul – and her family were Christians. However from the account of Paul’s nephew informing the Chiliarch of the murder plot against Paul (Acts 23:12-22), Paul’s relatives were definitely not adversaries to the Christians.

Gamaliel was a Pharisee and he was not only the leading teacher among the Jews in Jerusalem, but he was respected by everyone in Jerusalem (Acts 5:34). Not only was he respected, but he showed respect for others. When the High Priest and the Sadducees in Jerusalem wanted to kill the Apostles for preaching about Christ, then Gamaliel stood up at the Sanhedrin and counseled them against this. He reminded them about what happened with Theudas<sup>9</sup> and Judas of Galilee in the days of the census<sup>10</sup>. These false messiahs drew many people after their ideas, but they were overthrown by the Romans and came to nothing. Gamaliel counseled the Sanhedrin to let the Apostles alone. If what they are saying is the work of men, they will come to nothing just like Theudas and Judas. But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow

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<sup>7</sup> Jerome, Illustrious Men, Chapter 5.

<sup>8</sup> Alfred Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994, pp. 123-125.

<sup>9</sup> “Theudas” is probably the one that Josephus calls Judas, the son of Ezekias: Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XVII, x, 5, 271-272.

<sup>10</sup> That is, at the time of the birth of Christ. See Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XX, v, 2, 102. Also see Josephus, Wars of the Jews, II, iv, 1, 56; viii, 1, 118; xvii, 8-9, 433-448. We note that Josephus describes many, many more leaders of rebellions who rose up for a short time only to be put down violently by the Romans.

it and you will even be found to be fighting against God (Acts 5:35-39). From this we can see that Gamaliel was keeping an open mind regarding what the Apostles were saying. According to tradition<sup>11</sup>, when Stephen was stoned, it was Gamaliel who collected Stephen's body and buried it in his own tomb. Over 200 others were stoned to death at the same time<sup>12</sup> as Stephen including Deacon Nicanor (Acts 6:5). Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus by night (John 3:1-15), and who had assisted in the burial of Christ (John 19:38-42), passed away at this time due the extreme stress of the time. Gamaliel buried Nicodemus in his own tomb along with Stephen. According to tradition, Gamaliel himself later became a Christian.

There are actually two leaders in Israel named Gamaliel in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The Gamaliel referred to in the New Testament died in about 50 AD. He was the grandson of the great Jewish teacher Hillel the Elder and presided over the Sanhedrin. In Hebrew tradition, Gamaliel holds the reputation of being the greatest teacher in the history of Judaism<sup>13</sup>. The other Gamaliel was the grandson of the Gamaliel in Acts 5 and was the first person to lead the Sanhedrin after the destruction of Jerusalem; he is sometimes referred to as Gamaliel II.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>14</sup> that Paul's teacher, Gamaliel, became a Christian before Paul did but that did not convince Paul.

“Paul was not inferior to those that preached the Resurrection, and was more credible, by being all at once converted. He had no discussion with any of the believers; it was at Damascus that he was converted, or rather before he came to Damascus that this happened to him. I ask the Jew; by what was Paul converted? He saw so many signs, and was not converted; his teacher (Gamaliel) was converted, and he remained unconverted. Who convinced him — and not only convinced, but all at once inspired him with such zeal? He even volunteered to go into hell itself for Christ's sake (Romans 9:3).”

Another student of Gamaliel with Paul was the Apostle of the Seventy, Barnabas<sup>15</sup>. Barnabas was born<sup>16</sup> in c. 14 BC on the island of Cyprus into the family of the tribe of Levi, and he was named Joseph (Acts 4:36). Joseph was pious; he frequented the Temple; he strictly observed the fasts and avoided youthful distractions. During this time period our Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry. Seeing the Lord and hearing His Divine Words, Joseph believed in Him as the Messiah. Filled with love for Christ, he followed Him, and the Lord

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<sup>11</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, The Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 27.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp December 27>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 27.

<sup>12</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, The Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp July 28, December 28>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 28.

<sup>13</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gamaliel>.

<sup>14</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XIX, vv. 7-8.

<sup>15</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, The Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, June 11.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp June 11>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2007, June 11.

<sup>16</sup> See <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=101691>. If Barnabas died in 62 AD at age 76, he had to have been born in c. 14 BC, making him about 20 years older than the Apostle Paul.



chose him to be one of His Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-11). The other Apostles called him Barnabas, which means “son of consolation” (Acts 4:36). After the Ascension of the Lord to Heaven, Barnabas sold land belonging to him near Jerusalem and he brought the money to the feet of the Apostles, leaving nothing for himself (Acts 4:36-37). After the stoning of Stephen, it was Barnabas who was the leader of the Seventy Apostles, the first in preaching and chief spokesman of the Seventy<sup>17</sup>.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>18</sup> that when Luke wrote that Barnabas was “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (Acts 11:24), he meant that he was kind, sincere, and exceedingly desirous of the salvation of his neighbors.

Paul was an excellent student and advanced beyond many of his contemporaries, being “exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers” (Galatians 1:14). In the late 20’s AD, it is possible that Paul came with other Pharisees to be baptized by John the Baptist. John refused to baptize the Pharisees (Luke 7:30) and called them a brood of vipers (Matthew 3:7).

### **The Stoning of Stephen**

The first mention of Paul in the New Testament comes at the stoning of the Archdeacon Stephen.

“Then the Sanhedrin cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at Stephen with one accord; and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’. Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin’. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

“Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the Church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles. And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 7:57-8:4).

Stephen was a kinsman of the Apostle Paul<sup>19</sup> and was the first of the seven deacons whom the Apostles ordained and appointed to the service of assisting the poor in Jerusalem. Since Paul came from Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 22:3), we may presume that Stephen came from Cilicia also. Stephen was the eldest<sup>20</sup> of the seven deacons, and therefore he is called “archdeacon”. He was the first Christian martyr, and he suffered for Christ when he was about thirty years old. Stephen was a Hebrew<sup>21</sup> and, like Paul, was disciple of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3),

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<sup>17</sup> See [http://www.goarch.org/chapel/saints\\_view?contentid=83](http://www.goarch.org/chapel/saints_view?contentid=83).

<sup>18</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXV, Recapitulation.

<sup>19</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 27.

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.oca.org/FSlives.asp>, December 27.

<sup>21</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 27.

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the renowned teacher of the Law. Stephen's name, meaning "crown" in Greek, could indicate that he was a Hellenist or Greek-speaking Jew. The significance of Stephen being a Hellenist is seen first in their numbers and second in the need for seven men to be in charge of the distribution of relief.

There were many Jews who came long distances to be in Jerusalem at certain Feast Days. For example, when Peter spoke to the crowd at Pentecost, he addressed people in 13 different languages from areas remote from Jerusalem (Acts 2:8-11). Some of these people had come 1400 miles to be in Jerusalem at that time<sup>22</sup>. Most of these visitors spoke Hebrew, but Hebrew was not their first language, and they may not have been able to read Hebrew. If they had received an education, it had probably been taught in Greek. For these people to be dedicated enough to make a 7-week journey (and then turn around and take 7 weeks traveling home), one can surmise that they were very dedicated to their faith. They had a natural barrier between them and the Gentiles back home, but they had learned to live with the Gentiles peacefully. These Jews living away from Judea were called "The Dispersion" (John 7:35, 1 Peter 1:1), and they had adopted their faith to a Greek language basis, where they had access to the Old Testament Scriptures via the Septuagint. Stephen, being a disciple of Gamaliel, was fluent in Hebrew (i.e. Aramaic).

### **Paul's Role in the Death of Stephen**

Stephen had discovered<sup>23</sup> the inadequacy of a mere formalism and ceremonialism in the Temple worship. The observance of legal minutiae was not an absorbing concern with many of the early Christians. Stephen, with his broad background among those of the dispersion, maintained these important aspects of Jesus' message and opened the way for future advance into Gentile evangelism. Being a man<sup>24</sup> mighty in word, he confirmed the believers in the faith as well, and from the Law and the Prophets proved to the Jews that Jesus, Whom they slew out of malice, was the Son of God, the Messiah awaited from ancient times.

Ignatius of Antioch stated<sup>25</sup> that Stephen served as a deacon to Bishop James in Jerusalem just as Timothy and Linus<sup>26</sup> did to Paul, and Anencletus and Clement<sup>27</sup> did to Peter. We might add that Deacon Prochorus served in a similar role to the Apostle John.

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<sup>22</sup> For example, the route from Parthia (Acts 2:9) went by land around the forbidding Arabian Desert, and was about a 1400-mile journey; by sea around the Southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, it was still a 900-mile journey by land. Mesopotamia and Media were not quite as far (600 and 900 miles respectively). Figuring 20 miles per day on foot, this represents a journey of 30 to 45 days, not including Saturday, which required the Sabbath rest.

<sup>23</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 27.

<sup>24</sup> Demetrius of Rostov, The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints, tr. Fr Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2000, December 27.

<sup>25</sup> Ignatius, Epistle to the Trallians, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Timothy: Acts 16:1, 17:14-15, 18:5, 19:22, 20:4-5, Romans 16:21, 1 Corinthians 4:17, 16:10, 2 Corinthians 1:19, Philippians 2:19, 1 Thessalonians 3:1-6, Hebrews 13:23; Linus: 2 Timothy 4:18.

<sup>27</sup> According to Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, iii, 3, Anencletus (also called Anacletus and Cletus) was Bishop of Rome after Linus. Clement was Bishop of Rome after Anencletus, and was ordained by Peter just before Peter's death in c. 67 AD. This Clement may not be the same as the Clement referred to by Paul (Philippians 4:3).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>28</sup> that Stephen was preeminent among the Seven Deacons, because he drew greater grace upon himself.

“Notice how even among the seven, one was preeminent. Though the ordination was common to him and the others, yet he drew upon himself greater grace. Notice also how he worked no signs and wonders before this time, but only when he became publicly known. Grace alone is not sufficient; there must be ordination also, so that there was a further access of the Spirit. For if they were full of the Spirit (Acts 6:3), it was from the Laver of Baptism.”

At this time, “the Word of God spread and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the Faith” (Acts 6:7). These priests were Levitical priests who ceased serving under the Old Covenant priesthood, becoming obedient to the direction of the Holy Spirit in the Church. This does not imply that they automatically became presbyters (or priests) in the Church, although some may have done so. Paul referred to this, “We have an altar from which those who serve the Tabernacle (i.e. Old Covenant) have no right to eat” (Hebrews 13:10). John Chrysostom made it a point<sup>29</sup> to say that even the High Priest under the Old Covenant was not permitted to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Demetrius of Rostov added<sup>30</sup>, “Each group of Jews sent its own children to Jerusalem to learn the Law of God. The foreign Jews and proselytes living in Jerusalem assembled at separate locations with their countrymen, and not at the Temple. Every year Jews from the Dispersion came to the Holy City to worship in Solomon’s Temple, and they assembled at separate synagogues with their compatriots.”

During the first year of the Church, Stephen had a dispute with the Synagogue<sup>31</sup> of the Freedmen. Stephen did not hesitate<sup>32</sup> to preach his views in the Hellenistic synagogues. John Chrysostom referred<sup>33</sup> to the diversity of the synagogues of the Freedmen.

“The synagogues of the Freedmen were diverse, where they seem to have had synagogues according to their different nations. Many stayed behind there, that they might not be obliged to be continually traveling. The Libertines perhaps were freedmen of the Romans, and the Cyrenians were from those parts beyond Alexandria. There were many foreigners dwelling there, so they had their synagogues, where the Law was to be read.”

This incident began when Stephen came upon Hebrew Jews, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Greek Jews quarreling about the Lord Jesus Christ: some of them saying that He was a prophet, others that He was a deceiver, still others that He was the Son of God. Standing on a high place

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<sup>28</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XV, v. 8.

<sup>29</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XXXIII, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Demetrius of Rostov, The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints, tr. Fr Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2000, December 27.

<sup>31</sup> The term “Freedmen” is of Latin origin. Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius, XXIII, 155-156, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher from Alexandria (d. 50 AD) refers to Jews who had been bought as slaves, but who had been freed under Pompey (108-46 BC). Gaius Pompeius Magnus, the Roman general, had been very kind to the Jewish people, supplying them with food and allowing them to build synagogues.

<sup>32</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 27.

<sup>33</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XV, v. 9.

the saint proclaimed Christ the Lord, saying, “Brethren, why are you at odds with one another, disturbing all Jerusalem? Blessed are they that believe in Jesus Christ, Who bowed the heaven and came down to cleanse our sins, and was born of the holy maiden chosen before the world’s creation. He took upon Himself our infirmities, granting sight to the blind, cleansing lepers, and expelling demons”. At this the Jews began to argue with him, blaspheming the Lord.

The Hellenistic Jews considered their ancestral faith the one thing worth living for; therefore, they were bitterly opposed to anything that might undermine their traditional faith<sup>34</sup>. Paul, who was also a Hellenistic Jew, had a similar viewpoint prior to his conversion. The Hellenistic Jews did three things to Stephen, which the Jews from Jerusalem had also done to Christ:

1. They secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God” (Acts 6:11).
2. They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him*, seized him, and brought *him* to the council (Acts 6:12).
3. They set up false witnesses, who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the Law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us” (Acts 6:13-14).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>35</sup> that the real issue with the Jews in the conflict with the Christians was over their traditions. This was what angered them about Jesus and Stephen. If it weren’t for the issue of circumcision, the resentment of the Jews would have been appeased.

“Not even the Cross was so great an offense to the Jews, as the doctrine that their father’s customs ought not to be obeyed. When they brought Stephen before the council, they didn’t say that this man adores the Crucified, but that he speaks ‘against this holy place and the Law’ (Acts 6:13). They accused Jesus of this, that He broke the Law. Therefore, Paul says, ‘If we concede circumcision, the strife you are involved in would be appeased; from now on, no enmity to the Cross and our preaching remains. But why do they bring this charge against us, while waiting day after day to murder us? It is because they thought I brought an uncircumcised man into the Temple (Acts 21:29) that they fell on me. Am I then so senseless, after giving up the point of circumcision, vainly and idly to expose myself to such injuries, and to place such a stumbling block before the Cross? For you observe that they attack us for nothing else with such vehemence as about circumcision. He calls it the offense of the Cross, because circumcision was forbidden by the doctrine of the Cross; and it was this, which principally offended the Jews, and hindered their reception of the Cross.”

Before the Sanhedrin, Stephen’s face glowed brilliantly like the face of an angel (Acts 6:15), similar to Moses’ face (Exodus 34:29-34) after he had returned from receiving the Law on

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<sup>34</sup> Another aspect of the politics going on in Jerusalem was the influence of the political party called “The Zealots”. To the Zealots, circumcision represented Jewish national identity – it had been given by God to Abraham – and no Jew should disregard it. This viewpoint came to a head at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) and simply would not go away during Paul’s lifetime. By the time of the Siege of Jerusalem by the Romans from 66 AD to 70AD, the motto of the Zealots became “Better dead than Roman”.

<sup>35</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 5, v. 11.

Mt. Sinai. Aaron and Moses' Seventy elders had been afraid to speak to Moses when they saw his glowing face. The members of the Sanhedrin, except for Gamaliel, were not impressed with this, but looked at his face steadfastly to find some reason to condemn him. For the Sanhedrin to stone Stephen as his face glowed was equivalent to the people stoning Moses as he came down from Mt. Sinai with a glowing face.

Gamaliel was secretly a Christian at this time, but didn't say anything. After Stephen's death, it was either Gamaliel or Paul, who drafted the account that appears in Acts 7 of Stephen's testimony before the Sanhedrin.

Like Paul, Stephen may have been a Roman citizen, and he could have appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:8-12) or he could have had the right to obtain protection by the local Roman authorities (Acts 22:22-29). Later when Paul was in a similar situation, he created a diversion by playing the Pharisees against the Sadducees by referring to their theological differences (Acts 23:6-10). Paul was probably present at Stephen's defense and he may have learned from Stephen how to conduct his own defense. In presenting his case, Stephen did not try to create a diversion or appeal to higher authorities, but he confronted his accusers. When Paul came to Jerusalem three years after his conversion, he could only stay 15 days due to a murder plot against him (Acts 9:26-30, Galatians 1:18-19). The brethren in Jerusalem did not want the same thing to happen to Paul that happened to Stephen.

After Stephen spoke, the Sanhedrin was cut to the heart and they gnashed their teeth at Stephen. The Sanhedrin had passed no sentence, however, and Stephen was still entitled to finish his defense. Still having a glowing face, he saw heaven opened<sup>36</sup> and reported that he saw Jesus standing at the Right Hand of God. At this, they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and ran at him with one accord. They hauled him outside the city and stoned him to death in the Valley of Jehoshaphat<sup>37</sup>, with Stephen's kinsman Saul (the future Apostle Paul) holding the clothes of those throwing the stones. Before he died, Stephen said two things: (1) "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"; and (2) "Lord, do not charge them with this sin" (Acts 7:54-60).

In describing Stephen's death, Luke noted particularly the role of Saul (Paul). John Chrysostom noted<sup>38</sup> that even at this time, the power of God was at work in Paul.

"Observe how Luke particularly relates what concerns Paul, to show you that the power which worked in him was of God. But after all these things, not only did Paul not believe, but also aimed at Stephen with a thousand hands; this is why it says, 'And Saul was consenting to his death' (Acts 8:1). Stephen does not simply pray, but does it with earnestness, 'having kneeled down'. Note his divine death! He prayed as long as the Lord permitted his soul to remain in him."

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<sup>36</sup> The Scriptures speak of "heaven opened" on a few special occasions. For example, heaven was opened at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16), at Ezekiel's vision of the Throne of God (Ezekiel 1:1), at Peter's vision of the Gentile Church (Acts 10:11), at John's vision of the Throne of God (Revelation 4:1), and at Jesus' Second Coming (Revelation 19:11-14).

<sup>37</sup> The valley of Jehoshaphat is situated between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Through it runs the brook of Kedron, which has many rocks scattered on its banks.

<sup>38</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XVIII, Recapitulation.

We might note that one of the people that Stephen was praying for was the future Apostle Paul.

“Now Saul (Paul) was consenting to Stephen’s death” (Acts 8:1). At that time a great persecution arose against the Church, which was at Jerusalem; and they were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the Apostles. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church entering every house and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison” (Acts 8:1, 3). In Paul’s testimony nearly 30 years later, he admitted that he forced them to blaspheme (Acts 26:11). This persecution lasted for about three years or until 34 AD when Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. With Paul not leading<sup>39</sup> the attack against the Christians, “the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified” (Acts 9:31).

When Paul was converted on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6), immediately, he began to preach Christ in the synagogues of Damascus, saying that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 9:20-22). Everyone that heard him was amazed, knowing that he had come to Damascus to arrest and imprison Christians. John Chrysostom stated<sup>40</sup>:

“As an expert in the Law, Paul stopped their mouths, and didn’t allow them to speak. They thought that they had gotten rid of arguments about such matters by getting rid of Stephen; and now they found another, more vehement than Stephen.”

### **The Scattering of the Saints after the Death of Stephen**

“Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:19-21).

The scattering of the Saints from Jerusalem began in early 31 AD, after the martyrdom of Stephen on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 30 AD. Thus the development of the Church in Jerusalem occurred very rapidly, and the span of time for Acts 1-7 is about 1 year<sup>41</sup>. The motivation for this scattering was not just the martyrdom of Stephen; Stephen’s fellow deacon Nicanor was also stoned along with about 200 others<sup>42</sup> during a major bloodbath in Jerusalem.

We note the last time that the Twelve Apostles are mentioned as being together in Jerusalem is at the ordaining of the seven deacons (Acts 6:1-6). During the first year of the Church, the Twelve had been planning their missionary journeys as Christ had commanded

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<sup>39</sup> For more details on Paul’s early life, see the Epistle Lesson for the 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

<sup>40</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XX, v. 21-22.

<sup>41</sup> One year is the consensus, but a few authors place it at two years.

<sup>42</sup> Along with Deacon Stephen, Deacon Nicanor and 200 others were also murdered. This generated such a bloodbath that the Church was scattered to other parts of the world. See:

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

Hippolytus, On the Seventy Apostles, 9.

See also <http://www.oca.org/FSLives.asp> , July 28, December 28.

<http://www.goarch.org/en/chapel/saints.asp?contentid=144>, July 28.

them. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). The way they did this is to first divide the world up into different regions, then to draw lots for who should go where. At the time of the martyrdom of Stephen, they knew where they were going to go; so this was seen as the leading of the Lord to start their journeys. Knowing that they may never see each other again, they drafted a common statement<sup>43</sup> of the Faith – which we call today “The Apostles’ Creed”.

As part of this scattering, men from Cyprus and Cyrene who were also scattered at the death of Stephen began preaching to the Greek speaking Gentiles in Antioch. Over the span of a few years, a great number had believed and turned to the Lord (Acts 11:21). From the Scriptures, the men we know who were from (the island of) Cyprus and Cyrene (in Northern Africa) were:

| <b>Name</b> | <b>From</b> | <b>Bishop of</b> | <b>Reference</b> | <b>Notes</b>                             |
|-------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|--|
| Simon       | Cyrene      | ?                | Mark 15:21       | Carried Jesus’ Cross                     |
| Rufus       | Cyrene      | Thebes           | Mark 15:21       | Son of Simon                             |
| Alexander   | Cyrene      | (heretic)        | Mark 15:21       | Son of Simon                             |
| Lucius      | Cyrene      | Laodicea         | Acts 13:1        |  |
| Aristobulus | Cyprus      | Britain          | Romans 16:10     | Barnabas’ brother; Peter’s father-in-law |
| Barnabas    | Cyprus      | Cyprus           | Acts 12-15       |  |

All of the above, except for Alexander, were members of the original Seventy and were referred to, in the early church, as the “lesser apostles” as opposed to the Twelve who were called the “great apostles.” The name Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21) is a Greek name that is equivalent to the Hebrew name “Simeon.” Simeon, called Niger (or black) in Acts 13:1, may be the same person (as being a black man coming from North Africa). This would explain the connection between Rufus (Simon’s son, Mark 15:21) and Antioch<sup>44</sup>. The connection being that Rufus came to Antioch with his father.

We should note also that Luke made it a point to mention where some of the people present at the first Pentecost of the Church had come from. Notably present to hear Peter speak were a contingent from the parts of Libya about Cyrene (Acts 2:5-11).

Of the people listed above, all may have been involved in starting the church in Antioch, although Alexander ended up as an apostate later (1 Timothy 1:20, 2 Timothy 4:14). John Chrysostom noted<sup>45</sup> that when the text states, “the hand of the Lord was with them” (Acts 11:21), this means that the men from Cyprus and Cyrene performed miracles, further suggesting that the Seventy were involved. Barnabas was not, but when the news of the great number of people (including Gentiles) turning to the Lord reached the Church in Jerusalem, James and the

<sup>43</sup> Rufinus, A Commentary on the Apostles’ Creed, Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, v. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Another connection between Rufus and Antioch is that Rufus was martyred in c. 107 AD with Ignatius of Antioch.

<sup>45</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXV, v. 19.

Apostles<sup>46</sup> in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to investigate. This was similar to the sending of Peter and John to chrismate the converts of Deacon Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:14) and the Lord sending Peter to chrismate and baptize Cornelius and those with him (Acts 10:19-21, 44-48). Barnabas may have been chosen to go because his brother Aristobulus was involved.

### **Paul Begins Persecuting the Church**

In 30 AD, when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, Paul began to persecute the Church. Paul may have been a junior member of the Sanhedrin; he mentions that he cast his vote in favor of putting some Christians to death (Acts 26:10). In 31 AD (almost a year after Pentecost), Paul was present at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 22:19-20, Acts 7:59-8:3). But Luke does not say that Paul was among the Sanhedrin who “stopped their ears” at Stephen’s rebuke (Acts 7:57). Paul may have been listening, however. His zeal against the Christians may even have been triggered by the testimony of Stephen, his kinsman<sup>47</sup>.

The martyrdom of Stephen began as a dispute with the Synagogue of the Freedmen (people from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia). They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which Stephen spoke (Acts 6:9-10). Since Paul was from Cilicia, he may have been personally involved in this dispute.

For the next three years, Paul “persecuted the Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4). He “punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, he persecuted them even to foreign cities” (Acts 26:11).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>48</sup> some interesting contrasts in the life of the Apostle Paul. Paul persecuted the Church out of ignorance (1 Timothy 1:13), but yet he was extremely knowledgeable in the Law. The Jewish leaders persecuted the Christians out of love for power, but Paul did it out of zeal for doctrine. Paul’s teacher, Gamaliel, was not like the other Jewish leaders, and does not seem to have a love for power like them; perhaps he instilled this in Paul. Paul was given mercy because of his ignorance; the other Jewish leaders were not given mercy because they did things willfully.

“‘But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief’. Why then did other Jews not obtain mercy? Because what they did, they didn’t do ignorantly, but willfully, well knowing what they did. For this we have the testimony of John, ‘Many of the Jews believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God’ (John 12:43). And Christ again said to them, ‘How can you believe, who receive honor one of another’ (John 5:44)? The parents of the blind man ‘said these things for fear of the Jews, lest they should be put out of the synagogue’ (John 9:22). The Jews themselves said, ‘Perceive you how we avail

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<sup>46</sup> We might note that at this time “the Apostles in Jerusalem” only included Peter and John from among the Twelve. “James” was James, the Lord’s brother, author of the Epistle of James, and who had been ordained as Bishop of Jerusalem by the Twelve. Judas, called Barsabas, and Silas (Acts 15: ) from the Seventy Apostles among others were there also.

<sup>47</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 27.

<sup>48</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Timothy, III, v. 13.



nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him' (John 12:19). Thus, their love of power was everywhere in their way. When they admitted that no one can forgive sins but God only, and Christ immediately did that very thing, which they had confessed to be a sign of divinity, this could not be a case of ignorance. But where was Paul then? Perhaps one should say he was sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, and took no part with the multitude that conspired against Jesus. For Gamaliel does not appear to have been an ambitious man. Then how is it that afterwards Paul was found joining with the multitude? He saw the doctrine growing, and on the point of prevailing, and being generally embraced. For in the lifetime of Christ, the disciples consorted with Him, and afterwards with their teachers, but when they were completely separated, Paul did not act as the other Jews did, from the love of power, but from zeal. For what was the motive of his journey to Damascus? He thought the doctrine was pernicious, and was afraid that the preaching of it would spread everywhere. But with the Jews it was no concern for the multitude, but the love of power, that influenced their actions. Hence, they say, 'The Romans will come and take away both our place and nation' (John 11:48). What fear was this that agitated them, but that of man? But it is worthy of inquiry, how one so skillful in the Law as Paul could be ignorant. It is he who says, 'which He had promised before by His holy prophets' (Romans 1:2). How is it then that you know not, you who are zealous of the Law of their fathers, who were brought up at the feet of Gamaliel? Yet those who spent their days on lakes and rivers, and the publicans, have embraced the Gospel, while those that studied the Law are persecuting it! It is for this he condemns himself, saying, 'I am not fit to be called an Apostle' (1 Corinthians 15:9). It is for this he confesses his ignorance, which was produced by unbelief. For this reason, he says, he obtained 'mercy' (1 Timothy 2:16). What then does he mean when he says, 'He counted me faithful?' (1 Timothy 1:12) He would give up no right of his Master's; even his own part he ascribed to Him, and assumed nothing to himself, nor claimed for his own the glory that which was due to God. Hence in another place we find him exclaiming, 'Sirs, why do you these things to us? We also are men of like passions with you' (Acts 14:15). So again, 'He counted me faithful'. And again, 'I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me' (1 Corinthians 15:10). And again, 'It is He that works in us both to will and to do' (Philippians 2:13). In acknowledging that he 'obtained mercy', he admits that he deserved punishment. And again, in another place he says of the Jews, 'Blindness in part is happened to Israel'" (Romans 11:25).

### **The Road to Damascus**

"Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound<sup>49</sup> to Jerusalem. As he

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<sup>49</sup> Paul later stated, "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished" (Acts 22:4-5).

journeyed he came near Damascus<sup>50</sup>, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads’. So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do’. And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice<sup>51</sup> but seeing no one. Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought *him* into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank” (Acts 9:1-9).

### Paul’s Conversion by Ananias

“Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, ‘Ananias’. And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord’. So the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision, he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight’. Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name’. But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake’. And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit’. Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized<sup>52</sup>. So, when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

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“I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities” (Acts 26:9-11).

<sup>50</sup> Paul later said, “While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is hard* for you to kick against the goads.’ So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:12-18).

<sup>51</sup> Paul later said, “Those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me” (Acts 22:8). This is a slight variation of Acts 9:7. It could be that the “voice” in Acts 9:7 that the other men “heard” was Paul answering God.

<sup>52</sup> Paul later added that Ananias said, “The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:14-16).

Then all who heard were amazed, and said, ‘Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?’ But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ. Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let *him* down through the wall in a large basket. And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him<sup>53</sup>. When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus. Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied” (Acts 9:10-31).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>54</sup> that Paul was not catechized by Ananias or anyone else; this was the will of God, not an oversight by any of the men involved.

“What may be the reason that God didn’t draw anyone of high authority and importance, for the purpose of instructing Paul? It was because it was not fit that Paul should be catechized by men, but only by Christ Himself as in fact Ananias taught him very little, but merely baptized him. As soon as Paul was baptized, he was to draw upon himself the grace of the Spirit, by his zeal and exceeding earnestness. That Ananias was no very distinguished person, is plain. ‘The Lord spoke to him in a vision; Ananias answered and said, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem’ (Acts 9:13). If Ananias spoke in objection to God, much more would he have done so, had the Lord just sent an Angel. This is why Philip is not told what the matter is; he sees the Angel, and then the Spirit directs him go near the chariot. Observe how the Lord relieves Ananias of his fear: Paul is blind and prays (Acts 9:8-12); why should Ananias be afraid?”

Ambrose of Milan stated<sup>55</sup> that it is the will of God for His disciples to possess great powers. This is why He didn’t heal Paul’s blindness Himself, but let Ananias do it.

“It is the will of the Lord that His disciples should possess great powers; it is His will that the same things which He did when on earth should be done in His Name by His servants. He said: ‘Most assuredly, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do’ (John

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<sup>53</sup> Paul later expanded on this, saying, “Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance and saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me’. So I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him’. Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles’. And they listened to him until this word, and *then* they raised their voices and said, ‘Away with such a *fellow* from the earth, for he is not fit to live!’” (Acts 22:17-22).

<sup>54</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XX, v. 13.

<sup>55</sup> Ambrose of Milan, Concerning Repentance, I, viii, 34.

14:12). He gave them power to raise the dead. Whereas He could Himself have restored to Saul the use of his sight, He nevertheless sent him to His disciple Ananias, that by Ananias' blessing Saul's eyes might be restored, the sight of which he had lost. Peter also He welcomed to walk with Himself on the sea, and because he faltered He blamed him for lessening the grace given him by the weakness of his faith. He Who Himself was the light of the world granted to His disciples to be the light of the world through grace."

John Chrysostom stated<sup>56</sup> that Ananias had probably done some exhaustive inquiry on why Paul was in town. And Ananias was also greatly afraid of Paul not only for himself but also for all his congregations in Damascus. Ananias was startled that Paul was converted; he was even more startled at what Paul became after his conversion. In faith, Ananias addressed Paul as a friend and brother. The Jews, on the other hand, thought that they had gotten rid of Stephen; what they got was someone even more vehement than Stephen.

"Ananias knew that Paul came to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on The Name (Acts 9:14). How was that known? It is likely that they, being in fear, made minute inquiries. This is done, in order that Paul may believe Ananias when he comes to him saying 'he has seen a vision' (Acts 9:10-16); it was shown him beforehand. Paul had also 'seen in a vision a man named Ananias', for this is why it was 'in a vision', namely, because he was blind. Not even the exceeding wonder of the thing took possession of the Ananias' mind, so greatly was he afraid. Notice: Paul being blind; in this way Ananias was restored to sight. But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake' (Acts 9:15-16). Not only, said He, shall he be a believer, but even a teacher, and great boldness shall he show before Gentiles and kings — such shall be the spread of the doctrine! — that just as God astonished Ananias by Paul's conversion, so He may startle him even more by Paul's ministry. Ananias went, and entered into the house, and laid his hands on Paul, and said, 'Brother Saul'. Ananias immediately addressed Paul as a friend by that Name — 'Jesus, Who appeared to you on the road' (Acts 9:17). Yet Christ had not told him this; he learned it from the Spirit — 'has sent me to you that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 9:17). As he said this, he laid his hands on him. 'Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales' (Acts 9:18). Some say this was a sign of his blindness. Why did God not blind his eyes entirely? This was more wonderful, that, with his eyes open, he did not see (Acts 9:8), which was just his case with respect to the Law, until the Name of Jesus was put on him. 'Paul received sight and arose, and was baptized. Having taken food, he recovered strength' (Acts 9:19). Paul was faint, therefore, both from his journey and from his fear; both from hunger, and from dejection of mind. Wishing therefore to deepen his dejection, God made Paul blind until the coming of Ananias; that he might not imagine the blindness to be only fancy, this is the reason for the scales. Paul needed no other teaching; that which had befallen was made teaching to him. 'Paul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached

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<sup>56</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XX, vv. 14-20.

the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God' (Acts 9:19-20). They thought they were rid of disputation in such matters, in getting rid of Stephen, and they found another, more vehement than Stephen.”

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>57</sup> how in the Early Church, it was not just the Apostles performing miracles; some miracles were done by God Himself. If it weren't for some of these, Ananias would not have been persuaded to accept Paul.

“Notice how, after Paul, we have God also doing miracles. The Jews accused the Apostles after their miracles and they cast them into prison; after this, notice that God also does the miracles. For instance, the bringing the Apostles out of prison (Acts 5:18-26) was His miracle; the translating of Philip was His miracle (Acts 8:39-40); the bringing Paul over was His miracle (Acts 9:1-9). Notice in what way Paul is honored. Christ appears, probably because of his hardness, and because Ananias would not otherwise have been persuaded.”

### **The Role of Ananias in Damascus**

Ananias was one of the original Seventy Apostles, and had been ordained Bishop of Damascus by the Twelve Apostles. His role in Damascus can be described<sup>58</sup> as follows:

“Ananias, the apostle of Christ, lived at the time that our Lord Jesus Christ was found bodily on the earth. He was an eyewitness of the Logos and the Passion, and an initiate in the mysteries of His wonders, as He taught His flock to worship the Trinity in three hypostases. Ananias resided in Damascus, where he led that Church as archpastor, after following the commands of the Teacher Christ that he should be consecrated a hierarch. Paul lauds Ananias, saying, ‘Ananias is a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwell in Damascus’” (Acts 22:12).

Ananias' role in the Church extended beyond the city of Damascus, and he was later stoned<sup>59</sup> to death by the governor Lucian of Eleutheropolis near Gaza.

Early Christian tradition noted<sup>60</sup> that Stephen had great gifts and visions, but he never sought to become a priest. Others like Philip and Ananias performed priestly functions when necessity called. But no one snatches that dignity; they are appointed by Christ.

“Stephen was a great and good a man, fervent in spirit, who saw Christ on the right hand of God, and the gates of heaven opened. But he nowhere appears to exercise functions which did not pertain to his office of a deacon, nor to have offered the sacrifices, nor to have laid hands on any, but kept his order of a deacon to the end. It became him, who was a martyr for Christ, to preserve good

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<sup>57</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XIX, vv. 26-27.

<sup>58</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 1. See also:

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 1.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp>, October 1.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>59</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 1.

<sup>60</sup> Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VIII, v, 46.

order. But if some blame Philip our deacon, and Ananias our faithful brother, that Philip baptized the eunuch, and Ananias baptized Paul, these men do not understand what we say. We have affirmed only that no one snatches the sacerdotal dignity to himself, but either receives it from God, as Melchizedec and Job, or from the high priest, as Aaron from Moses. Philip and Ananias did not act by themselves, but were appointed by Christ, the High Priest of that God to whom no being is to be compared.”

John Cassian stated<sup>61</sup> that an important guideline for the Church was laid down by Ananias. We are not generally taught directly by God but by human Elders. Those who despise this never learn the way of perfection.

“When Christ in His own Person called and addressed Paul, although He might have opened out to him at once the way of perfection, yet He chose rather to direct him to Ananias and commanded him to learn the way of truth from him. ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do’ (Acts 9:6). He sent Paul to an older man, and thought it good to have him instructed by Ananias’ teaching rather than His own, lest what might have been rightly done in the case of Paul might set a bad example of self-sufficiency. If He didn’t do this, everyone else might persuade himself that he also should in like manner to be trained by the government and teaching of God alone, rather than by the instruction of the Elders. This self-sufficiency Paul himself teaches ought to be shunned with all possible care, not only by his letters but by his acts and deeds. He says that he went up to Jerusalem solely for this reason: to communicate in a private and informal conference with his co-apostles and those who were before him that Gospel which he preached to the Gentiles, the grace of the Holy Spirit accompanying him with powerful signs and wonders. ‘I communicated with them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles lest perhaps I had run or should run in vain’ (Galatians 2:2). Who then is so self-sufficient and blind as to dare to trust in his own judgment and discretion when the chosen vessel, Paul, confesses that he had need of conference with his fellow apostles. We clearly see that the Lord does not Himself show the way of perfection to anyone, who having the opportunity of learning despises the teaching and training of the Elders. We need to pay attention to that saying which ought most carefully to be observed: ‘Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you’” (Deuteronomy 32:7).

John Chrysostom took<sup>62</sup> a close look at Ananias, who was at the center of the action in Damascus. He had to take courage since he felt like he was being sent to the mouth of the lion. His temptation was to let Paul remain blind; it took courage to heal Paul’s blindness.

“But let us look at what relates to Ananias. The Lord did not say to him, ‘Speak to Paul, and catechize him’ (Acts 9:11-12). Ananias did not need to persuade Paul. Notice how Philip is not told everything immediately either. Let no one imagine that Ananias spoke in unbelief regarding what was told him; far from it! But frightened and trembling, he did not even listen to what was said at

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<sup>61</sup> John Cassian, 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of Abbot Moses, I, ii, 15.

<sup>62</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XX, Recapitulation.

hearing the name of Paul. Moreover, the Lord does not tell Ananias that He has blinded Paul; at the mention of Paul's name fear prepossessed his soul. Ananias might have asked the Lord, 'Why do You cast me into the mouth of the lion?' He was terrified, even while he spoke these words; from every quarter we may learn the energetic character of Paul. That these things should be spoken by Jews is nothing wonderful; but that the believers are so terrified, it is a most mighty proof of the power of God. Both the fear is shown, and the obedience greater after the fear. There was indeed need of strength. Ananias heard what he most desired — that against the Jews also Paul will take his stand; this above all gave him courage. At the same time also this puts the onus on Ananias; if Paul, who was so frantic, shall suffer so many things, what will it be like for Ananias if he was unwilling to baptize Paul! Ananias might be tempted to say, 'It is well; let him continue blind'; and 'why do You ask me to open his eyes, that he may bind men again?' Ananias had to take courage to not fear the future. Ananias said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus' — he didn't say, 'Who made you blind', but — 'Who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 9:17). Notice that Ananias utters nothing boastful; just as Peter said in the case of the lame man, 'Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?' (Acts 3:12) So here Ananias said, 'Jesus, Who appeared to you'. Ananias came not to reprove the past, but to bestow the gift: 'that Paul may receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit'".

### **The Date of Paul's Conversion – 34 AD**

Paul's life as an Apostle began in 45 AD when Barnabas went to Tarsus to get him and brought him to Antioch. Paul and Barnabas then taught in the Church in Antioch for a year (Acts 11:25-26) before being sent out by the Church on their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1-4) in about 46 AD. Upon their return, they went up to Jerusalem for the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD (Acts 15, Galatians 2:1-10). There are three places in Paul's epistles that give us some dates prior to 45 AD.

- Galatians 2:1. Paul's conversion occurred 14 years before the Council of Jerusalem or 34 AD<sup>63</sup>.
- Galatians 1:18. Paul went to see Peter and James in Jerusalem 3 years after his conversion or 37 AD.
- 2 Corinthians 12:2. Paul had a vision of heaven 14 years prior to writing 2 Corinthians. Since 2 Corinthians was written in 55 AD, his vision occurred in 41 AD.

Let us look at these periods in the life of the Apostle Paul more closely.

### **34 AD to 37 AD**

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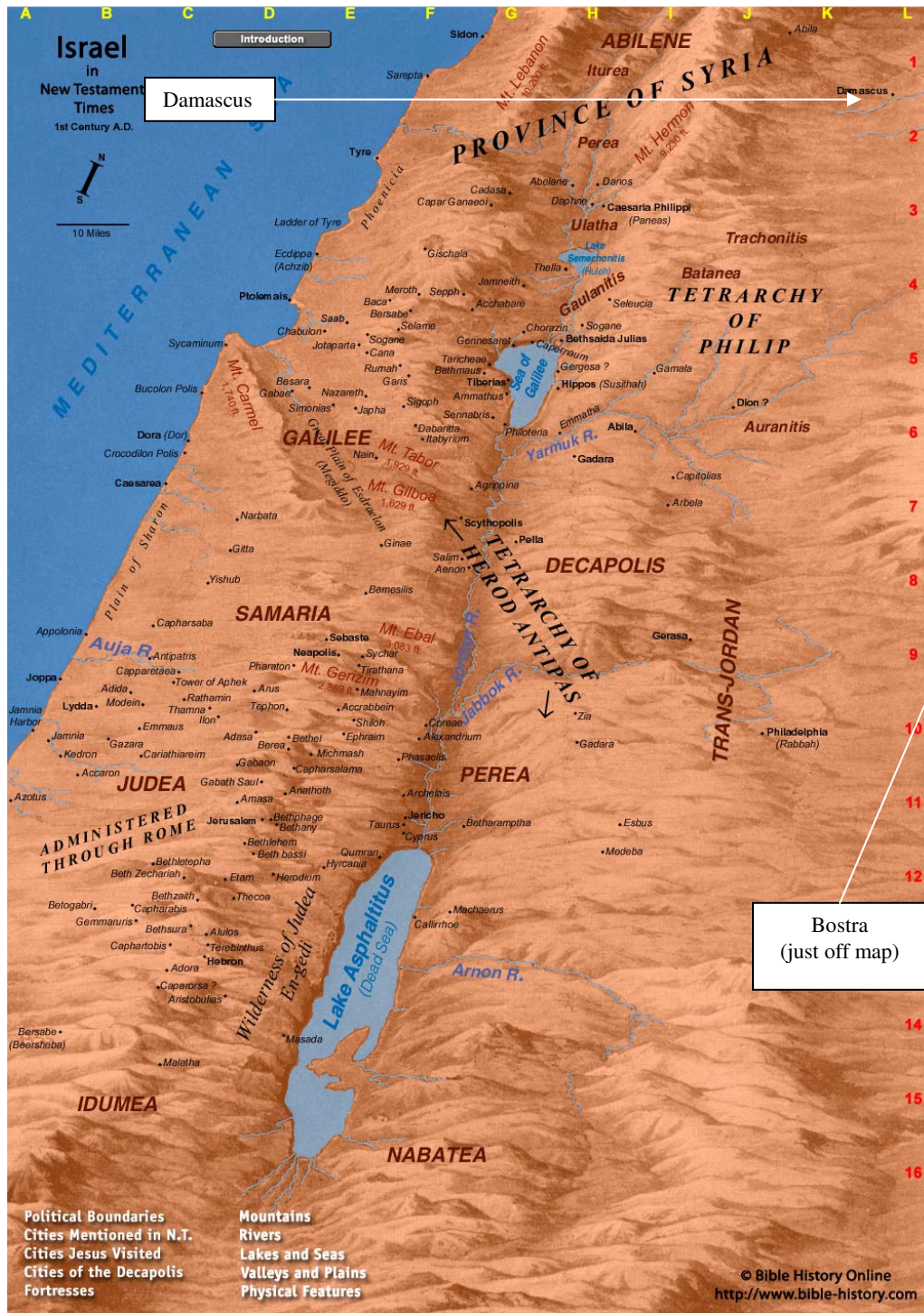
<sup>63</sup> The context is his going up to Jerusalem. He didn't go up to Jerusalem immediately following his conversion (Galatians 1:17), but he did three years later (Galatians 1:18) and 14 years later (Galatians 2:1).

For concurrence, see also The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 1.

Paul spent some days with the disciples of Damascus after his baptism (Acts 9:19-20). Undoubtedly, Ananias and Paul talked about their visions: that Paul was a chosen vessel to evangelize the Gentiles and would suffer a lot. Paul stated that he did not immediately confer with flesh and blood (Galatians 1:16), but he went to Arabia for a while (Galatians 1:17). The implication is that he spent the greater part of three years (34-37 AD) in Arabia (Galatians 1:18). See Figure 1 for a map of Paul's movement in and around Damascus and Arabia.



Figure 1  
 Map<sup>64</sup> of Paul's Movement Around Arabia and Damascus



<sup>64</sup> © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available.

To a Jew in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century “Arabia” did not mean the entire Arabian Peninsula. Josephus wrote that Arabia could be seen to the East from a tower in Jerusalem. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, the kingdom of Nabatea was established as generally to the East of the Dead Sea and South of Syria. This area was generally referred to as Arabia by residents of Palestine (see map). Note that Nabatea includes both the area surrounding Damascus and the area of Decapolis evangelized by the healed demoniacs in Mark 5:20 (see also Matthew 8:28).

The politics of this area was somewhat in turmoil at the time of Paul’s conversion. From an article<sup>65</sup> in Bible Review that gives a historical perspective to Nabatea:

“Although the mother of Herod the Great came from an eminent Nabatean family, he later fought the Nabateans in a war that he won only after suffering heavy losses. The Nabateans, in return, enthusiastically provided auxiliary troops to aid the Roman governor of Syria in brutally suppressing the Jewish revolt that followed Herod’s death” (about 4 BC).

“In order to calm the tensions between the two peoples, one of Herod’s sons, Herod Antipas, married the daughter of the Nabatean king, Aretas IV. However, in about 23 AD he divorced her in order to marry Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip. John the Baptist criticized this marriage, as reported both by Josephus and the Gospels, with the result that John was imprisoned and then beheaded (Matthew 14:3-12; Mark 6:17-29, Luke 4:19-20). Using a disputed border as an excuse, the Nabatean king attacked Galilee to avenge the insult to his daughter.”

“The Nabatean king knew from experience that Rome had little patience with warlike actions between the client kings who guarded the eastern frontier of the empire. He thus had every reason to feel anxious not only about Jewish reaction, but about Roman reaction to his attack on Galilee. The Roman emperor was perfectly capable of reacting quickly and decisively. All he had to do was to give an order to the governor of Syria, who had four legions of troops at his disposition.”

Just as the Nabatean King Aretas was expecting the reaction from Rome, Paul [a Jew, a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee] went to Arabia.

Prior to leaving for Arabia, Paul had begun to preach Christ in the synagogues of Damascus (Acts 9:20). Those who heard him were amazed since they knew that Paul tried to destroy Christians in Jerusalem, and had come to Damascus to do the same (Acts 9:21-22). After his return to Damascus from Arabia, the amazement and consternation turned into a murder plot against Paul. The Jews hatched the plot (Acts 9:24) and got the governor of Damascus under King Aretas to go along (2 Corinthians 11:32). With an Ethnarch<sup>66</sup> guarding the city looking for Paul, the Christians let Paul down in a basket through a window in the city wall (Acts 9:25, 2 Corinthians 11:32-33) and he escaped, heading for Jerusalem.

To get a perspective on why Paul went where, it helps to understand where the Twelve Apostles went. The Twelve had divided the world up into different regions, and then they drew

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<sup>65</sup> Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “What Was Paul Doing in Arabia?” Bible Review, October 1994

<sup>66</sup> An Ethnarch was someone just below the level of a king. E.g. Herod Archelaus was an Ethnarch.

lots to see who would go where. The Apostle John had drawn the region of Asia Minor<sup>67</sup>, but he couldn't go there until after the death of the Virgin Mary, since the Lord had directed him to care for her (John 19:25-27). On Paul's missionary journeys, he filled in for John in Asia Minor until John could get there.

Paul did something similar during his first three years as a believer in Arabia. Timon, of the Seventy and of the first seven deacons, was later Bishop of Bostra in Arabia. Paul laid the groundwork for Timon in Arabia. John Chrysostom noted<sup>68</sup> Paul's fervent, yet extremely humble, character, as he began his life as an Apostle. He desired to go to places that the Twelve and the Seventy hadn't taken up the preaching of the Word yet.

“Paul was a fervent soul! He desired to go to regions not yet cultivated, which were in a wild state. Had he remained with the Apostles, since he had nothing to learn, his preaching would have been limited, for they needed to spread the Word everywhere. Thus this blessed man, fervent in spirit, undertook to teach wild barbarians, choosing a life full of battle and labor. He said, ‘I went into Arabia’, and added, ‘and again I returned to Damascus’ (Galatians 1:17). Observe his humility; he doesn't speak of his successes, or whom or the many he instructed. Yet such was his zeal, immediately after his baptism, that he confounded the Jews, and so exasperated them, that they and the Greeks lay in wait to kill him. This would not have been the case, had he not greatly added to the numbers of the faithful. Since the Jews were defeated in doctrine, they resorted to murder, which was a clear sign of Paul's superiority. But Christ did not allow him to be put to death, preserving him for his mission. Of these successes, however, Paul says nothing. In all his writings, his motive is not ambition, nor to be honored more highly than the Apostles, nor because he is embarrassed at being taken lightly. He calls himself, ‘one born<sup>69</sup> out of due time’, and, ‘the first of sinners’, and ‘the last of the Apostles’, and, ‘not fit to be called an Apostle’ (1 Corinthians 15:8). The one who said this had labored more than all of them; which is real humility. For he, who is conscious of no excellence, and speaks humbly of himself, is candid but not humble; but for Paul to say so after such accomplishments, is to be practiced in self-control.”

“What great things did he achieve in the city of Damascus? He tells us that the governor<sup>70</sup> under Aretas the king set guards about the whole city, hoping to trap this blessed man. This is a proof of the strongest kind that he was violently persecuted by the Jews. He says nothing of this, but, mentioning his arrival and departure, is silent concerning the events which occurred, nor would he have mentioned them (2 Corinthians 11:32) had not circumstances required it.”

“He said that after three years he went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas’ (Galatians 1:18). What can be lowlier than such a soul? After such successes, lacking nothing of Peter, not even his assent, but being of equal dignity with him, he went to him as his elder and superior. The only object of this journey was to

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<sup>67</sup> We can see this from Revelation 2 and 3, where John addresses some of the Churches in this region.

<sup>68</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 1, v. 17

<sup>69</sup> The Greek word *ektroma* means literally “an abortion”.

<sup>70</sup> The “governor” under Aretas was an Ethnarch. Archelaus (Matthew 2:22) was an Ethnarch, which is a higher position than a Tetrarch, such as Herod Antipas, Philip and Lysanias (Luke 3:1). Thus, it was a higher ranking official who was after Paul, trying to kill him, than was after Peter (Acts 12:3).

visit Peter; thus he pays due respect to the Apostles, and regards himself as not even their equal. Which is plain from this journey, for Paul visited Peter for the same reason many of our brethren today visit with holy men. Or rather by a humbler feeling, for today they do so for their own benefit, but Paul, not for his own instruction or correction, but merely for the sake of honoring Peter by his presence. He says, ‘to visit Peter’; he does not say to see (Greek: *ideio*), but to inquire about, (Greek: *istoresai*) a word, which those, who seek to become acquainted with great and splendid cities, apply to themselves. Worthy of such trouble did he consider the very sight of Peter. Paul did this again on his arrival at Jerusalem, after having converted many Gentiles; having reformed and brought to Christ Pamphylia, Lycaonia, Cilicia, and all nations in that quarter of the world, he first addressed himself with great humility to James, as to his elder and superior (Acts 21:17-19). Next, he submitted to his counsel, and that counsel contrary to this Epistle. ‘You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those which have believed; therefore, shave your head, and purify yourself’ (Acts 21:20-24). Accordingly, he shaved his head, and observed all the Jewish ceremonies; for where the Gospel was not affected, he was the humblest of all men. But where by such humility he saw any injured, he gave it up, for that was no longer being humble, but that could destroy the disciples.”

Chrysostom continued<sup>71</sup> to say that Paul, in his humility, referred to himself as “less than the least of all the saints” (Ephesians 3:8). In spite of being a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man (1 Timothy 1:13), he was given the grace to communicate the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles. Paul didn’t call himself the least of the Apostles, but less than the least of all the saints. In his humility, Paul mourned his former sins, even though they were blotted out.

### **37 AD to 45 AD**

Arriving in Jerusalem, Paul met with Peter and James, the Lord’s brother (Galatians 1:18-19). This was his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion and he only stayed 15 days. At first, the disciples in Jerusalem were afraid of him and didn’t believe he was a disciple. But Barnabas, who had also studied<sup>72</sup> under Gamaliel, took Paul in, introduced him to the Apostles, and declared to them concerning Paul’s conversion (Acts 9:26-27). When Paul spoke boldly in the Name of Jesus and disputed with the Greek-speaking Jews, they also hatched a murder plot (Acts 9:29). This is why he only stayed 15 days in Jerusalem. When the brethren in Jerusalem found out about the murder plot, they hustled Paul down to Caesarea and off to his hometown of Tarsus (Acts 9:30). With Paul out of the way and no longer organizing the persecution of the Church, Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and multiplied considerably (Acts 9:31). This peace lasted until about 44 AD when Herod (Agrippa) killed James, the son of Zebedee, and tried to kill Peter also (Acts 12:1ff) because it pleased the Jews.

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<sup>71</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, VII.

<sup>72</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, The Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, June 11.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp June 11>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2007, June 11.

Before leaving Jerusalem, Paul had another vision from the Lord that confirmed the one he had at his conversion (Acts 22:17-21). In this vision, which occurred while Paul was praying in the Temple, the Lord warned him to get out of Jerusalem quickly because:

- They will not receive your testimony in Jerusalem
- The Lord would send him far from there to the Gentiles.

Paul spent the next 8 years in Tarsus (37 AD - 45 AD). During this time Paul had at least one other vision, this one greater than all the others. This vision occurred in 41 AD (14 years before the writing of 2 Corinthians in 55 AD). In this vision Paul was caught up into Paradise and heard things that he couldn't even speak about (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). This vision prepared Paul for his role as an Apostle since the Churches on earth are modeled after the Assembly of the Saints in heaven just as the Tabernacle in the wilderness was modeled after the Tabernacle in heaven (Exodus 25:9, 20; 26:30, Acts 7:44, Hebrews 8:5).

There was other foundational work that Paul did while he was in Tarsus that we don't notice until later. A number of the members of Paul's immediate family either came to know the Lord; or if they already did, the breach between them and Paul was repaired. According to tradition<sup>73</sup>, Stephen, one of the first seven deacons was a kinsman of Paul and therefore some repair work on family relationships may have been necessary.

Some of Paul's kinsmen that are mentioned in the Scriptures are Herodion (Romans 16:11), Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7), Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (Romans 16:21). Herodion and Andronicus, both members of the Seventy, and Junia were in Rome in 55 AD when Paul wrote Romans. They seem to have been sent there by Peter and Paul right after Nero became Emperor to help the Church, and Paul addressed them by name in Romans 16.

After spending about 8 years in Tarsus, Barnabas arrived in 45 AD looking for Paul (Acts 11:25). The Church in Antioch had gotten started recently by some men from Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts 11:20). The men we know from the Scripture that were from Cyprus are Barnabas (Acts 4:36) and his brother Aristobulus (Romans 16:10). According to tradition<sup>74</sup>, Aristobulus was also Peter's father-in-law and later Bishop of Britain. Those from Cyrene were Simon of Cyrene and his sons Rufus and Alexander (Mark 15:21). Simon was pressed into service to carry Jesus' cross at the crucifixion. Rufus worked with the apostle Paul, was in Rome when Paul wrote Romans (Romans 16:13), and was later Bishop of the Greek city of Thebes<sup>75</sup>. Simon's other son, Alexander, became a traitor to the Faith and was largely responsible for Paul's martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:14, 1 Timothy 1:20). Another man from Cyrene was Lucius of Cyrene who was one of the prophets and teachers at the Church of Antioch (Acts 13:1).

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<sup>73</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 27.

<sup>74</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, March 16.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, March 16, October 31.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 15.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>75</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

When Barnabas found Paul in Tarsus, he brought him to Antioch (Acts 11:26). Along with the others, Paul and Barnabas taught at the Church in Antioch for a year before they went off on their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. During this one-year period, Agabus, a prophet and one of the Seventy, predicted that there would be a great famine. During the famine, Barnabas and Paul hand-carried alms from Antioch to the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30).

As one can see from this brief history of the Apostle Paul's early life, there was considerable preparation and training he went through prior to his being sent out as an Apostle. He didn't have the opportunity to follow Jesus for three years like the Twelve and the Seventy. However, the Lord did speak to him personally and specifically in directing him what to do. When he said in Galatians, "I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood" (Galatians 1:16) following his conversion, he is not putting down the Twelve, nor is he saying one shouldn't confer with one's elders. He is simply referring to the visions he had that were necessary for him to be able to do what he had done.

### **Barnabas Receives Paul after His Conversion**

After Paul's conversion on the Road to Damascus, Paul returned to Jerusalem, but everyone was afraid of him due to his intense persecution of the Church only a short while before. Only Barnabas befriended Paul and took him in to meet the other Apostles.

"Paul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, 'Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this Name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?' But Paul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ. Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Paul. They watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let *him* down through the wall in a large basket. When Paul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the Apostles. Barnabas declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. So Paul was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. He spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus" (Acts 9:19-30).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>76</sup> that it was not just the Apostles in Jerusalem who were afraid of Paul, but Ananias in Damascus also. They just didn't believe that he was a disciple! This was not something that they would have expected! Barnabas proved to be different and changed that! As a result, the Church took care of Paul.

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<sup>76</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXI, vv. 26-27, Recapitulation.

“They didn’t believe that Paul was a disciple. Truly that was beyond all human expectation. He was no longer a wild beast, but a man mild and gentle! Observe how Paul does not go to the Apostles, such is his forbearance, but to the disciples, as being a disciple. He was not thought worthy of credit. But Barnabas -- Son of Consolation he was called -- also he makes himself easy access to Paul. ‘He was a kind man’ (Acts 11:24), exceedingly; this is proved both by the present instance, and in the affair of John Mark. Barnabas took Paul, ‘brought him to the Apostles, and he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the Name of Jesus’ (Acts 9:27). It is likely that at Damascus, Barnabas had heard all about him; *he* was not afraid but the others were, for Barnabas was a man whose glance inspired fear.

“Notice how the disciples feared the dangers, how the alarm was still at its height in them. But Barnabas changed that! It seems to me that Barnabas was of old a friend of Paul’s. Notice how Paul says nothing of all this himself; nor would he have brought it forward to the others, had he not been compelled to do so. ‘Paul was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus’ (Acts 9:28-29). This gave them all confidence. ‘The Jews went about to slay him; but the brethren found out’. Notice how both at Damascus and here, the rest take care of Paul, provide him the means of departure, and that we nowhere find him thus far receiving direct supernatural aid from God! So the energy of his character is exhibited. ‘They took him to Caesarea, and sent him off to Tarsus’ (Acts 9:30) so that he did not continue his journey by land, but sailed the rest of it. This departure is providentially ordered, that he might preach there also; so likewise were the plots against him ordered by God’s Providence, and his coming to Jerusalem, that the story about him might no longer be disbelieved. There he was ‘speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus; he spoke and disputed with the Hellenists. So the Church throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace”.

### **Barnabas was sent to Antioch by the Church in Jerusalem**

“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:22-24).

Ambrose of Milan singled<sup>77</sup> out Barnabas as a man who was worthy of his calling at this time.

“Barnabas also believed, and obeyed because he believed. Therefore, being chosen by the authority of the Holy Spirit, Which came on him abundantly, as a special sign of his merits, he was worthy of so great a fellowship. For one grace shone in these whom one Spirit had chosen.”

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<sup>77</sup> Ambrose of Milan, On the Holy Spirit, II, 157.

Since Barnabas was sent to Antioch just before Herod Agrippa killed the Apostle James the son of Zebedee in 44 AD (Acts 12:1-2), we can put a date on Barnabas' trip to Antioch as just a few years earlier.

Chrysostom also speculates<sup>78</sup> on why Barnabas was sent to Antioch, whereas Peter and John were sent to Samaria following Deacon Philip's evangelism (Acts 8:14). Chrysostom felt that it was because of the Jews in Jerusalem that they sent Barnabas. That is, the Jews in Jerusalem didn't want to make it obvious that they were evangelizing Gentiles, so they didn't send the "pillars" (Galatians 2:9), but instead sent one of the "lesser Apostles." (Compare the attitude of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem who are very zealous for the Mosaic Law: Acts 21:20-21).

"What may be the reason that, when such a city received the Word, they did not come themselves? Because of the Jews! But they sent Barnabas. However, it is no small part of the providential management so that Paul comes to be there. It is both natural, and it is wisely ordered, that they are averse to him, so that Voice of the Gospel that Trumpet of heaven is not shut up in Jerusalem. Note how on all occasions, Christ turns their ill dispositions to needful account and for the benefit of the Church! From the hatred of Paul by the Judaizers, God made Himself available for the building up of the Church. Observe this holy man, Barnabas, how he looked not to his own interests, but hastened to Tarsus. 'When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord' (Acts 11:23-24). He was a very kind man, single-hearted, and considerate".

### **Barnabas Leaves for Tarsus to Get Paul**

"Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Paul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:25-26).

When Barnabas got to Antioch and saw the grace of God among the Gentiles (Acts 11:23), he encouraged them and then left for Tarsus to get Paul (Acts 11:25). Why? Paul had been sent to Tarsus, his home town (Acts 22:3), by James and the Jerusalem brethren, to get him away from murder plots in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29-30). Paul had been in Tarsus now for about 8 years (Acts 9:31), and Barnabas was one of the brothers in Jerusalem who had welcomed Paul after his conversion (Acts 9:26-27). Both Paul and Barnabas had been educated by Gamaliel in their youth (Acts 22:3) and had known each other a long time.

But there was another reason why Barnabas went to get Paul. Just before Paul was sent to Tarsus, he had a vision in the Temple where the Lord told him that He was going to send him to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21). This vision occurred before Peter's vision of the sheet (Acts 10:9-17) leading up to the baptism of Cornelius. Therefore, Paul and the Jerusalem brethren probably didn't know what to do about the vision at the time. But when Barnabas saw the grace

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<sup>78</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXV, v. 21.



of God in Antioch, he went immediately to get the guy who had had the vision about the Gentiles 8 years earlier. And together, Barnabas and Paul spent a year teaching a great many people in Antioch. Following this, Barnabas and Paul were sent out by the church in Antioch on what has come to be known as Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>79</sup> that the city of Antioch didn't have the Apostles for their teachers to begin with, just men from Cyprus (such as Barnabas) and Cyrene plus Paul, who was taught by Ananias.

“In these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch’ (Acts 11:27). The fruit of alms needed to be planted in Antioch also. Notice how of necessity none of the men of note become the teachers in Antioch. They got for their teachers, men of Cyprus, and Cyrene, and Paul — though he surpassed the Apostles themselves — since Paul also had for teachers Ananias and Barnabas. Of necessity this was the case.

Following the events described here, James (Zebedee) was killed by Herod (Acts 12:2) and Peter was imprisoned (Acts 12:3). When Peter escaped from prison (Acts 12:6-11), he “departed and went to another place” (Acts 12:17). According to tradition, he slowly made his way North and ended up in Antioch with Paul (Galatians 2:11-15). Thus the Apostles in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, but the Lord sent Peter also a little later.

### **Origin of the Name “Christian”**

Luke writes, “So it was that for a whole year Barnabas and Paul assembled with the Church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:26).

Ignatius of Antioch stated<sup>80</sup> that the name “Christians” for the believers in Antioch was the fulfillment of a prophecy by Isaiah. We need to work at being worthy of being called by that name that we have received.

“Let us not be insensible to the kindness of God. Were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be. ‘If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?’ (Psalm 130:3) Let us therefore prove ourselves worthy of that name, which we have received. For whoever is called by any other name besides this, he is not of God; for he has not received the prophecy which speaks thus concerning us. ‘The people shall be called by a new name, which the Lord shall name them, and shall be a holy people’ (Isaiah 62:2, 12). This was first fulfilled in Syria; for ‘the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch’ (Acts 11:26), when Paul and Peter were laying the foundations of the Church. Lay aside, therefore, the evil, the old, the corrupt leaven, and be changed into the new leaven of grace. Abide in Christ, that the stranger may not have dominion over you. It is absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue, and to cherish in the mind a Judaism, which has now come to an end. Christ is one, in whom every nation that believes, and every tongue that confesses, is gathered to

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<sup>79</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXV, v. 27.

<sup>80</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Magnesians, 10.

God. Those that were of a stony heart have become the children of Abraham, the friend of God; and in his seed all those have been blessed who were ordained to eternal life in Christ.”

According to tradition, it was Evodius<sup>81</sup>, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bishop of Antioch, and a member of the original Seventy Apostles, who coined the term “Christian” in Antioch<sup>82</sup>. This occurred while Barnabas and Paul were in Antioch.

According to tradition<sup>83</sup>, Evodius was consecrated Bishop of Antioch by the Apostle Peter, just before Peter left for Rome the first time. Thus Evodius was Bishop of Antioch when the people were first called Christians (Acts 11:26), and Peter left for Rome shortly after his imprisonment by Herod (Acts 12:1-10) in c. 44 AD. This means that Evodius was Bishop of Antioch for about 20 years before his martyrdom at the hands of Vespasian, as Vespasian was moving south to destroy Jerusalem.

Ignatius of Antioch wrote<sup>84</sup> to the Church of Antioch in c. 107 AD as he was being led to Rome to be eaten by lions. In this epistle, he asked the Church to remember Evodius, who had been martyred over 40 years earlier. Evodius had obviously made a lasting impression on the people of Antioch.

“You have been the disciples of Paul and Peter; do not lose what was committed to your trust. Keep in remembrance Evodius, your deservedly blessed pastor, into whose hands the government over you was first entrusted by the Apostles. Let us not bring disgrace upon our Father. Let us prove ourselves His true-born children, and not bastards. You know after what manner I have acted among you. The things which, when present, I spoke to you, these same, when absent, I now write to you. “If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.” Be followers of me. My soul is yours, when I attain to Jesus. Remember my bonds.”

### **Agabus the Prophet Warns of a Famine**

Paul stated, “God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28). The “prophets” that Paul refers to as being almost as important as apostles are not just those of the Old Testament, but also those of the New Testament such as Agabus (Acts 11:28, 21:10), Joseph Barsabas and Silas (Acts 15:22-32).

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<sup>81</sup> Sometimes spelled Evodius, where the Apostle Peter was considered the 1<sup>st</sup> Bishop of Antioch. Ignatius of Antioch followed Evodius as Bishop of Antioch. See also Eusebius, Church History, III, 22 and Ignatius, Epistle to the Antiochians, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Holy Apostles Convent, The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista, CO, 2002, September 7, p. 239.

<sup>83</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 7.

<sup>84</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Antiochians, 7.

Agabus predicted the worldwide famine that occurred during the reign of Emperor Claudius (41-52 AD), and he also predicted the suffering of the Apostle Paul by the Jews in Jerusalem. He also preached<sup>85</sup> in many other lands and converted many pagans to Christ.

From Paul's and Barnabas' Missionary Journeys, we can see that the spiritual gift of Apostleship is of Primary importance in establishing Churches. How does the spiritual gift of prophecy fit in? Paul stated,

“Pursue love, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the Church. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies *is* greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the Church may receive edification” (1 Corinthians 14:1-5).

How this works, Paul describes as follows: “If all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all. Thus, the secrets of his heart are revealed. Falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you” (1 Corinthians 14:24-25). This is what happened with Photini, the woman at the well in Sychar (John 4:16-26).

Thus, Paul said that prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe' (1 Corinthians 14:22). Paul's advice on how this should be done is:

“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. You can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:29-33).

Included in the gift of prophecy is the understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge (1 Corinthians 13:2). This understanding led to the ordination of Timothy as an Apostle (1 Timothy 4:14). Yet prophecy outside the Church is false, since “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21). Also included in the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (1 Peter 1:10).

Early Christian tradition described<sup>86</sup> the difference between prophecy in the Church and false prophecy:

“The false prophet falls into a spurious ecstasy, which is accompanied by a lack of all shame and fear. Beginning with an intentional rudeness, he ends with an involuntary madness of soul. But they will never be able to show that any one of the Old Testament prophets, or any one of the New, was carried away in spirit

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<sup>85</sup> See <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

<sup>86</sup> Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VIII, I, 6.

after this fashion. Nor will they be able to boast that Agabus, Joseph Barsabas, Silas, the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8-9), the woman Ammia in Philadelphia, Quadratus, or any of the others who do not in any respect belong to them, were moved in this way.”

Eusebius of Caesarea stated that Quadratus first and then Aristides presented an Apology to Emperor Hadrian. Quadratus was also renowned for his prophetic gifts.

“After Trajan had reigned for 19½ years, Hadrian became his successor in the empire. To him Quadratus addressed<sup>87</sup> a discourse containing an apology for our Faith, because certain wicked men had attempted to trouble the Christians. The work is still in the hands of a great many of the brethren, as also in our own, and furnishes clear proofs of his understanding and of his apostolic orthodoxy. He himself reveals the early date at which he lived in the following words: ‘The works of our Savior were always present, for they were genuine. Those that were healed, and those that were raised from the dead were seen not only when they were healed and when they were raised, but were also always present. They were seen not merely after his death, but they were alive for quite a while, so that some of them lived even to our day.’ Such then was Quadratus! Aristides also, a believer earnestly devoted to our Faith, left, like Quadratus, an apology for the Faith, addressed to Hadrian. His work, too, has been preserved even to the present day by a great many persons.”

Among those that were celebrated<sup>88</sup> at that time was Quadratus, who was renowned along with the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8) for his prophetic gifts. There were many others besides these who were known in those days, and who occupied the first place among the successors of the apostles. They also, being illustrious disciples of such great men, built up the foundations of the churches which had been laid by the apostles in every place, and preached the Gospel more and more widely and scattered the saving seeds of the kingdom of heaven far and near throughout the whole world.

Vincent of Lerins summarized<sup>89</sup> what is the mind of the Church regarding prophets and the unity of the Church. It is not an option to reject this; doing so places one outside the Church.

“Lest anyone should rashly think the holy and Catholic consent of the fathers of the Church to be despised, Paul says, ‘God has placed some in the Church, first Apostles’, of whom Paul was one; ‘secondly Prophets’ (1 Corinthians 12:28), such as Agabus. We ‘doctors’, are now called Homilists, Expositors; Paul sometimes calls them also ‘Prophets’, because by them the mysteries of the Prophets are opened to the people. Whoever shall despise these, who had their appointment of God in His Church in their several times and places, when they are unanimous in Christ, in the interpretation of some one point of Catholic doctrine, despises not man, but God. From their unity in the truth, lest anyone should vary, Paul earnestly protests, ‘I plead with you, brethren, by the

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<sup>87</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, IV, 3.

Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “Quadratus Bishop of Athens”, in Remains of the Second and Third Centuries, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8.

<sup>88</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 37.

<sup>89</sup> Vincent of Lerins, Commonitory, XXVIII, 73.

name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment' (1 Corinthians 1:10). But if anyone dissent from their unanimous decision, let him listen to Paul's words, 'God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace'. That is, God is not the God of him who departs from the unity of consent, but of those who remain steadfast in the peace of consent, 'As in all the Churches of the saints' (1 Corinthians 14:33). The Churches of the saints continue steadfast in the communion of the faith."

All this is what Agabus (and Judah Barsabas and Silas) did. Agabus started in Jerusalem; then he prophesied in Antioch, then in other parts of the world.

### **Alms for the Jerusalem Church**

"In these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout the entire world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Paul" (Acts 11:27-30).

There was more to this famine than immediately meets the eye. As persecution developed, especially at the hand of Saul (Acts 8:3), the Jewish leaders would raid houses occupied by Christians, drag people off to prison, plunder the house of food and clothing and confiscate the property. In Jerusalem and vicinity, the long-term effect of the persecution was the impoverishment of the Jerusalem church. The effect of the famine of 44 AD was felt particularly hard by the Christians. By 57 AD, it was so bad that the Apostle Paul took up another major collection among the Gentile churches in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea), Achaia (Corinth, Athens) and Galatia (Iconium, Lystra, Derbe), to bring relief to the Jerusalem church (Romans 15:25-27, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, Acts 24:17).

Since the Christians in and about Jerusalem had sold their property and laid the proceeds at the Apostles' feet (Acts 4:35-37), these proceeds had to have been used for food, clothing and shelter for the saints. But if large portions were now being confiscated by the persecution, the Church began to be impoverished. The Gentile Churches that Paul started are never described as selling their property and laying the proceeds at the feet of the Apostles. Instead they are described as taking up a collection to help out the saints in Jerusalem. What the saints in Jerusalem were doing is certainly a blessed undertaking. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, asked Paul specifically to remember the poor (Galatians 2:10). This refers not just to the poor among the Gentiles, but also to the very poor brethren in Jerusalem; and Paul was very eager to help out.

John Chrysostom referred<sup>90</sup> to the reason why this famine occurred: it was because of the evils done to the Apostles by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. The whole world suffered through the famine as a result. Jesus had predicted this, saying, "You shall have tribulation" (John 16:33).

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<sup>90</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXV, v. 28.

Chrysostom noted<sup>91</sup> one every important development in Antioch: the alms for the Jerusalem Church (Acts 11:29-30). Chrysostom said this had more benefit for Antioch than for Jerusalem:

“There is no sin which alms cannot cleanse; none which alms cannot quench. All sin is beneath this; it is a medicine adopted for every wound. On this, Paul and James concurred (Galatians 2:10). Solomon wrote, ‘The ransom of a man’s soul is his own wealth’ (Proverbs 13:8 LXX). The Lord said, “If you want to be perfect, go sell what you have and give to the poor and come follow me” (Matthew 19:21).

Chrysostom also spoke<sup>92</sup> of the good use of wealth as a relief for the poor, and how neglecting that has dire consequences for us. Paying attention to this can cause us to inherit the Kingdom of God.

“Let us flee from this root of all evils, and we shall escape them all. ‘The love of money is the root’; says Paul, or rather Christ by Paul, and let us see how this is. The actual experience of the world testifies to it. What evil is not caused by wealth, or rather not by wealth, but by the wicked will of those who don’t know how to use it? It is possible to use wealth in well doing, and even by means of it to inherit the kingdom. What was given to us for the relief of the poor, to make amends for our past sins, and to please God, this we employ against the poor, or rather against our own souls, and to the great displeasure of God. A man may rob someone of his wealth, and reduce him to poverty; but he reduces himself to death. The man he robs he causes to pine in poverty here; but himself in that eternal punishment. Are they equal sufferers, do you think?”

Chrysostom further stated<sup>93</sup> that people mired in deep poverty sometimes make unseasonable clamor, idle complaints and lamentations about matters for which they ought to be grateful. Others can easily be provoked by their unreasonable annoyance and complaints. This class of persons deserves to be pitied for their misfortunes, not insulted. To trample on their calamities, and add the pain of insult to that which poverty brings, would be an act of extreme brutality. The nature of poverty has a terrible power to depress even the noblest character, and induce it often to act in these same respects without shame. A man coming to help should not be irritated when accused of stinginess, or be provoked by continual begging to become an enemy. He should be affable and accessible to the needy, as Sirach said, ‘Incline your ear to a poor man and give him a friendly answer with meekness’ (Ecclesiasticus 4:8). The man, who is able to bear the other’s infirmity, should bestow his gift to correct the suppliant by the gentleness of his countenance and the mildness of his words. If someone coming to help with a gift loads the poor with reproaches, insults them, and is exasperated against them, he not only fails through his gift to alleviate the despondency produced by poverty, but aggravates the distress by his abuse. Although the poor may be compelled to act very shamelessly through the necessity of hunger, they are nevertheless distressed at this compulsion. Due to the dread of famine, when they are constrained to beg, they feel shame because of their begging. Then on account of their

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<sup>91</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXV, Recapitulation.

<sup>92</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Timothy, XVII, Moral.

<sup>93</sup> John Chrysostom, Treatise Concerning the Christian Priesthood, III, 16.

shamelessness, if they are insulted, the power of despondency becomes a complex kind, accompanied by much gloom, and settles down on the soul.

In dealing with the poor, one ought to be so long-suffering, as to avoid increasing their despondency by their fits of anger, but also to remove the greater part of it by his exhortation. The man, who has been insulted, even if he is in the enjoyment of great abundance, does not feel the advantage of his wealth, on account of the blow, which he has received from the insult. On the other hand, the man who has been addressed with kind words, and for whom the gift has been accompanied with encouragement, exults and rejoices all the more, and the thing given becomes doubled in value through the manner in which it is offered. I say this not of myself, but borrow from him whose precept I quoted just now: ‘My son, do not mix reproach with your good deeds, nor cause grief by your words when you present a gift. Does not the dew ease the scorching heat? So a word is better than a gift. Indeed, does not a word surpass a good gift? Both are to be found in a gracious man’” (Ecclesiasticus 18:15-17).

Chrysostom continued<sup>94</sup> that alms can be done by other means than money, and that the services done by deeds often do more good than if done by money.

“But alms may be done not only by money, but by acts. For example: one can stand by a person kindly to help and defend him; one may reach to him a helping hand. The service rendered by acts has often done more good even than money. Do you think it is small alms to a lost, castaway soul possessed by a burning fever to be able to rid it of its disease? For example, do you see one possessed by love of money? Pity the man. Quench his fire. What if he will not be persuaded? Do your part and do not be remiss. Have you seen him in bonds? Wealth is indeed bonds (Matthew 25:41-43). Go to him; visit him; console him; try to release him from his bonds. If he refuses, he shall bear the blame himself. Have you seen him naked and a stranger? He is indeed naked and a stranger to heaven. Bring him to your own inn; clothe him with the garment of virtue; give him the city which is in heaven.

In considering the spread of the Early Church, one might think about how terrible the persecutions were. However, as Chrysostom put<sup>95</sup> it: “The persecution turned out to be no light benefit. As ‘to those who love God all things work together for good’” (Romans 8:28).

“If they had made it their express study how best to establish the Church, they would have done nothing else but this; they would have dispersed the teachers. When Stephen was slain, when Paul was twice in danger, when the Apostles were scourged, then the Gentiles received the word, and also the Samaritans. Paul declared: ‘It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you (the Jews) first; but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles’ (Acts 13:46). Truly this is the reason why it was there they were appointed to be called Christians, because Paul spent so long a time in Antioch!”

### **Distinguishing Characteristics about the City of Antioch**

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<sup>94</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXV, Recapitulation.

<sup>95</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXV, v.22.

The city of Antioch acquired a special dignity due to the extended presence of Peter, Paul, Barnabas and others. This was the cradle of Christianity, which is why believers were first called “Christians” there.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>96</sup> that the city of Antioch was very distinguished for three reasons: (1) Believers were first called Christians there. (2) Even while they were expecting a famine, they gave generously instead of hoarding for their own sustenance. (3) When the Jewish believers tried to lay Judaism on them, they didn’t bear this in silence, but sent Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem to resolve the issue.

“Do you wish to learn the dignity and ancestry of the city of Antioch? I will tell it exactly; not only that you may know, but that you may also emulate it. ‘It came to pass, that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch’ (Acts 11:26). This dignity, none of the cities throughout the world possesses, not even the city of Rome herself! On account of that love toward Christ, that boldness and virtue, Antioch can look the whole world in the face.”

“Do you wish farther to hear of a different dignity and commendation belonging to the city of Antioch? A really bad famine was approaching (Acts 11:28-30), and the inhabitants of Antioch determined, as far as each person had the means, to send relief to the Saints dwelling at Jerusalem. Notice this; charity in a time of famine! The times did not make them stingy; the expectation of the calamity did not make them backward in helping. When everyone is apt to be storing up what is not their own, then they distributed their own, not merely to those who were near, but also to those who were living afar off! Do you see here the faith towards God, and the love towards their neighbor?”

“Another dignity of the city of Antioch was displayed when certain men came down from Judaea to Antioch, defiling the doctrine preached, and introducing Jewish observances. The men of Antioch did not bear this novelty in silence. They came together, sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, and caused the Apostles to provide pure doctrines, cleared from all Jewish imperfection, distributed throughout all parts of the world! This is the dignity of Antioch! This is its precedence! This makes it a metropolis, not on earth, but in heaven. All other honors are corruptible, fleeting, perish with the present life, and often come to their end before the close of it! To me, a city that doesn’t have pious citizens is inferior to any village, and less noble than any cave.”

### **Barnabas and Paul Take Their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey**

“When Barnabas and Paul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry of delivering the alms, they also took with them John whose surname was Mark” (Acts 12:25). Thus, they brought John Mark to Antioch, who was to begin accompanying them on their missionary journey. John Mark had been one of the original Seventy, along with Mark the Evangelist (who wrote the Gospel of Mark) and Mark the cousin of Barnabas<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Statues, XVII, 10.

<sup>97</sup> See Appendix B for a summary of the lives of these three men named Mark



Barnabas and Paul's First Missionary Journey lasted from about 46 AD to 48 AD. We note that the Apostle Peter is not mentioned as being in Antioch when they started (Acts 13:1-3), but he had been there earlier. Herod Agrippa had tried to kill Peter to please the Jews in 44 AD, after he had killed James the son of Zebedee (Acts 12:1-3). Peter escaped, took the Evangelist Mark with him, and headed first to Caesarea (Acts 12:19) then to Antioch of Syria.

After staying in Antioch for a short time, Peter left for Rome with the Evangelist Mark in late 44 AD or early 45 AD. At this time, the people of Rome asked the Evangelist Mark to write down the things that Peter was preaching so that they could read it over and over. Mark did this, drafting what we now know as his Gospel. Peter read what Mark wrote, and asked that this be read regularly in the Churches. Thus, the Gospel Readings in the Churches began according to a set schedule – now called the Orthodox Lectionary. In 45 AD, Peter also sent the Evangelist Mark<sup>98</sup> to Alexandria to start the Church there.

During the time that Peter was in Antioch, Paul was there also, and the two became good friends for the rest of their lives. This was probably the time that Paul referred to when he criticized Peter for eating with the Jews only and not as he had done before the Jews arrived from Jerusalem (Galatians 2:11-13). Even Barnabas got carried away with what Peter did. More on this later!

After Peter left Antioch, “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Paul. As they ministered<sup>99</sup> to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them’. Then, having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away (Acts 13:1-3). We might emphasize that this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, as Paul's first journey starts, Barnabas, Paul and John Mark (of the Seventy) are traveling together while Rufus and Luke (also of the Seventy) are in Antioch. Not mentioned in Luke's account in Acts, the Apostle Titus of the Seventy was also traveling<sup>100</sup> with Barnabas and Paul on this 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. This makes sense, since later Paul wrote that Titus went up to Jerusalem with he and Barnabas as another witness to the events of the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey; but the Apostles did not compel Titus to be circumcised (Galatians 2:3). If Titus had not accompanied Barnabas and Paul, there would have been no point of him going up to Jerusalem and risking offense from the brothers there.

In Figure 2 the route of Barnabas' and Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey is shown. The numbers in red show the order of places visited. Not shown is the return trip back to Antioch

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<sup>98</sup> For more details about the Evangelist Mark's work in Egypt, see Mark Kern, [The Feast Day of the Evangelist Mark](#), April 25<sup>th</sup>, at the web site <http://www.stathanasius.org/>. The work of the Evangelist Mark was quite different than that of John Mark and Mark the cousin of Barnabas; they were working in different parts of the world most of their lives.

<sup>99</sup> The Greek word that is translated “ministered” is *leitourgouton*, which means to perform the Liturgy in the Church. Included then in their “ministering” is both worship and preaching.

<sup>100</sup> Holy Apostles Convent, [The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church](#), Holy Apostles Convent, 2009, August 25, p . 935.

where they retraced their steps, ordaining elders in each of the Churches that they had established.

Figure 2  
Map of Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>101</sup>



In Luke's account in Acts, we note that he used the third person (they) exclusively in the account of the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. Later on, in Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Luke switches to the first person (we) since he was then traveling with Paul. John Mark returned to Jerusalem after they arrived in Perga (in Pamphylia, Acts 13:13), apparently shrinking back from the long and dangerous journey up the mountains from Perga to Antioch in Pisidia. Later (Acts 15:37-39), this became a sore point where Paul didn't want to take John Mark along on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>102</sup> the details that Luke mentions. Barnabas was the leader acknowledged by everyone. This makes sense since Barnabas was 20-25 years older than Paul (see earlier discussion). They were ordained to confer the authority of God to their work.

“Note that Luke still mentions Barnabas first; Paul was not yet famous, he had not yet done any miracles<sup>103</sup>. What does ‘ministering’ mean? Preaching!

<sup>101</sup> © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available.

<sup>102</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, XXVII, v. 25.

What does ‘separate to Me Barnabas and Paul’ mean? For the work, for the Apostleship! See again by what persons he is ordained; by Lucius the Cyrenean and Manaen, or rather, by the Spirit. The fewer the persons, the more palpable the grace! Barnabas and Paul were ordained to the Apostleship, so as to preach with authority. Why then does Paul himself say that he is, ‘an Apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father?’ (Galatians 1:1) Because it was not man that called or brought him over to Christ; that is, that he was not sent by this man, but by the Spirit. Luke thus proceeds, ‘So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus’” (Acts 13:4).

Up to this point, the only (human) teacher that Paul had had was Ananias in Damascus for a short time and Barnabas for the year they spent teaching in Antioch. Since Paul didn’t have the benefit of spending three years with Jesus, he is still learning at this point, and those of the Seventy, who had spent three years with Jesus, were especially helpful. Paul had not performed any miracles yet, but those of the Seventy, which included Barnabas, had done so at least during the time that Jesus sent them out (Luke 10:1-11), and some of them subsequently.

Chrysostom noted<sup>104</sup> that there were prophets in Antioch also, and not just in Jerusalem. The Spirit saw that Barnabas and Paul were ready for this mission, and sent them out.

“If this wasn’t the Holy Spirit saying ‘Separate to Me’, what being would have dared to say this, if not of the same authority? But this is done, that they may not hide themselves together in Antioch. The Spirit saw that Barnabas and Paul had greater power, and were able to be sufficient for many. How did He speak to them? Probably by prophets (Acts 13:1); therefore, Luke says, that there were prophets in Antioch also. They were fasting and ministering, that we may learn that there was need of great sobriety. In Antioch Paul was ordained, where he preaches. Why did the Holy Spirit not say, ‘Separate for the Lord’, but, ‘For Me’? It shows that He is of one authority and power. Notice what a great thing fasting is! “So, they were sent forth by the Holy Spirit”; this shows that the Spirit did everything.”

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>105</sup> that Paul excelled the other Apostles chiefly in his immediate and implacable war with the Jews to overthrow the foundation of their error. His critics said that this had been entrusted to him by the Apostles, and thus by man. Yet the Apostleship was given to Barnabas and Paul by the Holy Spirit; it is only after this that Paul starts to work miracles. Barnabas had been given that already when he was called for the work of the Seventy.

“Just as Peter, Andrew, James and John did not require a second call, but immediately left their nets and all that they had, and followed Him, so Paul at his call pressed vigorously forward, waging as soon as he was baptized, an implacable war with the Jews. In this respect he chiefly excelled the other Apostles, as he says, ‘I labored more abundantly than they all’ (1 Corinthians

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<sup>103</sup> While Paul had not done any miracles yet, Barnabas had done some as one of the Seventy (Like 10:9), although Barnabas was not renowned for this as Stephen had been (Acts 6:8).

<sup>104</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXVII, Recapitulation.

<sup>105</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, I, vv. 1-3.

15:10). As he began his missionary journeys, however, he makes no such claim, but is content to be placed on a level with them. His great object was not to establish any superiority for himself, but to overthrow the foundation of the Jewish error. The not being 'from men' applies to everyone, for the Gospel's root and origin is divine; the not being 'through man' is peculiar to the Apostles; for He called them not by men's agency, but by His own."

"Why does Paul not speak of his calling rather than his apostolate, and say, 'Paul' called 'not by man?' Here lay the whole question; his critics said that the office of a teacher had been committed to him by men, namely by the Apostles, whom therefore he ought to obey. That it was not entrusted to him by men, Luke declares, 'As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul' (Acts 13:2). It is clear that the power of the Son and Spirit is one, for being commissioned by the Spirit, Paul says that he was commissioned by Christ."

As Barnabas and Paul began their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, they traveled very simply, just as Barnabas had done when he had traveled as part of the Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-11). That is, they traveled with no food, money bag, knapsack, and perhaps no sandals; they were entirely dependent on the kindness of those that they met along the way. In addition, both Barnabas and Paul worked at their trade to support themselves in the places that they went (1 Corinthians 9:6). Paul's trade was a tentmaker; we're not told what Barnabas' trade was.

### **Mission to Cyprus, Barnabas' Homeland**

"Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, Barnabas and Paul went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John Mark as *their* assistant. Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the Faith. Then Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, 'O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time'. Immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord" (Acts 13:4-12).

Why would they choose to go to Cyprus first? Granted it was Barnabas' homeland; but there is another reason. In the dispersion of the Christians after the stoning of Stephen, "Those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only" (Acts 11:19-20). Barnabas had been sent by the Church in Jerusalem to help the Church in Antioch, which he did. The Christians in Phoenicia had been taken care of by the Apostles in Jerusalem following the conversion of the Samaritans by Deacon Philip (Acts 8:5-12). But no one had yet gone to help out the Christians on the island of Cyprus. Cyprus was not that far from Antioch, so it was

natural for Barnabas to extend his commission from Jerusalem to the island of Cyprus, even though his mission had been only to go as far as Antioch (Acts 11:22).

When Barnabas, Paul and John Mark were on the Island of Cyprus, the homeland of Barnabas, Aristobulus, Barnabas' brother, (and also Peter's father-in-law) was probably there also. Barnabas had a very strong desire for bringing his countrymen to the Lord and went back to Cyprus later with John Mark. According to tradition, Barnabas spent most of the rest of his life on Cyprus.

We note that the blinding of the sorcerer Elymas was the first miracle recorded as being done by the Apostle Paul. The impact was that the Apostle Paul was starting to gain a more leading role in the Mission that he and Barnabas started.

Why didn't Barnabas and Paul stay longer on Cyprus, since it was Barnabas' homeland? Cyprus is fairly close to Antioch of Syria, where Barnabas and Paul had sailed from. John Chrysostom stated<sup>106</sup> that it was relatively easy for Cyprus to get teachers to come over from Antioch, provided that the roadblock, Elymas bothering the proconsul, was removed. So, they moved on to the coast of Asia Minor where there was a greater need – at the direction of the Holy Spirit.

### **John Mark Abandons His Apostleship in Pamphylia**

John Mark had been called as one of the Seventy and had worked miracles on that mission. Yet after leaving Cyprus and coming to the coast of Asia Minor, he left Barnabas and Paul and returned to Jerusalem. As a result of this, Paul refused to take him along on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey and Barnabas and Paul split up (Acts 15:36-39).

Why would John Mark abandon them? Perhaps he didn't want to go beyond his homeland (Cyprus). Since the Apostles traveled very light: no bag, no food, no money, no change of clothes (Mark 6:8-9), this was a difficult journey traveling by foot, especially when they were climbing 5500 feet up a mountain to get to the next town that they stopped at.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>107</sup> that the work of an apostle is a very dignified calling, and he doesn't take the honor to himself. He who shrinks from it when offered to him gets blame of a different kind. When John Mark abandoned his Apostleship in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13), Barnabas, being a kind man, sought an opportunity to bring him back to the work.

“Great and admirable is the dignity of an Apostle, and we find Paul constantly listing the causes of it, not as if he took the honor to himself, but as entrusted with it, and being under the necessity of so doing. He speaks of himself as ‘called’, and that ‘by the will of God’, and elsewhere, ‘a necessity is laid upon me’ (1 Corinthians 9:16). He says, ‘for this I was separated’; by these expressions, all idea of arrogance and ambition is removed. Just as he deserves the severest blame, who intrudes into an office which is not given him of God, so he who refuses and shrinks from it when offered to him, incurs blame of another

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<sup>106</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXVIII, Recapitulation.

<sup>107</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Timothy, I, v. 1.

kind, that of rebellion and disobedience. Therefore, Paul expresses himself, ‘Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God’ (1 Timothy 1:1). He does not say here, ‘Paul called’, but ‘by commandment’. He begins in this manner, that Timothy may not feel any human infirmity from supposing that Paul addresses him on the same terms as his disciples. Where is this commandment given? ‘The Spirit said, Separate to Me Barnabas and Paul’ (Acts 13:2). Everywhere in his writings Paul adds the name of Apostle, to instruct his hearers not to consider the doctrines he delivered as proceeding from man. For an Apostle can say nothing of his own, and by calling himself an Apostle, he at once refers his hearers to Him that sent him.”

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>108</sup> Paul’s words to Timothy, where Paul was trying to persuade Timothy not to abandon his apostleship. He was ordained by prophecy and the Holy Spirit; this was not a human vote. Similarly, in the case of John Mark; Barnabas felt that he had to bring John Mark back.

“If we neglect even what is clearly evident, how will God reveal to us what is unseen? ‘If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit the true riches to your trust?’ (Luke 16:11) Timothy was ordained ‘by prophecy’ (1 Timothy 1:1); what does this mean? By the Holy Spirit! Prophecy is not only the telling of things future, but also of the present. It was by prophecy that Saul was discovered ‘hidden among the equipment’ (1 Samuel 10:17-24). God reveals things to the righteous. So it was said by prophecy, ‘Separate to Me Barnabas and Paul’ (Acts 13:2). In this way Timothy also was chosen, concerning whom he speaks of prophecies in the plural; when Paul ordained him, he said, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy’ (1 Timothy 4:14). Therefore, to elevate him, and prepare him to be sober and watchful, Paul reminds him by whom he was chosen and ordained. It is as if Paul had said, ‘God has chosen you. He gave you your commission, you were not ordained by human vote. Do not therefore abuse or bring into disgrace the appointment of God.”

### **The Church of Antioch in Pisidia**

Sailing from Cyprus to the mainland, Barnabas, Paul, Titus and John Mark arrived at Attalia and hiked inland about 10 miles (as the crow flies) to Perga in Pamphylia. This was not too much of a hike, since Perga is only 175 feet above sea level. Perga was built inland, however, to frustrate raids by pirates operating along the shore.

John Mark left to return to Jerusalem shortly after they arrived in Perga, and Barnabas and Paul didn’t stay long in Perga either, moving on across the 4500-foot-peak mountains and climbing from there to Antioch of Pisidia at an elevation of 5500 feet, about 100 miles North of Perga. On the Sabbath, they went into the local synagogue and sat down. After the Readings from the Law and the Prophets as prescribed for that day, the synagogue rulers asked if Barnabas or Paul had a word of encouragement for the people. Paul stood up and began to speak. As Paul

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<sup>108</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Timothy, v, 18.

spoke, he quoted from the Scriptures, which may have been part of the Readings for that day. After the synagogue service,

“The Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. When the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth’. Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout the entire region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women; the chief men of the city raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:42-52).

When Barnabas first came to Antioch of Syria, he encouraged everyone to continue in the Grace of God. “When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:23-24).

Now here in Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas did the same thing, since many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas out of the synagogue. They “persuaded them to continue in the grace of God” (Acts 13:43). This was coming right from Barnabas’ heart as the “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>109</sup> just as the “scattering” of the saints (Acts 8:4) produced a good result in spreading the Gospel, so did the contentious behavior here. The Jews of Antioch of Pisidia simply judged themselves unworthy; the Apostles had no choice but to go elsewhere. We note that now Paul is the chief speaker, not Barnabas.

“Do you observe the eagerness; how great it is? They ‘followed’ them! Why did Paul and Barnabas not baptize them immediately? It was not the proper time: there was need to persuade them in order to assure their steadfastness.”

“The next Sabbath when the whole city turned out – this hadn’t happened before with the synagogue rulers – the Jews got envious and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul.”

“By the contentious behavior of the Jews, the preaching was extended, and the Apostles gave themselves the more to the Gentiles, having freed themselves of all blame with their own people at Jerusalem. By their ‘envy’ the Jews brought

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<sup>109</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXX, v. 43.

about great things, other than what they looked for; namely, the Apostles spoke out boldly, and came to the Gentiles! By saying ‘To you first’, Paul showed that to the Jews also it was their duty to preach, and in saying ‘Necessary’, he showed that it was necessary to preach to the Gentiles also.”

“Paul does not say, ‘You are unworthy’, but ‘have judged yourselves unworthy’; therefore, we turn to the Gentiles. So, has the Lord commanded us, I have sent you to be a light of the Gentiles that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47).

“Notice what the Jews accomplished by their opposition the preaching, and to what dishonor they brought these ‘honorable women’. Here the Apostles used that awesome sign, ‘shaking off the dust from their feet’ (Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11). They did it on no light ground, but because they were driven away by them. This was no hurt to the disciples; on the contrary, they continued all the more in the word; for the suffering of the teacher does not check his boldness, but makes the disciple more courageous.”

### **The Church of Iconium in Galatia**

Iconium is about 75 miles East of Antioch in Pisidia, and is lower in elevation, about 4000 feet. But one has to climb up from Antioch in Pisidia at 5500 feet over a 6000-foot-peak mountain range to get there. After their arrival at Iconium:

“It happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Therefore, they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the Apostles. And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. And they were preaching the gospel there” (Acts 14:1-7).

We note from this account that Paul was the primary speaker in Antioch in Pisidia, but here in Iconium, Barnabas spoke also. No signs and wonders were recorded as being done in Antioch in Pisidia, but in Iconium many signs and wonders were performed by both Barnabas and Paul. At this point, Barnabas was still the leader, but Paul was taking on more responsibility for the work.

During the “long time” that Barnabas and Paul stayed in Iconium, there were two notable people that became prominent later because of Barnabas and Paul’s visit: Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16, 4:19) and Thekla. Onesiphorus was one of the original members of the Seventy<sup>110</sup>, and Barnabas and Paul stayed in his house for at least part of the time they were there during this visit and on Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>111</sup>. Thekla was a young lady that was

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<sup>110</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>111</sup> Holy Apostles Convent, *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, Holy Apostles Convent, 2002, September 24, pp. 589-593.



converted through the preaching of Paul and she went on to become one of the famous Unmercenary Healers of the Orthodox Church<sup>112</sup>.

Following her baptism, Thekla desired to have nothing to do with her fiancé's and her family's idolatry and began following Paul for a short time. Soon she was condemned to be burned alive in the amphitheater. Paul and Onesiphorus fasted and prayed for several days and a sudden electrical storm with rain and hail erupted in the theater and extinguished the fire. Thekla walked home unharmed.

Later when Thekla returned to Antioch with Paul, the chief magistrate took a liking to her. She refused his advances and was condemned to the arena to be eaten by lions and bears. However, some lionesses licked her feet and defended her while the other animals fought among themselves. Unable to kill her, they released her.

Eventually, she went off to live a simple life of prayer and fasting in a cave near Seleucia (northwest of Antioch). After living there for about 70 years, she was martyred by the local physicians who were seeing all their patients healed by Thekla. Thekla came to be called "Equal to the Apostles" as a result of her ministry<sup>113</sup>.

Also traveling with Paul<sup>114</sup> as he passed through Iconium were Demas and Hermogenes, both members of the original Seventy Apostles, but who both later apostatized<sup>115</sup>. When Paul first arrived, Onesiphorus greeted him warmly, but he didn't greet Demas or Hermogenes at all, and they were offended. Demas and Hermogenes then secretly offered advice to Thekla's family on how to trap Thekla into doing what they wanted, just as Judas did to Christ. Besides the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey here, Demas was also with Paul on the 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey when Paul was under house-arrest in Rome (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24) and on the 5<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey just before Paul was executed (2 Timothy 4:10). Details are scarce on whether Demas was with Paul on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, or whether Paul left him in Macedonia with Luke<sup>116</sup>.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>117</sup> that the Jews in Iconium again extended the preaching against their will, this time with the help from the Gentiles.

"See how far they were from becoming more timid! It is likely they spoke to Greeks also, so the Jews began stirring up the Gentiles too, as not being enough by themselves. The Apostles didn't leave since they were not driven away, only attacked. Because of the long time that they continued speaking boldly in the

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<sup>112</sup> For more information on the Unmercenary Healers, see Mark Kern, The Unmercenary Healers, St. Athanasius Press, 2001, September 24.

<sup>113</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 24. <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, September 24.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, September 24.

<sup>114</sup> Holy Apostles Convent, The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Holy Apostles Convent, 2002, September 24, pp. 589-593.

<sup>115</sup> For more information on those of the Seventy who apostatized and why they did so, see the Study: Mark Kern, Simon Magus Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004, pp. 58-59.

<sup>116</sup> See the Section titled, "The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi" for more details.

<sup>117</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXX, v. 1.

Lord, signs and wonders were granted to be done by their hands (Acts 14:3). It was no small matter that the multitude of the city was divided; one part supported the Jews, and one part supported the Apostles. This was what the Lord said, 'I am not come to bring peace, but a sword' (Matthew 10:34). Again, as if the Jews purposely wished to extend the preaching after it was increased, they once more did this."

### **The Churches of Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia of Galatia**

Lystra is about 20 miles Southwest of Iconium and at about the same elevation (4000 feet) with no major mountains to cross. Derbe is about 60 miles Southeast of Iconium, about 70 miles East of Lystra and at about 3500 feet elevation, with no mountain ranges to cross. After their arrival in Lystra, an unusual event occurred. Because the miracles were becoming more prominent, the unknowing pagans began to treat Barnabas and Paul as gods. This occurred as follows:

"In Lystra, a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man heard Paul speaking. Observing him intently, and seeing that he had faith to be healed, Paul said with a loud voice, 'Stand up straight on your feet!' And he leaped and walked. Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, 'The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!' And Barnabas they called Zeus<sup>118</sup>, and Paul, Hermes<sup>119</sup>, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes" (Acts 14:8-13).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>120</sup> the consequences if Barnabas and Paul had not acted quickly to defuse the desire of the pagans to offer sacrifice to them. It would have been more difficult for the pagans to distinguish them from the Greek gods.

"When something needs to be done, let us not decline it. Even after all this Barnabas and Paul hardly persuaded them; if they had not acted, what might have been the consequence? If they had not done thus, they would have been thought to make only a show of humility, and to be all the more desirous of the honor. Observe their language, how in rebuking, it is moderated, both full of wonder and of rebuke. This above all it was that hindered them, the saying, 'Preaching to you to turn from these useless things to the living God' (Acts 14:15). Note how they not only subvert the false, but teach the true, saying nothing about things invisible. 'Who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all

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<sup>118</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeus>. Zeus was the Father of gods and men who ruled the Olympians of [Mount Olympus](#) as a father ruled the family. He was the [god of sky](#) and [thunder](#) in [Greek mythology](#). This implies that Barnabas' role was as a fatherly image or leader, with a dignified appearance. This is a natural association for Barnabas, since he was 15 to 20 years older than Paul. If Barnabas died in 62 AD at age 76 according to <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=101691>, he had to be about that much older than Paul.

<sup>119</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermes>. Hermes is the great messenger of the gods in [Greek mythology](#) Hermes was born on [Mount Cyllene](#) in Arcadia and is an [Olympian god](#). This implies that Paul's role was seen as communicating to the people what Barnabas wanted him to.

<sup>120</sup> John Chrysostom, [Commentary on Acts](#), XXXI, Recapitulation.

things that are in them. Who in bygone generations' (Acts 14:15-16). He names as witnesses even the years in their courses.”

With much effort Barnabas and Paul barely restrained the pagans from offering sacrifice to them in Lystra. Barnabas and Paul had already gotten their point across, when they had to leave Lystra on short notice. Paul barely escaped death by stoning when Jews came from Antioch and Iconium; but the testimony of the man who was healed remained behind as a witness that Paul's message needed serious consideration.

“Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe” (Acts 14:19-20).

Paul stated that he was “untrained in speech, but not in knowledge” (2 Corinthians 11:6). How is it then that he appeared as a spokesman in Lystra and the pagans thought that he was the Greek god Hermes? John Chrysostom stated<sup>121</sup> that the opinion that Barnabas and Paul were gods came from their miracles; but the notion that Paul was Hermes did not arise from this, but was a consequence of his speech. Paul may not have been a good orator, but he was very knowledgeable in the Scriptures; this knowledge allowed him to master his opponents to the point that they wanted to kill him. It was this knowledge in his speech that came across in Lystra.

“Paul was not as unskilled, as some count him to be. The unskilled person in men's estimation is not only one who is unpracticed in the tricks of oratory, but also the man who is incapable of contending for the defense of the right faith, and they are right. But Paul did not say that he was unskilled in both these respects, but in the first only.”

“How was it, tell me, that he confounded the Jews in Damascus (Acts 9:22), though he had not yet begun to work miracles? How was it that he wrestled with the Hellenists and overwhelmed them so much that they tried to kill him? (Acts 9:29) Why was he sent to Tarsus? (Acts 9:30) Was it not because he was so strong in the Word, and brought his adversaries to such a point that they were unable to stop their defeat, and were provoked to seek his life? Those who contended with him were not overpowered by the force of public opinion concerning him. At this time he conquered by means of argument only. How was it that he disputed successfully in Antioch with those who tried to push circumcision? (Acts 15:1-2) Why did Dionysius of Athens follow Paul, he and his wife Damaris? (Acts 17:34) How do we find Paul employed at Thessalonica and Corinth, in Ephesus and in Rome? Did he not spend whole nights and days in interpreting the Scriptures in their order? (Acts 20:7-8) He also disputed with the Epicureans and Stoics” (Acts 17:18-32).

“Paul's sermons and disputations were admired by all who heard them. How is it that up and down the world he is so much on everyone's tongue? Is it not from the power of his epistles? (2 Peter 3:15-16) Not only to the faithful of today, but from his time forward, he has been and will continue to be profitable so

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<sup>121</sup> John Chrysostom, Treatise Concerning the Christian Priesthood, IV, 6-7.

as long as the human race shall last. His writings fortify all the Churches of the world, and he brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, casting down imaginations, and every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God. All this he does by those epistles which he has left to us full of wonders and of Divine wisdom. His writings are not only useful to us for the overthrow of false doctrine and the confirmation of the true, but they help not a little towards living a good life. Such are the medicines and the effects left us by this so-called unskillful man; they know them and their power best that constantly use them. From all this it is evident that Paul had given himself to the study of the Scriptures with great diligence and zeal.”

As the Light increased with more prominent miracles, the darkness matched it. While the Jews from neighboring cities were on a witch-hunt, for Paul especially, the believers who were observing all this were being enlightened regarding what was really happening. Taking all this in at this time was the future Apostle Timothy, who became prominent himself later when Paul returned to this region (Acts 16:1-3). Also, Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20:4) was involved. Timothy was later added to the ranks of the Seventy Apostles to replace some who apostatized<sup>122</sup>, just like Matthias was added to the ranks of the Twelve Apostles to replace Judas. This was why Gaius of Derbe needed to be baptized in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>123</sup> that God so ordered the affliction of the Apostles so that the people would not think of them as gods. This is how the Greek gods came to be popular; God didn't want His followers to fall into that same trap.

“When Peter and John had restored the lame man, in order to restrain the people, Peter said, ‘Why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?’ (Acts 3:12) Again at Lystra, the people were not only filled with astonishment, but led out bulls, after crowning them with garlands, to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. Observe the malice of the demons. By the same persons through whom the Lord was at work, to purge out ungodliness from the world, by the same did that enemy try to introduce it, persuading them to take men for gods. This was what our enemy had done in former times. This is especially what introduced the principle and root of idolatry. Many after having had success in wars, set up trophies, built cities, and did other benefits to the people of those times; as a result, they came to be thought of as gods by the multitude, and were honored with temples and altars. The whole catalogue of the Grecian gods is made up of such men. In order that this may not be done towards the Saints, God permitted them constantly to be banished, scourged, and fall into diseases. By the abundance of bodily weakness, God might convince those who observed, both that they were men who did such wonders and that they contributed nothing of their own power. It was mere grace that did all these miracles through them. If the pagans regarded as gods, men who had done simple things, much more would they have thought the Apostles to be such, when they performed miracles that no one had ever seen or heard of. If when they were scourged, thrown down cliffs, imprisoned, banished, and placed

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<sup>122</sup> For more information on those of the Seventy who apostatized and why they did so, see the Study: Mark Kern, Simon Magus Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004, pp. 58-59.

<sup>123</sup> John Chrysostom, Concerning the Statues, I, 17.

in peril every day, there were some who still wanted to treat them as gods, how much rather would they have been thus regarded, had they endured nothing which belongs to human nature.”

Chrysostom also noted<sup>124</sup> the stark contrast between the Jews and the Gentiles: the Gentiles thought the Apostles were gods; the Jews thought they were evildoers. This is a truly great attitude of the Apostles: to ascribe everything to God and not to their ability or gift.

“Observe both the simplicity of the Gentiles, and the malignity of the Jews. By their actions the Gentiles showed that they were worthy to hear; they honored them from the miracle only. The Gentiles honored them as gods; the Jews persecuted them as pestilent fellows. The Gentiles not only took no offense at the preaching, but said, ‘The gods, in the likeness of men, are come down to us’. But the Jews were offended! Here was a new sort of trial, from immoderate zeal, and no small one; from this is shown the virtue of the Apostles, and how on all occasions they ascribe everything to God. Let us imitate them; let us think nothing our own, seeing even faith itself is not our own, but more God’s than ours. ‘For by grace you are saved through faith; and this is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God’ (Ephesians 2:8). Then let us not think great things of ourselves, nor be puffed up, being as we are, men, dust and ashes, smoke and shadow.”

Chrysostom further noted<sup>125</sup> the extremity of the evil of the Jews versus the humility of the Apostles. This presented a day-versus-night contrast in the minds of all those who were looking on.

“The Jews coming from Antioch and Iconium (Acts 14:20) were indeed children of the devil; not in their own cities only, but also beyond them, they did these things. They as much made it their study to make an end of the preaching, as the Apostles were in earnest to establish it! The Gentiles regarded Barnabas and Paul as gods (Acts 14:11-15), but the Jews ‘dragged’ Paul out of the city, supposing he was dead. The Jews persuaded the multitude since it is not likely that everyone revered them. In the same city in which they received this reverence, they were treated really badly. This also profited those looking on. ‘Lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me’ (2 Corinthians 12:6). Here is fulfilled that saying, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Corinthians 12:9). This humility is greater than the raising of the lame man! Note Paul’s zeal; note how fervent he is, how set on fire! He returned to the city itself again; this is proof that he retired only because he had already sown the Word, and because it was not right to inflame the wrath of the Jews.”

This occurred in c. 47 AD, and Timothy and Gaius were there witnessing it all. About 20 years later, when Timothy was going through similar things, but now as an Apostle on his own, Paul wrote to Timothy:

“You have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me

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<sup>124</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXX, v. 6.

<sup>125</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXI, v. 18.

at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra -- what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all, the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:10-12)

### **Ordaining Elders and the Report Back to Antioch of Syria**

“When Barnabas and Paul had preached the Gospel in Derbe and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the Faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations<sup>126</sup> enter the kingdom of God’. So, when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. After they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the Church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. So they stayed there a long time with the disciples” (Acts 14:21-28).

One of the elders (that is, presbyters) that Barnabas and Paul ordained was Sosipater<sup>127</sup>, Paul’s kinsman (Romans 16:21), in Iconium. Sosipater, originally from Berea (Acts 20:4), served well in Iconium and was later replaced by Tertius<sup>128</sup>, also one of the Seventy, who wrote down Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:22). Sosipater and Tertius were both with Paul in Corinth in c. 55 AD when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:21-22). Sosipater later accompanied Paul to Asia (Acts 20:4) in c. 57 AD, and Tertius was probably in Iconium by that time, taking over as Bishop for Sosipater.

Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20:4), also one of the Seventy, was probably the first elder appointed by Barnabas and Paul for Derbe. Timothy, who lived in Lystra, was probably the first elder appointed by Barnabas and Paul for Lystra (2 Timothy 3:11). Sosipater later went on his own missionary journey to establish the Church on the Island of Corfu, along with the Apostle of the Seventy, Jason<sup>129</sup>. Timothy was later ordained Bishop of Ephesus<sup>130</sup> and Gaius followed

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<sup>126</sup> The Church Fathers have had a great deal to say about this. For a synopsis, see the Study Mark Kern, The Evangelist Mark, St Athanasius Press, 2012, pp. 61-100.

<sup>127</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10, April 28. See: [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30, November 10](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030,%20November%2010). The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>128</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10, October 30. [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30, November 10](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030,%20November%2010).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>129</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28. [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 28](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%2028).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 29.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>130</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, January 22.

Timothy as Bishop of Ephesus after Timothy was martyred<sup>131</sup>. We have no record who Barnabas and Paul ordained as Elder of the Church in Antioch of Pisidia.

When Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch, Evodius was the Bishop of Antioch at the time. A little earlier Evodius had coined the term “Christians” to refer to the followers of Christ. Evodius also wrote some books (now lost) on the life of the Virgin Mary. Since Evodius had been involved as Bishop in sending off Barnabas and Paul, it was common courtesy that Barnabas and Paul report back to him what they had accomplished. Evodius may have sent others back to the new Churches Barnabas and Paul had started to help out.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>132</sup> that the primary issue on Barnabas and Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey was being counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Christ. Miracles were secondary, and the saints never rejoice in having performed miracles.

“Barnabas and Paul said, ‘We must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of God’ (Acts 14:22). This they said, this they showed. This was done on purpose, not only by the Apostles, but by their disciples also, that they may learn from the very outset both the might of the preaching, and that they must themselves also suffer such things. They need to stand nobly, not idly gaping for the miracles, but much readier for the trials. Therefore, Paul himself said, ‘Having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me’ (Philippians 1:30). Persecutions succeeded persecutions: wars, fighting, stoning. These things, not less than the miracles, both made them more illustrious, and prepared for them a greater rejoicing. The Scripture nowhere says that they returned rejoicing because they had done miracles, but it does say that they rejoiced that ‘they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name’ (Acts 5:41). They were taught this by Christ, ‘Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you’ (Luke 10:20). The joy indeed is this, to suffer anything for Christ’s sake. What sort of cheering is it to say, ‘through much tribulation’? How did they persuade them by telling them at the outset of tribulations? Then also another consolation! ‘When they had appointed elders in every Church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed’” (Acts 14:23).

Chrysostom also noted<sup>133</sup> that something else was happening just as Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch of Syria: the Judaizers were coming to Antioch to try to force circumcision. This needed to take place to clarify what the Holy Spirit had been leading Barnabas and Paul to do.

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<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for January 22.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, January 22.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>131</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for November 5.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>132</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXI, v. 15.

<sup>133</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXI, v. 26.

“Why do Barnabas and Paul come back to Antioch? To report what had taken place among the Gentiles. Besides, there was a great purpose of Providence involved; they needed to preach with boldness to the Gentiles in the future. They came therefore, reporting these things that the elders in Antioch may be able to know what happened. It is providentially ordered that just then those, who forbade keeping company with the Gentiles (Acts 15:1), came in order that from Jerusalem they might obtain great encouragement, and so go their ways with boldness. Besides, it shows that in their temperament there was nothing of self-will. They came showing their boldness; they had preached to the Gentiles without the authority of those at Jerusalem, and the Gentiles obeyed; now they refer the matter to Jerusalem. They were not made arrogant, as having achieved so great successes. It says, ‘They commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed’ (Acts 14:23). And yet the Spirit had said, ‘Separate to Me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2).

**Table 1**  
**Summary of the Seventy Apostles Involved on Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Native To</b> | <b>Journey</b> | <b>Later Bishop of</b> | <b>Comments</b>              |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Aristobulus | Cyprus           | 1, 2, 3        | Sent to Britain        | Met at Cyprus                |
| Barnabas    | Cyprus           | 1              | Roving Apostle         | Leader of Group              |
| Gaius       | Derbe            | 1, 2, 3        | Ephesus after Timothy  | Presbyter in Derbe           |
| John Mark   |                  | 1              | Byblos                 | Began journey; left at Perga |
| Luke        | Antioch          | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  | Roving Apostle         | In Antioch at sendoff        |
| Onesiphorus | Iconium          | 1, 2, 3, 5     | Colophon near Ephesus  | Housed Paul in Iconium       |
| Rufus       | Cyrene           | 1, 2, 3        | Thebes in Greece       | In Antioch at sendoff        |
| Sosipater   | Berea            | 1, 2, 3        | Iconium, Corfu         | Presbyter in Iconium         |
| Thekla      |                  | 1              | Unmercenary Healer     | Met at Iconium               |
| Timothy     | Lystra           | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  | Ephesus                | Presbyter in Lystra          |
| Titus       | Crete            | 1, 2, 3, 5     | Crete                  | Accompanied Paul             |

What is it that so animated and angered the Jews on Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey? Their anger is neither understandable nor logical. Here are their countrymen, who are providing a huge benefit to their community, but they are in an uncontrollable rage over it. Their answer to this dilemma has to do with the political party of the Zealots, for whom circumcision was Jewish national identity, and Paul was saying that their national identity was unnecessary. This conflict with the Zealots and with the Zealot influence was to be a huge issue for the rest of Paul’s life and will be covered in much greater detail as we proceed.

### **Barnabas and Paul at the Council of Jerusalem**

When the question arose whether those converted from the Gentiles should accept circumcision, Barnabas and Paul went to Jerusalem. There they were warmly received by the Apostles and elders. The preachers related “what God had wrought with them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27).



“However certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’. Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the Apostles and elders, about this question. So, being sent on their way by the Church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the Church, the Apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses’. Now the Apostles and elders came together to consider this matter” (Acts 15:1-6).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>134</sup> how twisted the situation was when Barnabas and Paul returned from their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. Some thought that people couldn’t be saved without circumcision, when the opposite was the case.

“The Apostles from Antioch, as being taught of God, spoke to everyone indifferently; this moved to jealousy those of the Jews who had believed. They did not merely speak of circumcision, but they said, ‘You cannot even be saved’. Whereas the opposite was the case, that receiving circumcision they could not be saved (Galatians 5:2-3). Note how closely the trials follow each other, from within, from without! It is well ordered too, that this happens when Paul is present, that he may answer them. ‘When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem to the Apostles and elders about this question’” (Acts 15:2).

Why was the issue of circumcision so important? This goes back to the Covenant that God had made with Abraham, where God had instituted a means of identifying His people from all the other nations of the earth. God had said to Abraham,

“‘As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant’” (Genesis 17:9-12).

Chrysostom looked<sup>135</sup> carefully at Peter’s words at the Council in Jerusalem; his words were aimed more at teaching the Jewish believers to abandon the details of the Mosaic Law than to apologize for the Gentiles. The real issue is faith: the Gentiles have it; the Judaizers don’t.

“Everywhere Peter puts the Gentiles on a thorough equality. ‘And made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith’ (Acts 15:9). From faith alone, they obtained the same gifts. This is also meant as a lesson to

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<sup>134</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXII, v. 1.

<sup>135</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXII, v. 8.

those objectors; this is able to teach them that faith only is needed, not works or circumcision. They do not say all this only by way of apology for the Gentiles, but to teach the Jewish believers also to abandon the Law. However, at present this is not said. ‘Now therefore why do you tempt God, to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples?’ (Acts 15:10) What does he mean, ‘Tempt God?’ As if He had no power to save by faith! Consequently, this bringing in the Law proceeds from a lack of faith. Then Peter shows that they themselves were not benefited by it, and he turns the whole stress of his speech against the Law, not against the Judaizers, and so cuts short their accusation: ‘which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved, in the same manner as they’ (Acts 15:10-11). These are powerful words! The same thing that Paul says, Peter says here. ‘If Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God’ (Romans 4:2). Do you perceive that all this is more a lesson for the Jews than an apology for the Gentiles?”

Chrysostom also noted<sup>136</sup> that the problem with those men that came down from Judea to Antioch teaching the necessity for circumcision was a lust for power<sup>137</sup>.

“Therefore, there came down certain men laboring under this disease of the love of power, and wishing to have those of the Gentiles attached to them. Though Paul was educated in the Law, he was not thus affected. ‘Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them’ (Acts 15:2). When Paul returned from Jerusalem, the doctrine also became more exact. For if they at Jerusalem enjoin no such thing, much more these men from Judea have no right to do so. Note that Barnabas and Paul ‘caused great joy to all the brethren as they proceeded to Jerusalem’ (Acts 15:3). Note also, as many as do not have a love of power, rejoiced in their believing (Galatians 6:12-13). It was no ambitious feeling that prompted their testimony about their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, neither was it for display, but in justification of the preaching to the Gentiles. They said nothing of what had happened to the Jews on their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. ‘But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up’ (Acts 15:4-5). Even if these Pharisees with a love of power did bring over the Gentiles to their side, they learned that the Apostles in Jerusalem can’t just overlook it.”

Chrysostom further noted<sup>138</sup> how mild and gentle the Apostles were even in the face of rank insubordination on the part of the believing Pharisees. Barnabas and Paul don’t accuse them either, but just speak of the facts as they happened, and let the facts speak for themselves.

“As Peter spoke at the Council of Jerusalem, he said, ‘Why do you tempt God?’ He has become the God of the Gentiles; this was the tempting of God: denying that He is could save anyone apart from the Law. Notice what Peter does. He shows that those clinging to the Mosaic Law are in danger. What the Law could not do, faith had power to do. ‘We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved even as they’ (Galatians 2:16). But if faith falls

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<sup>136</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXII, Recapitulation.

<sup>137</sup> As we will see later, it is the lust for power by the political faction of the Zealots that is driving this adherence to circumcision as a way of focusing on Jewish national identity against the Romans.

<sup>138</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXII, Recapitulation.

away, notice that they themselves are headed for destruction. Peter did not say, 'Why do you disbelieve?' which was harsher, but, 'Why do you tempt God'. Great impudence is this of the Pharisees; even after faith they set up the Law as greater than faith, and will not obey the Apostles. But notice the Apostles, how mildly they speak, and not in the tone of authority; such words are amiable, and more apt to fix themselves in the mind. Observe, it is nowhere a display of words, but demonstration by facts, by the Spirit. Though they have such proofs, yet they still speak gently. Notice also that Barnabas and Paul do not come accusing those causing the trouble at Antioch, but 'declaring all things that God had done with them' (Acts 15:4). But again, these men seize upon the occasion to champion their own cause. 'But there rose up' etc. (Acts 15:5). Such were the pains they took in their love of power; it was not with the knowledge of the Apostles that Paul and Barnabas were blamed. But still Barnabas and Paul brought forward none of these charges. However, when the Apostles had proved the matter, then they wrote in stronger terms. For gentleness is everywhere a great good; gentleness, I say, not stupid indifference; gentleness, not flattery; for between these there is a vast difference."

Clement of Alexandria quoted<sup>139</sup> Barnabas as encouraging the fear of God as being the beginning of wisdom. This was the culture of the Church in Jerusalem, where everyone obeyed the Mosaic Law, but in a good way.

"Certain heresies appealed to Paul to say that the Law is not good, 'For by the Law is the knowledge of sin?' (Romans 3:20) To whom we say, 'The Law did not cause, but showed sin'. Commanding what is to be done, it reprehended what ought not to be done. It is the part of the good to teach what is beneficial, and to point out what is harmful; to counsel the practice of the one, and to command to shun the other. Paul, whom they do not comprehend, said that by the Law the knowledge of sin was made clear, not that it derived its existence from the Law. How can the Law not be good, which is given as the instructor until Christ (Galatians 3:24), for the attainment of the perfection which is by Christ? He says, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but in his repentance' (Ezekiel 33:11, 18:23, 32). Now the commandment works repentance; inasmuch as it deters from what ought not to be done, and commands good deeds. 'A wise man in heart will receive the Commandments' (Proverbs 10:8). Barnabas the Apostle said<sup>140</sup>, 'Woe to those who are wise in their own conceit, clever in their own eyes' (Isaiah 5:21 LXX), then added, 'Let us be spiritually minded; let us be a perfect temple to God. As much as in us lies, let us meditate upon the fear of God, and let us keep His commandments, that we may rejoice in His ordinances'. Consequently 'the fear of God' is divinely said to be the beginning of wisdom."

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<sup>139</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, II, 7. Early writers such as Clement, Origen et al, ascribed the Epistle of Barnabas (written anonymously) to the Apostle Barnabas, even though few do so today. Chapter 16 seems to refer to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, even though this occurred after the traditional death of the Apostle Barnabas in 62 AD. Inclusion here of early statements attributed to the Apostle Barnabas is given to allow the early writers to speak in their own words. It may be that the Apostle Barnabas wrote these words but someone later added to and published them after the destruction of Jerusalem.

<sup>140</sup> Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 4.

## The Issues in Jerusalem, 48 AD

The real issues in Jerusalem had strong political overtones. In Jerusalem at that time was a small, but very vocal, group of zealots bent on expelling Roman rule. One of the Twelve Apostles, Simon the Zealot, was part of this group at one time, and Judas Iscariot may have been involved also. According to Josephus, the political party of the Zealots was ultimately responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem<sup>141</sup> as a result of their scheming and conspiring to achieve their goals. To them, circumcision represented Jewish national identity. They didn't necessarily keep all the requirements of the Law, but they were very vocal about those aspects of the Law that spoke to their political agenda<sup>142</sup>.

This ideology spilled over to the Christians. The conflict among the Christians<sup>143</sup> was between a small minority of Jewish Christian Zealots, who were zealous about keeping the Law (Acts 21:20) and a large majority of Jewish Christians with a weak faith, who also kept the Law, but were not involved with the political agenda of the Zealots. They knew Christ after the flesh, as the Jewish Messiah, and were very sincere about that. If Paul (and James) handled this situation wrong and offended either group, many people might revert back to Judaism and be lost in the destruction coming to Jerusalem in a few years.

Tertullian stated<sup>144</sup> that circumcision was the only issue involved when Paul wrote to the Galatians. To the Jews, "circumcision" had their national identity associated with it, since this was part of the Covenant God made with Abraham, and the Law required anyone who rejected circumcision to be cut off from Israel (Genesis 17:9-14). Paul's opponents still believed in God, but they perverted the Gospel by retaining an emphasis on the Law. If the Zealots had not brought in the spies to see what Paul was doing regarding Christian liberty, Paul may not have made it such an issue. For Paul, the major issue was the basis for his teaching; for his opponents, the major issue was Jewish national identity.

"When Paul said, that 'neither was Titus compelled to be circumcised' (Galatians 2:3), he for the first time shows us that circumcision was the only question connected with the maintenance of the Law, which had been agitated by those whom he called 'false brethren secretly brought in' (Galatians 2:4). While these persons went no further than to insist on a continuance of the Law, they retained unquestionably a sincere belief in God. They perverted the Gospel in their teaching, not by tampering with the Scripture to eliminate Christ, but by retaining the emphasis on the Law. Therefore, he said, 'Because of false brethren secretly brought in, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we submitted not even for an hour' (Galatians 2:4-5). Let us listen to the clear sense and to the reason for their actions, and the perversion of the Scripture will be apparent".

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<sup>141</sup> See Josephus, Wars of the Jews, IV, vi, 3.

<sup>142</sup> In a way, this is similar to the US today, where there are Christian zealots who have a very strong political agenda involving US national identity. Those aspects of Christianity that speak to their political agenda are very important to them. Yet out of kindness and mercy, we don't want to offend them and cause them to abandon the Faith.

<sup>143</sup> See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995, Footnote 22, p. 433.

<sup>144</sup> Tertullian, The Five Books Against Marcion, II, ii, 5, 3.

“Paul first said that the Apostles did not compel Titus, a Greek, to be circumcised and added that false brethren were secretly brought in. He gives us an insight into his reason for acting in a clean contrary way, showing us why he did what he would neither have done nor shown to us, if the Zealots had not induced him to act as he did. But then would they have yielded to the subjection that the Zealots demanded, if these false brethren had not crept in to spy out their liberty? I apprehend not. They therefore gave way (in a partial concession), because there were persons whose weak faith required consideration. For their rudimentary belief, which was still in suspense about the observance of the Law, deserved this concessive treatment, when even Paul himself had some suspicion that he might have run, and be still running, in vain (Galatians 2:2). Accordingly, the false brethren, who were the spies of their Christian liberty, must be thwarted in their efforts to bring it under the yoke of their own Judaism. Paul needed (1) to discover whether his labor had been in vain; (2) those who preceded him in the Apostolate to have the opportunity to give him the right hand of fellowship; and (3) to have an understanding before he entered on the office of preaching to the Gentiles, according to the Apostles’ arrangement with him (Galatians 2:9-10). He therefore made some concession, as was necessary, for a time; and this was the reason why he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3), and the Nazirites introduced into the temple (Acts 21:23-26). Their truth may be inferred from their agreement with Paul’s own profession, how ‘he became all things to all men, that he might gain all’”.

John Cassian stated<sup>145</sup> that Paul identified with those he wished to reach. “To the Jews, I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews. To those who were under the Law I became as being under the Law, though not myself under the Law, that I might gain those who were under the Law. To those who were without law, I became as without law, though I was not without the Law of God but under the Law of Christ, that I might gain those who were without law; to the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I became all things to all men, that I might save all” (1 Corinthians 9:19-22). The Apostles in Jerusalem recognized that there would be a change in the Law as a result of the Coming of Christ (Hebrews 7:12), and they worked with the Apostle Paul in this regard.

“The Apostle James and all the chief princes of the primitive Church urged the Apostle Paul, in consequence of the weakness of feeble persons, to condescend to a fictitious arrangement and insisted on his purifying himself according to the requirements of the Law. By shaving his head and paying his vows (Acts 21:20-25), they thought that the present harm, which would come from this hypocrisy, was of no account, but had regard rather to the gain, which would result from his continued preaching. For the gain to the Apostle Paul from his strictness would not have counterbalanced the loss to all nations from his speedy death. And the whole Church would certainly have then incurred this unless this good and salutary hypocrisy had preserved him for the preaching of the Gospel”.

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<sup>145</sup> John Cassian, The Second Conference of Abbot Joseph, II, xvii, 20.

“Someone may ask how we can prove that Paul suited himself to all men in all things. When did he to the Jews become as a Jew? He had said, ‘Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing’ (Galatians 5:2). Yet by circumcising Timothy (Acts 16:3), he adopted a shadow of Jewish superstition. And again, where did he become to those under the Law, as under the Law? James and all the Elders of the Church, fearing lest he might be attacked by the multitude of Jewish Christians, who had received the faith of Christ in such a way as still to be bound by the rites of legal ceremonies, came to his rescue in his difficulty with this counsel and advice” (Acts 21:20-24).

“And so, for the good of those who were under the Law, he trod under foot for a while the strict view which he had expressed. ‘I through the Law am dead to the Law; that I may live to God’ (Galatians 2:19). Contrary to this, he was driven to shave his head, and be purified according to the Law and pay his vows after the Mosaic rites in the Temple” (Acts 21:20-24).

“For the good of those who were utterly ignorant of the Law of God, Paul himself became as if without law. In Athens, where heathen wickedness was flourishing, he stated, ‘as I passed by, I saw your idols and an altar on which was written: To the unknown God’ (Acts 17:23). When he began speaking to them, as if he himself also had been without law, he introduced the faith of Christ, saying, ‘The One whom you worship ignorantly, Him I proclaim to you’ (Acts 17:23). And after a little, as if he had known nothing whatever of the Divine Law, he chose to bring forward a verse of a heathen poet rather than a saying of Moses or Christ, saying, ‘As some of your own poets have said; for we are also His offspring’ (Acts 17:28). And when he had thus approached them with their own authorities, which they could not reject, thus confirming the truth by things false, he added, ‘Since then we are the offspring of God we ought not to think that the Godhead is like gold or silver or stone sculptured by the art and device of man’” (Acts 17:29).

“In this way he fulfilled what he had commanded the Corinthians to do when he said, ‘be without offense to Jews and Greeks and the Church of Christ, as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but that of the many, that they may be saved’ (1 Corinthians 10:32-33, Romans 14:3-13, 2 Corinthians 11:29). For it had certainly been profitable at other times not to circumcise Timothy, not to shave his head, not to undergo Jewish purification, not to practice going barefoot, not to pay legal vows. But he did all these things because he did not seek his own profit but that of the many”.

### **The Result of Barnabas’ and Paul’s Actions**

At the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD, Paul sought (1) clarification of his interpretation of the Gospel and (2) agreement with the other Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. This he received very clearly, and Paul was of one mind with the other Apostles and elders. Later Church Councils were patterned after Paul’s agreement with the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and this agreement came to be referred to as “The mind of the Church”.

There were four distinct steps in this first Church Council:

1. A great deal of disputing between the Pharisees who believed on the one side and Barnabas and Paul on the other side.
2. Peter spoke up about the giving of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and the Gentiles in Caesarea. His point was that God Himself had treated the Gentiles exactly as He had treated the Jews at Pentecost. God had even warned Peter in a vision not to think otherwise (Acts 10).
3. After Peter spoke, everyone quieted down to listen intently to Barnabas and Paul<sup>146</sup> speak about their recent 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, including the wondrous things they did,
4. After Barnabas and Paul spoke, James, the Lord's brother and Bishop of Jerusalem gave the verdict of the Council. He said the following:

“Men *and* brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 'After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My Name, says the Lord who does all these things' (Amos 9:11-12 LXX). Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore, I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood” (Acts 15:13-20).

Following the Council of Jerusalem, James and the Apostles in Jerusalem wrote a letter to the Gentile Churches that stated that these men that came down from Judea had no permission to teach what they did from the Apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 15:24). Thus, they were acting as overzealous rogues in doing this.

While the Jewish Christian Zealots had to agree with the Council, because their disagreement would be an obvious gesture of countermanding God, they later opposed the decision of the Council. Paul ended up opposing them for the rest of his life. A similar pattern emerged following most of the later Councils of the Church, where the heretics often accepted the decisions of the Council initially, but later opposed these decisions<sup>147</sup>. In both cases, this showed the basic dishonesty of the heretics, and where their allegiance was really based.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>148</sup> that a change in the Law was foreseen in the Mosaic Law as it referred to Christ:

“The Law itself has taught me no longer to obey itself; and therefore, if I do so, I shall be transgressing even its teaching. How, and in what way has it so taught? Moses says, speaking of Christ, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your midst of your brethren, like me; to Him shall you listen’

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<sup>146</sup> Since Luke lists Barnabas first, the implication is that Barnabas was the primary speaker at the Council. This makes sense since Paul had done most of the miracles; Barnabas emphasized Paul's miracles so that Paul didn't have to appear like he was boasting.

<sup>147</sup> For example, at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, the Arian Bishops were so embarrassed by the clear teachings from the Scriptures by Athanasius of Alexandria and others that they signed the decrees of the Council in order to avoid being defrocked for countermanding God. Later they opposed the decrees of the Council, and it took about 65 years for the decrees of the Council to be finally upheld throughout Christendom.

<sup>148</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians, Chapter 2, v 19.

(Deuteronomy 18:15). Therefore, those who do not obey Him transgress the Law”.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>149</sup> that all agreed that the doings in Antioch and on Barnabas and Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey were the hand of God. There was no dispute about this! What was lacking was that nothing had been written in the Scriptures concerning how to handle a mass conversion of the Gentiles. James made considerable condescension for the weakness of the believing Pharisees: even they need to observe no more than what the Gentiles are observing.

“The question is whether the Gentiles must be circumcised. What the objectors asserted, was not that the Gentiles must be rejected upon believing, but that it must be with the Law. Peter pleaded very well about this, since this above all others troubled the hearers; therefore, he sets this right. Observe, that which needed to be enacted as a rule, that it is not necessary to keep the Law, this Peter introduced. The milder part, James said, dwells upon that concerning which nothing is written. ‘Therefore’, he said, ‘I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God’ (Acts 15:19); that is, not to subvert. If God called them, and observing the Law subverts them, we fight against God. When James said, ‘My judgment is’, he was speaking not as from Moses but from the Apostles. The four commandments that James gave, although relating to the body, were necessary to be observed, because these things caused great evils. James’ words ‘For Moses has throughout many generations in every city’ (Acts 15:21), above all quieted the believing Pharisees. Why do we not write the same injunctions to Jews also? Moses speaks to them every Sabbath. Notice what condescension James makes to their weakness! Where it did no harm, he set Moses up as teacher, gratifying them, but which hindered nothing; he permitted Jews to hear Moses in regard of these matters, even while leading away from Moses those of the Gentiles. See what wisdom! He seems to honor Moses, and to set him up as the authority for his own people, and by this very thing he leads the Gentiles away from him! ‘Being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day’! Then why do the believing Pharisees not learn what is to be learned from Moses? Through their perversity! James shows that even these believing Pharisees need observe no more than these necessary things given to the Gentiles.”

In conveying the agreement of the Council to the Gentiles, John Chrysostom stated<sup>150</sup> that the Apostles in Jerusalem did not send Judas Barsabas and Silas to slight Barnabas and Paul, but to confirm everything. Even in their letter they are not overly critical of the rashness and subversion of the believing Pharisees; but the letter does make it very clear that the believing Pharisees were wrong.

“Notice that the Apostles in Jerusalem did not merely enact these matters, and nothing more. They sent Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They also sent letters with them the more to authenticate the decree, that there may be no room for regarding Paul and his company with suspicion. Notice with what patience and

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<sup>149</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIII, Recapitulation.

<sup>150</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIII, vv. 19-21.



with no harsh berating of those brethren they indict their epistle. ‘Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, you must be circumcised, and keep the Law, to whom we gave no such commandment’ (Acts 15:24). Sufficient was this charge against the rashness of those men, and worthy of the Apostles’ moderation, that they said nothing beyond this. Then to show that they do not act despotically, that all are agreed in this, that with deliberation they wrote this, ‘It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send men of ours whom we have chosen’ (Acts 15:25). That it may not look like a belittling of Paul and Barnabas that those men are sent, observe the glowing praise passed on them. They spoke of ‘Our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas; who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us’ -- it is not man’s doing, it says -- ‘to lay on you no greater burden’ -- again it calls the Law a burden. Apologizing even for these injunctions, they added, ‘Except these necessary things’: ‘That you abstain from meat offered to idols, from blood<sup>151</sup>, from things strangled, and from fornication from which if you keep yourselves, you shall do well (Acts 15:26-29). These things the New Testament did not forbid; we nowhere find that Christ spoke about these matters; but these things they took from the Law.’

### **What is the Place of the Mosaic Law Today?**

At this point, some clarification is needed regarding “the Law”. The Lord referred to the Greatest Commandment, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39, Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18). On this, He said, hangs all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40); and this Greatest Commandment was part of a Creed<sup>152</sup> used in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Synagogue worship. In addition, the Lord had said, “Assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one yod (smallest Hebrew letter) or one piece of a Hebrew letter will by no means pass from the Law till all<sup>153</sup> is fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). He also said that those who worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

All this is not contradictory. All the details of the Mosaic Law regarding sacrifices, uncleanness, Feast Days, avoiding certain foods, etc., had a purpose in leading the Lord’s people toward holiness. Once Israel ceased to exist as a nation, these tenets of the Law changed. We no longer offer animal sacrifices, but we are urged to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). We no longer follow the various washings prescribed by the Mosaic Law, but we are advised to avoid the defilement<sup>154</sup> from unclean spirits, which can be really foul.

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<sup>151</sup> “From blood” implies a prohibition against murder (Genesis 9:5-6).

<sup>152</sup> Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, p. 245, 101-104.

<sup>153</sup> For more details, see the Gospel lesson for the 15th Sunday after Pentecost.

<sup>154</sup> For more details regarding sacrifice, see the Epistle lesson for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; for more details on uncleanness, see the Epistle lesson for the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

Clement of Alexandria quoted<sup>155</sup> Barnabas in his teaching on what the dietary parts of the Mosaic Law really refer to. If our ears and heart are circumcised as Moses commands (Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6), we see that the unclean animals refer to unclean men and what they do, and we are commanded to avoid this.

“Barbarian philosophy prophesied also obscurely and by symbols, like the injunctions of Moses, ‘These common things, the sow, the eagle, the hawk and the raven, are not to be eaten’ (Leviticus 11). The sow is the emblem of unclean lust of food, lecherousness and licentiousness, always craving, lying in the mire, and being fattened for slaughter. Some barbarians command a person to eat that which parts the hoof and ruminates. Barnabas says that this intimate ‘that we ought to cling to those who fear the Lord, and meditate in their heart on that portion of the word which they have received. Those who speak and keep the Lord’s statutes are those to whom meditation is a work of gladness, and who ruminate on the Word of the Lord. What is the parted hoof? This is the righteous, who walk in this world, and who expect the holy eternity to come’. Then he adds, ‘See how well Moses enacted. We who have rightly understood speak the commandments as the Lord wished; therefore, He circumcised our ears and hearts, that we may comprehend these things. When He says, ‘You shall not eat the eagle, the hawk and the raven’, He says, ‘You shall not adhere to or become like those men who don’t know how to live by toil and sweat, but live by plunder and lawlessness’. For the eagle indicates robbery, the hawk injustice, and the raven greed. It is also written, ‘With the holy you will be holy; and with the innocent man you will be innocent. With the excellent *man* you will be excellent; and with the perverse you will be perverse’ (Psalm 18:25-26 LXX). ‘We ought to join ourselves<sup>156</sup> to those that fear the Lord, those who meditate in their heart on the commandment which they have received, those who both utter the judgments of the Lord and observe them, those who know that meditation is a work of gladness, and who ruminate upon the word of the Lord’”.

The usefulness of the Law is as a tutor to get us started in the right direction (Galatians 3:24, 25). As we grow in the Faith and can distinguish the Holy Spirit speaking to us, we don’t need the Law anymore, because it is written on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 10:16-17). John Chrysostom stated<sup>157</sup> that the Law and the Gospel work together:

“The Law is not the adversary but the fellow worker of Grace. But if when Grace is come, the Law continues to hold us down, it becomes an adversary. If it confines those who ought to go forward to Grace, it is the destruction of our salvation. If a candle which gave light by night kept us, when it became day, from the sun, it would not only cease to benefit us, but would injure us. And so does the Law if it stands between the greater benefits of Grace and us. Just so a tutor or pedagogue makes a youth ridiculous, by retaining him with himself, when time calls for his departure”.

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<sup>155</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, V, 8.

<sup>156</sup> Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 10.

<sup>157</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians, Chapter 3, vv 25-26.

Clement of Alexandria also quoted<sup>158</sup> Barnabas on what happens at conversion. Sinners imitate demons saying that our bodies are merely a human dwelling. At Baptism the demons are driven out, and God begins to dwell in us along with the Word, His calling, and the wisdom of His statutes and commandments.

“Vapors, which arise from the earth, and from marshes, gather into mists and cloudy masses; so, the vapors of fleshly lusts bring an evil condition on the soul, scattering about the idols of pleasure before the soul. They spread darkness over the light of intelligence, the spirit attracting the heat that arises from lust, and thickening the masses of the passions by persistence in pleasures. Gold is not taken from the earth as a lump, but is purified by smelting; then, when made pure it is called gold, the earth being purified out. ‘Ask, and it shall be given you’ (Mark 7:7), is said to those who are able of themselves to choose what is best. The powers of the devil, and the unclean spirits, sow into the sinner’s soul. Barnabas speaks in these words, ‘Before we believed<sup>159</sup> in God, the habitation of our heart was corrupt and weak, being like a temple made with hands. It was full of idolatry, and was a habitation of demons, through our doing such things as were opposed to the will of God’”.

“Sinners exercise activities appropriate to demons; but he does not say that the spirits themselves dwell in the soul of the unbeliever. He also adds<sup>160</sup>, ‘The temple of the Lord shall be built in the name of the Lord, in order that it may be built in glory. How? Having received the forgiveness of sins, and placing our trust in the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures, formed again from the beginning’. What Barnabas says is not that demons are driven out of us, but that the sins, which like them we commit before believing, are remitted. Rightly thus he puts in opposition what follows: ‘Therefore in our habitation God truly dwells. How? His word of faith; His calling of promise; the wisdom of the statutes; the commandments of the doctrine dwell in us; He himself prophesying in us; He himself dwelling in us; opening to us the doors of the temple, we who were enslaved by death’”.

Clement quotes<sup>161</sup> Barnabas as really understanding the Mosaic Law in its intents, and he gives examples of the humaneness of the Law, and how wisdom based on the Law is piety. Those who really get this, Barnabas calls them “Children of love and peace”.

“Moses wrote, ‘If anyone who has newly built a house, and has not previously inhabited it; or cultivated a newly-planted vine, and not yet partaken of the fruit; or betrothed a virgin, and not yet married her’ (Deuteronomy 20:5-7); these people the humane Law orders to be relieved from military service. They were exempted in the first place, lest, bent on their desires, they turn out sluggish in war; it is those who are untangled by passion that boldly encounter perils. From motives of humanity, in view of the uncertainties of war, the Law reckoned it right that one should enjoy his own labors, and not another, who without any labor, should receive what belonged to those who had labored. The Law seems also to point out manliness of soul, by enacting that he who had planted should

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<sup>158</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, II, 20.

<sup>159</sup> Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 16.

<sup>160</sup> Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 16.

<sup>161</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, II, 18.

reap the fruit, and he that built should inhabit, and he that had betrothed should marry. It is not vain hopes that the Law provides for those who labor. ‘For the hope of a good man dead or living does not perish’ (Proverbs 11:7 LXX); also ‘I love those that love Me; and they that seek Me shall find Me’ (Proverbs 8:17 LXX). The women of Midian, by their beauty, seduced the Hebrews from wisdom into impiety, through licentiousness, when making war against them. Having seduced them from a serious mode of life, and by their beauty ensnared them in wanton delights; they made them insane about idol sacrifices and strange women. Overcome by women and by pleasure at once, they revolted from God, and revolted from the Law. The whole people were about to fall under the power of the enemy through female stratagem, until fear by its admonitions pulled them back (Numbers 25:1-9). ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the counsel of saints is understanding. To know the Law is the character of a sound mind’ (Proverbs 9:10 LXX). Those who suppose that the Law agitates fear are neither good at understanding the Law, nor have they in reality comprehended it. ‘The fear of the Lord is life to a man; he shall lodge without fear in places where knowledge is not seen’ (Proverbs 19:23 LXX). Accordingly, Barnabas says mystically<sup>162</sup>, ‘May God, who rules over the entire world, give to you wisdom, intelligence, understanding, knowledge of His judgments, with patience. Be therefore God-taught, inquiring diligently what the Lord asks from you; and do it that you may be safe in the Day of Judgment’. Barnabas calls those who do this, ‘Children of love and peace’”.

Chrysostom stated<sup>163</sup> that Paul’s accusers thought that he had run in vain; so Paul went up to Jerusalem to prove that this was not the case. He met privately with the Apostles, not to reform doctrines, but to cut off the grounds of the deceivers. The Apostles permitted the use and the details of the Law in Judea due to the weakness of the people there. If Paul had announced that he was going to forbid the practice of the Law in Judea, he would have been attacked by those who practiced the Law. So, he did this privately with the Apostles.

“Paul’s accusers thought that Peter and John, of whom they thought more highly than Paul, differed from him in that he omitted circumcision in his preaching, while the former allowed it; and they believed that in this he acted unlawfully, and was running in vain. Paul went up and communicated to them his Gospel, not that he might learn anything himself, as appears more clearly further on, but that he might convince these suspicious persons that he did not run in vain. The Spirit foreseeing this contention had provided that he should go up and make this communication.”

“Therefore, Paul said that he went up by revelation, taking Barnabas and Titus as witnesses of his preaching, and communicated to them the Gospel which he preached to the Gentiles; that is, with the omission of circumcision. ‘But privately before them who were of repute’. What does ‘privately’ mean? He who wishes to reform doctrines held in common, proposes them, not privately, but before all in common; but Paul did this privately, for his object was not to learn or reform anything, but to cut off the grounds of those who would deceive. All at

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<sup>162</sup> Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 21.

<sup>163</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 2, v. 2.

Jerusalem would be offended if the Law was transgressed, or the use of circumcision forbidden; as James says, ‘You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs’ (Acts 21:20-21). To avoid offense, Paul did not condescend to come forward publicly and declare what his preaching was, but he conferred privately with those who were of reputation before Barnabas and Titus, that they might credibly testify to his accusers, that the Apostles found no discrepancy in his preaching, but confirmed it. The expression, ‘those that were of repute’, does not impugn the reality of their greatness; here the phrase implies his own assent to the common opinion.”

“Here arises a very important question: Who were these false brethren? If the Apostles permitted circumcision at Jerusalem, why are those who championed it, in accordance with the Apostolic sentence, to be called false brethren? First; because there is a difference between commanding an act to be done, and allowing it after it is done. He, who commands an act, does it with zeal as necessary, and of primary importance; but he who, without himself commanding it, allows another to do it who wishes yields not from a sense of its being necessary but in order to serve some purpose. And so here, the Apostles made this concession, not as vindicating the Law, but as condescending to the infirmities of Judaism. Had they been vindicating the Law, they would not have preached to the Jews in one way, and to the Gentiles in another. Had the observance been necessary for unbelievers, it would plainly have likewise been necessary for all the faithful. But by their decision not to harass the Gentiles on this point, they showed that they permitted it by way of condescension to the Jews. Whereas the purpose of the false brethren was to cast them out of grace, and place them under the yoke of slavery again. This is the first difference, and a very wide one. The second is that the Apostles so acted in Judaea, where the Law was in force, but the false brethren, everywhere, for all the Galatians were influenced by them. Their intention was, not to build up, but entirely to pull down the Gospel, and that the thing was permitted by the Apostles on one ground and zealously practiced by the false brethren on another.

### **Peter and Paul’s Ruse; Barnabas Gets Carried Away**

Paul stated, “When Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite<sup>164</sup> with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy” (Galatians 2:11-13).

Something is going on here that is not readily apparent! Peter had been absolutely fearless in facing up to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 4:8-22). Peter had been the one

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<sup>164</sup> The Greek words *sunupekritesan* (translated “play the hypocrite”) and *upokrisei* (translated “hypocrisy”) come from a root meaning of an actor playing out a role on the stage. Thus they can mean hypocrisy, but there is a more basic implication in their meaning: an actor.

who had stepped forward before the others, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). He was bolder than the others, and willing to come forward in spite of danger. When Christ was seen on the beach, and the others were pushing the boat in, he was too impatient to wait for its coming to land (John 21:7). After the Resurrection, when the murderous Jews sought to tear the Apostles in pieces, he first dared to come forward and to declare that the Crucified was taken up into heaven (Acts 2:14, 36). But there was no danger here in Antioch; is it reasonable to suggest that Peter was fearful of the believing Jews?

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>165</sup> what was really happening. Peter withdrew to eat with the Jews such that Paul would notice this and rebuke him in front of everyone. If this were not part of a ruse, Paul would have rebuked Peter privately, not publicly<sup>166</sup>. The point of the rebuke was for the effect it would have on the Jewish disciples who had come up from Jerusalem.

“Many, on a superficial reading of Galatians, suppose that Paul accused Peter of hypocrisy. But this is not so, indeed it is not, far from it; we shall discover great wisdom, both of Paul and Peter, concealed in their words for the benefit of their hearers.”

“The Apostles permitted circumcision at Jerusalem, an abrupt severance from the Law not being practicable. But when they came to Antioch, they no longer continued this observance, but lived indiscriminately with the believing Gentiles, which thing Peter also was doing at that time. But when some came from Jerusalem, who had heard the doctrine he delivered there, he no longer did so fearing to perplex them. Peter changed his course, with two objects secretly in view, both to avoid offending those Jews, and to give Paul a reasonable pretext for rebuking him. Having allowed circumcision when preaching at Jerusalem, had he changed his course at Antioch, his conduct would have appeared to those Jews to proceed from fear of Paul, and his disciples would have condemned his lack of consistency. This would have created no small offense. But to Paul, who was well acquainted with all the facts, Peter’s withdrawal would have raised no such suspicion, as knowing the intention with which he acted. Therefore, Paul rebukes, and Peter submits, that when the master is blamed, yet keeps silence, the disciples may more readily come over from the Law to faith. Without this occurrence Paul’s exhortation would have had little effect; but the occasion gave an opportunity to deliver a severe reproof, and impressed Peter’s disciples with a livelier fear. Had Peter disputed Paul’s sentence, he might justly have been blamed as upsetting the plan; but now that the one reproves and the other keeps silence, the Jewish party is filled with serious alarm. This is why Paul spoke to Peter so severely. Observe also Paul’s careful choice of expressions, whereby he points out to the discerning, that he uses them in pursuance of the plan, and not from anger.”

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<sup>165</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 2, vv. 11-12.

<sup>166</sup> Chrysostom stated that Paul’s words are, ‘When Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned’ (Galatians 2:11); that is, not by me but by others. Had he himself condemned him, he would not have shrunk from saying so. And the words, ‘I resisted him to the face’, imply a scheme, for had their discussion been real, they would not have rebuked each other in the presence of the disciples, for it would have been a great stumbling block to them. But now this apparent contest was much to their advantage; as Paul had yielded to the Apostles at Jerusalem, so in turn they yield to him at Antioch.

“The cause of Paul’s censure is this, ‘Before that certain men came from James’, who was the teacher at Jerusalem, ‘and Peter ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing those that were of the Circumcision’. His cause of fear was not his own danger, but their defection. If he didn’t fear in the beginning, much less would he do so now. As Paul himself says to the Galatians, ‘I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain’ (Galatians 4:11); and again, ‘I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ’ (2 Corinthians 11:3). Thus, they didn’t know the fear of death; but the fear that their disciples should perish, agitated their inmost soul.”

Chrysostom noted<sup>167</sup> that the ruse was so well done that even Barnabas was carried away with their ruse. They just weren’t walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel (Galatians 2:13-14).

“Don’t be surprised at Paul giving this proceeding the name of a ruse, for he was unwilling to disclose the true state of the case, in order for the correction of his disciples. On account of their vehement attachment to the Law, he calls the present proceeding “ruse,” and severely rebukes it, in order effectually to eradicate their prejudice. And Peter also hearing this, joins in the feint, as if he had erred, that they might be corrected by means of the rebuke administered to him. Had Paul reprovved these Jews, they would have spurned it with indignation, for they held Paul in slight esteem; but now, when they saw their Teacher silent under rebuke, they were unable to despise or resist Paul’s sentence.”

“Don’t let the phrase, ‘They didn’t walk uprightly’, disturb you, for in using it Paul does not condemn Peter, but so expresses himself for the benefit of those who were to be reformed by the reproof of Peter.”

Chrysostom also noted that it is completely illogical that Peter had erred in Antioch. Peter had been the moving force behind the Council of Jerusalem and its decrees.

“Why did Paul address this to Peter, who is more intimately acquainted with it than anyone? Has not God declared to him, that an uncircumcised man ought not to be judged by circumcision; and did he not in his discussion with the Jews at the Council in Jerusalem rest his bold opposition on the vision which he saw? Did he not send from Jerusalem unequivocal decrees on this subject? Paul’s object is not therefore to correct Peter, but his criticism needed to be addressed to him, though it was pointed at the disciples; and not only at the Galatians, but also at others who labor under the same error with them.”

Chrysostom continued<sup>168</sup> to say that the impact of Peter’s conduct in Antioch was to marginalize the death of Christ. That is, one is not justified by circumcision or by Jewish rituals, but by faith. Because of the circumstances, Paul had to do something!

“Christ’s death is a plain proof of the inability of the Law to justify us; and if the Law does justify, then His death is superfluous. Yet how could it be reasonable to say Christ’s death has been done heedlessly and in vain, when it is

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<sup>167</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 2, vv. 13-14.

<sup>168</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 2, v. 21.

so awesome, so surpassing human reason, a mystery so ineffable, with which Patriarchs travailed, which Prophets foretold, which angels gazed on with consternation, which all men confess as the summit of Divine tenderness? How utterly out of place it would be if they should say that so great and high a deed had been done superfluously, for this is what their conduct (i.e. the conduct of Peter and the Jews in Antioch) came to”.

### **Barnabas Goes Back to the Church on Cyprus**

“Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the Apostles. However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing’. Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:32-41).

John Chrysostom described<sup>169</sup> how the splitting up of Barnabas and Paul was the work of God. The immediate issue was Paul’s reluctance to take with them John Mark, who had deserted them earlier. Barnabas wanted to rescue his cousin<sup>170</sup> back into Apostolic work, but Paul didn’t have the patience to do this.

“Luke has described to us the character of the Apostles that Barnabas was more tender and indulgent, but Paul was stricter and more austere. In the Prophets too, we find this: diverse minds, diverse characters. For instance, Elijah was austere; Moses was meek. So here Paul is more vehement. Observe how gentle Barnabas is. Paul ‘insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work’ (Acts 15:39). There seems indeed to be exasperation, but in fact the whole matter is a plan of the Divine Providence, that each should receive his proper place. Barnabas and Paul both needed to be on a par; Barnabas should lead, and John Mark should be led. ‘And so Barnabas took John Mark, and sailed to Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches’” (Acts 15:39-41). This also is a work of Providence.

Chrysostom pointed out<sup>171</sup> that neither Barnabas nor Paul did something wrong. Both honored the other very much. However, Cyprus needed Barnabas while the Churches of Asia Minor needed Paul.

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<sup>169</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIV, v. 35.

<sup>170</sup> The same word can mean “cousin” or “nephew”.

<sup>171</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIV, v. 39-41.



“The Cyprians had exhibited nothing of the sort as they at Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium and the rest; the Cyprians needed the softer character, but the others needed such a character as Paul’s. Which then would you say did well; he that took Silas, or he that left with John Mark? A general would not choose to have an untrustworthy person always to be his baggage-bearer, so neither did Paul. This corrected and instructed John Mark himself. Then did Barnabas do something wrong? In the first place, no evil came of it; they were divided the one from the other, but for a great good. They would not readily have chosen to leave each other. But admire the writer, how he does not conceal this either. The contention cannot be said to be evil, when each person disputes for such objects and with just reason. If the exasperation were in seeking his own way, and contending for his own honor, this might well be reprov’d. But if wishing, both the one and the other, to instruct and teach, the one took this way and the other that, what is there to find fault with? Observe how Paul impeaches John Mark, and gives the reason. In his exceeding humility, Paul revered Barnabas, as having been partner with him in so great works; but still he did not so reverence him, as to overlook what was necessary. Now which of them advised best, it is not for us to pronounce; but thus far we can say that it was a great arrangement of Providence. If they stayed together, Antioch, Iconium, etc. would be granted a second visitation, but Cyprus would not be visited even once.”

Chrysostom further pointed out<sup>172</sup> that while there was a sharp contention, there was also an admirable mutual respect. They did not part on a bad note at all. The chief beneficiary of this contention was John Mark, who was brought back due to both Paul’s rebuke and Barnabas’ kindness.

“The point to be considered is not that they differed in their opinions, but that they accommodated themselves the one to the other, seeing that it was for a greater good. Did they withdraw in enmity? God forbid! In fact, after this Barnabas received great praises from Paul in the Epistles. There was ‘sharp contention’, not enmity or quarrelling. The contention happened to part them. What each supposed to be profitable, he did not abandon because of the fellowship with the other. It seems to me that they said one to another, ‘As I wish not, and you wish, therefore that we may not fight, let us distribute the places’. They did this, each yielding to the other. Barnabas wished Paul’s plan to stand, therefore he withdrew; on the other hand, Paul wished Barnabas’ plan to stand, therefore he withdrew. Would to God we too made such separations, as to go forth for preaching. A wonderful man this is; and exceedingly great! To John Mark this contest was exceedingly beneficial. The awe inspired by Paul converted him, while the kindness of Barnabas caused that he was not left behind. Seeing Paul choosing to leave him, he would be exceedingly awed, and would condemn himself; and seeing Barnabas taking his part, he would love him exceedingly. So, the disciple was corrected by the contention of the teachers; so far was he from being offended.”

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<sup>172</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIV, v. 37-40.

## **Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey with Silas**

After the 1<sup>st</sup> Church Council in Jerusalem in c. 48 AD, the Apostle Silas (along with the Apostle Justus Barsabas) was sent by Bishop James to Antioch with the letter to the Gentiles drafted by the Jerusalem Church. Justus returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained in Antioch (Acts 15:35).

At this point in Paul's life, he had really caught the attention of the Christian world as a result of his 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. This was thoroughly ratified by the Council of Jerusalem as demonstrated by the letter of Bishop James to all the Gentile Churches throughout the world. The Apostle Silas, who was present at the Council of Jerusalem, saw all this first hand. Being a prophet in the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:32), Silas understood the significance of what Paul was doing and the work of the Holy Spirit in Paul. And Silas greatly desired to be part of this work.

## **The Churches of Syria and Cilicia**

When Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus, "Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the Churches" (Acts 15:40-41). See Figure 3 for a map of this region. The numbers in green on the map are the stopping places on Paul's and Silas' 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey.

Thus, Paul and Silas, instead of traveling by ship from Antioch to Derbe and Lystra, took the overland route back to Derbe and Lystra; that is through Syria and Cilicia. None of these churches were on the route of Paul's and Barnabas' 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. They must have been raised up by Apostles coming from Antioch, perhaps even with the help of Peter. One major city along that route that they had to pass through was Tarsus, Paul's hometown.

The last time Paul had been to Tarsus was about 3 years earlier in c. 45 AD, when Barnabas came to get him and bring him to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). During those 8 years in Tarsus, Paul had his famous vision of the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven in c. 41 AD. In this vision Paul was caught up into Paradise and heard things that he couldn't even speak about (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). This vision prepared Paul for his role as an Apostle since the Churches on earth are modeled after the Assembly of the Saints in heaven just as the Tabernacle in the wilderness was modeled after the Tabernacle in heaven (Exodus 25:9, 20; 26:30, Acts 7:44, Hebrews 8:5).

## **Paul Probably Wrote to the Galatians at this Time**

Knowing what happened on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, we can infer that Paul wrote to the Galatians – all the Churches that he and Barnabas had established – before he visited them on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. On the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul and Barnabas had ordained Sosipater as presbyter of Iconium, Gaius as presbyter of Derbe and Timothy as presbyter of Lystra, where each of these men was a member of the original Seventy Apostles. As Paul passed through these cities again, things were peaceful enough that Paul could leave someone else in these cities as Bishop and have Sosipater, Gaius and Timothy join him as he departed for further missionary work. This could only happen if things in Galatia were in order.

Thus, what most likely happened is that Paul's Epistle to the Galatians had already had a tremendous effect on the Churches there by the time Paul arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Let us examine some key points that Paul made in his Epistle to the Galatians in the light of what happened later.

**Figure 3**  
**Map of Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey**<sup>173</sup>



Paul stated in his Epistle that the Council in Jerusalem had already occurred, at which the Gospel that Paul preached had been ratified authoritatively by the Apostles in Jerusalem. A letter had also been drafted by the Church in Jerusalem that specifically stated that some people had been pushing circumcision, which the Apostles in Jerusalem had definitely not authorized (Acts 15:24). This letter is not mentioned in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, but it was something that he carried with him everywhere he went. Paul stated:

“Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to

<sup>173</sup> © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available..

them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. Yet not even Titus who *was* with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And *this occurred* because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you. But from those who seemed to be something, they added nothing to me. But on the contrary, when they saw that the Gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the Gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised” (Galatians 2:1-9).

The Apostle of the Seventy, Silas had been sent by the Church in Jerusalem as far as Antioch to confirm the effect of the letter drafted by the Church (Acts 15:27). As Paul left on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Silas was now traveling with Paul and further confirmed this letter everywhere Paul went. The result of Paul’s Epistle followed by the visit of Paul and Silas with the letter from the Church in Jerusalem was an authoritative rebuke for everyone who had been trying to push circumcision on the Galatians. Paul’s words in his Epistle to the Galatians confirm this:

Paul further stated that the Galatians had been subverted to a different gospel and that those who are troubling them are “accursed”. These are extremely strong words!

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different Gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other Gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

We note that James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, in his letter to all the Gentile Churches used similar words to describe the Jewish Zealots<sup>174</sup> who were “troubling” the Gentile Churches.

“Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘*You must* be circumcised and keep the law’ -- to whom we gave no *such* commandment – ‘it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth’” (Acts 15:24-27).

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<sup>174</sup> For more information on the impact of the Jewish Zealots, see the Sections titled:  
“Ordaining Elders and the Report Back to Antioch of Syria”  
“The Issues in Jerusalem, 48 AD”  
“History of the Jewish Zealot Party”

Having just come from the Church Council in Jerusalem, and now being accompanied by Silas, one of the leading men in Jerusalem, and also a prophet (Acts 15:22, 32), Paul laid out things in no uncertain terms, knowing that he can back up everything he wrote when he arrives. Paul classified the Jewish Zealots as sorcerers (Who has bewitched you?). He referred to miracles done in their midst, which the Jewish Zealots can't do. And Paul summarized matters by saying that true sons of Abraham live by Faith, not by the letter of the Law as promoted by the Zealots.

“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain -- if indeed *it was* in vain? Therefore, He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? -- just as Abraham ‘believed God<sup>175</sup>, and it was accounted to him for righteousness’. Therefore, know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you<sup>176</sup> all the nations shall be blessed’” (Galatians 3:1-8).

Paul continued to describe the situation as one where the Jewish Zealots portrayed Paul as the enemy of the Galatians. Yet Paul was on his way to Galatia to face these apostates. They know that Paul works miracles<sup>177</sup> all the time; they may have been reluctant to go toe-to-toe with him! They also knew the Scriptures very well, such as how Korah, Dathan and Abiram didn't fare very well against Moses when they challenged him (Numbers 16). The Jewish Zealots may very well have understood that the best thing that they can do for themselves is to get out of Dodge and get out now!

“Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. My little children (for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you), I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you. Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar -- for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children -- but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother

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<sup>175</sup> Genesis 15:6.

<sup>176</sup> Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14.

<sup>177</sup> Paul stated that when he returned to Corinth, he will see what power is associated with those who were puffed up. “But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power” (1 Corinthians 4:19).

of us all. For it is written: ‘Rejoice<sup>178</sup>, O barren, *you* who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband’” (Galatians 4:16-27).

Paul’s words get stronger as he proceeds! Not only does getting circumcised by the Jewish Zealots profit the Galatians nothing, but doing so estranges them from Christ and causes them to fall from Grace!

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love” (Galatians 5:1-6).

Apparently, there were problems among the Galatian Churches as a result of the visits of the Jewish Zealots. Paul noted that they “bite and devour one another”, and that the activity of the Zealots was “works of the flesh”. Paul also associated many notorious sins with the Zealots, like adultery, idolatry, sorcery, heresies, murder, etc. These are also characteristics of what Jerusalem was like when the Zealots ruled just prior to 70 AD.

“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off! For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’. But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:11-21).

What were the real motivations of the Jewish Zealots? The ones in Galatia were apparently Christians, at least nominally, but their real agenda seems to be Jewish national identity. Paul stated:

“As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they

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<sup>178</sup> Quote from Isaiah 54:1.

desire to have you circumcised that they may boast<sup>179</sup> in your flesh” (Galatians 6:12-13).

### **Some of the Seventy Accompanied Paul and Silas from the Beginning**

By examining the Scriptures carefully and piecing them together with early Christian tradition, we find that there were other Apostles traveling with Paul and Silas on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, just like there were others involved on the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. These other Apostles will be mentioned as we go along. A summary of the Apostles that Paul worked with on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey is included in Table 2.

One of the other Apostles traveling with Paul and Silas in c. 48 AD was Andronicus of the Seventy (Luke 10:1-20) and his wife Junia. To understand this, we need to look forward to c. 55 AD when Paul wrote to the Church of Rome from Corinth. There he addressed two of his “countrymen”, Andronicus<sup>180</sup> and Herodion<sup>181</sup> (Romans 16:7, 11), who were both members of the Seventy. Paul there referred to Andronicus (and his wife Junia) as his “fellow prisoner” (Romans 16:7). However, the only recorded prison time Paul spent between 48 and 55 AD was in Philippi (Acts 16:19-34), about 51 AD. Andronicus thus must have accompanied Paul and Silas as they headed for Macedonia (and Philippi) after Paul had visited Andronicus in Tarsus<sup>182</sup>. Andronicus must have been imprisoned along with Paul and Silas in Philippi, but not mentioned in Luke’s account of Acts. No mention is made whether Herodion also accompanied Paul at this time. As on the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, Rufus of the Seventy was probably still in Antioch when Paul left. Rufus was sent to Rome (Romans 16:13) about 54 AD, and may have been traveling with Paul during the first part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.

We note that Andronicus is mentioned with Junia (Romans 16:7). They were one of several husband-wife<sup>183</sup> teams of Apostles such as Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19). John Chrysostom noted<sup>184</sup> how Paul heaped praise on others, especially Andronicus, exalting them above himself and even calling Junia an Apostle.

“Paul praises Andronicus and Junia saying, ‘They are of note among the Apostles’ (Romans 16:7). To be apostles at all is a great thing. But to be even among these of note, just consider what an accolade this is! They were of note

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<sup>179</sup> “Boast in your flesh”; that is, boast that they have the Galatians firmly under the Jewish national umbrella.

<sup>180</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17. See:

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for May 17.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 28, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>181</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8, November 10. See:

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 8, November 10.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>182</sup> Andronicus and Junia were native to Tarsus and were related to Paul. See Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17, July 30. See also:

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>.

<sup>183</sup> See also for example Philologus and Julia, Aquila and Priscilla.

<sup>184</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 5.

owing to their works, to their achievements. How great is the devotion of Junia that she should be even counted worthy of being called an Apostle! But even here Paul does not stop, but adds another accolade besides, ‘Who were also in Christ before me’”.

**Table 2**  
**Those of the Seventy with Paul on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey**  
 For More Details, see Appendix B

| Member of Seventy     | Native To    | Journey       | Later Bishop of             | Comments                         |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Amplias               |              | 2, 3          | Lydda                       | Andrew sent to Rome              |
| Andronicus            | Tarsus       | 1, 2          | Pannonia in Illyricum       | Prisoner with Paul               |
| Apelles               | Smyrna       | 2, 3          | Smyrna                      | Acquaintance of Paul             |
| Aquila & Priscilla    | Pontus       | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Ephesus before Timothy      |                                  |
| Aristarchus           | Thessalonica | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Apamea                      | Joined at end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Aristobulus           | Cyprus       | 1, 2, 3       | Sent to Britain             | Barnabas' brother                |
| Artemas               |              | 2, 5          | Lystra                      |                                  |
| Asyncritus            |              | 3             | Hyrkania (Persia)           | Acquaintance of Paul             |
| Carpus                |              | 2, 3, 5       | Berea, Troas                |                                  |
| Cephas                |              | 2, 3, 4       | Iconium after Tertius       |                                  |
| Crispus               | Corinth      | 2, 3          | Island of Aegina            | Synagogue ruler                  |
| Dionysius             | Athens       | 2, 3, 5       | Athens                      |                                  |
| Epaenetus             | Achaia       | 2, 3          | Carthage, Spain             |                                  |
| Epaphroditus          | Philippi     | 2, 3, 4       | Colophon in Pamphylia       |                                  |
| Gaius                 | Derbe        | 1, 2, 3       | Ephesus after Timothy       |                                  |
| Hermas                |              | 2, 3          | Philippi                    | Wrote “Shepherd”                 |
| Herodion              | Tarsus       | 1, 2, 3       | Neoparthia, Patras          |                                  |
| James, Lord's Brother | Bethlehem    | 2, 4          | Jerusalem                   | Council of Jerusalem             |
| Jason                 | Tarsus       | 1, 2, 3       | Tarsus, Thessalonica, Corfu |                                  |
| Justus                | Nazareth     | 2, 4          | Eleutheropolis              | Antioch, start 2 <sup>nd</sup>   |
| Linus                 |              | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Rome                        |                                  |
| Luke                  | Antioch      | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Roving Apostle              |                                  |
| Narcissus             |              | 2, 3          | Athens after Dionysius      | Acquaintance of Paul             |
| Olympas               |              | 5             | --                          | Beheaded with Paul               |
| Onesiphorus           | Iconium      | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Colophon near Ephesus       |                                  |
| Philologus & Julia    |              | 3             | Sinope                      |                                  |
| Phlegon               |              | 2, 3          | Marathon (Thrace)           | Worked with Luke                 |
| Rufus                 | Cyrene       | 1, 2, 3       | Thebes in Greece            |                                  |
| Silas                 |              | 2, 3          | Corinth                     |                                  |
| Silvanus              |              | 2             | Thessalonica                | An older man                     |
| Sosipater             | Berea        | 1, 2, 3       | Iconium, Corfu              | Presbyter in Iconium             |
| Sosthenes             | Corinth      | 2, 3          | Caesarea                    |                                  |
| Stachys               |              | 2, 3          | Byzantium                   | Met Paul at Troas                |
| Tertius               |              | 2, 3          | Iconium after Sosipater     |                                  |
| Timothy               | Lystra       | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Ephesus                     |                                  |
| Titus                 | Crete        | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Crete                       |                                  |
| Urbanus               | Tarsus       | 2, 3          | Tarsus, Macedonia           |                                  |



“This too is a very great praise that they came before others. But let me draw your attention to their holy soul, how untainted it is by vanity. After glory such as his in kind and degree, Paul sets others before himself, and does not hide from us the fact of his having come after them, nor is ashamed of confessing this.”

Tradition states<sup>185</sup> that Andronicus and Junia traveled extensively outside their city of Pannonia in Illyricum, and were eventually martyred in Byzantium, which was later called Constantinople in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

“Andronicus was made Bishop of Pannonia, but his preaching also took him and Junia to other lands, far from the boundaries of his diocese. Through the efforts of Andronicus and Junia the Church of Christ was strengthened, pagans were converted to the knowledge of God, many pagan temples closed, and in their place Christian churches were built.”

Passing from Tarsus to Derbe and Lystra, Paul, Silas and Andronicus picked up Timothy at Lystra, where Timothy was later added to the ranks of the Seventy<sup>186</sup>. Since Paul had been to Lystra on his 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 14:6-18), and had ordained presbyters there, Timothy was probably the one he ordained for Lystra, since Timothy becomes so prominent later, and since Timothy was so well-spoken of when Paul arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 16:2). Timothy would probably be in his mid-20’s at this time.

Before Paul, Silas, etc. traveled to Philippi, Luke joined the Apostolic party, which we see from the Scriptures. The author of the Book of Acts, Luke, switches from “they” to “we” (Acts 16:7, 10), indicating that Luke was now there himself. Luke did not start out traveling with Paul and Silas since he refers to “they” and “them” when Paul started the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 16:4-7). Since Luke was a native of Antioch<sup>187</sup>, he would have known where they were going and what they were doing.

### **Visiting the Churches from the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey**

Most authors show Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey going from Derbe and Lystra through Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia on the way to Troas even though this isn’t mentioned in Luke’s account in Acts. This is undoubtedly the route taken as it is the most direct route between Lystra and Troas. See Figure 3 for a map of the region. Thus, Paul would have seen Sosipater and Onesiphorus (both members of the original Seventy Apostles) again in Iconium, where Paul

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<sup>185</sup> <http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> for May 17, July 30.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17; 2008, July 30.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17, July 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>186</sup> Just as Matthias was added to the ranks of the Twelve after the apostasy of Judas Iscariot, so four others were added to the ranks of the Seventy after some of the Seventy apostatized. For details, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

<sup>187</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 18.

stayed at the house of Onesiphorus<sup>188</sup> on his 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journeys. Sosipater was the presbyter of Iconium that Barnabas and Paul ordained on their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>189</sup>. Paul would also have seen Gaius, the first presbyter appointed for Derbe (Acts 20:4) and Timothy the first presbyter appointed for Lystra (2 Timothy 3:11). As we will see shortly, Artemas of the Seventy was also traveling with Paul and Silas at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey and he would be ordained as Bishop of Lystra to replace Timothy.

Timothy had been doing a very good job in his role as presbyter (Acts 16:2) over the last several years and Paul asked Timothy to begin traveling with them. We note that Timothy's regard spread to the neighboring city of Iconium 20 miles away.

“Then Paul and Silas came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. Paul took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek” (Acts 16:1-3).

Why would Paul circumcise Timothy here, when he didn't bother to circumcise Titus earlier (Galatians 2:1-3) when he and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem for the Council of Jerusalem? Now that the Apostles in Jerusalem have decreed that circumcision is not necessary for the Gentiles, Paul goes and circumcises Timothy! This is completely backwards!

John Chrysostom commented<sup>190</sup> on this in amazement at the wisdom of Paul. Paul came through the area carrying the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem which stated that circumcision is not required for the Gentiles; yet Paul goes ahead and circumcises Timothy. And the result is that the Churches “were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily” (Acts 16:5).

“It is indeed amazing, the wisdom of Paul! He had so many battles about circumcision; he moved all things to this end, and did not give over until he had carried his point; now that the decree is made sure, he circumcises Timothy. Paul states emphatically that circumcision is not required (Galatians 5:2). The wonder is that he even did the circumcision himself. He did it because the Jews, which were in that area, would not endure to hear the word from someone who was uncircumcised. Nothing could be wiser! In all things Paul looked to what was profitable; he did nothing from his own preference. Note the success: he circumcised, that he might take away circumcision; for he preached the decrees of the Apostles. ‘As they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily’ (Acts 16:4-5). Note that by fighting, Paul obtains edification! They were not warred

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<sup>188</sup> Holy Apostles Convent, The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Holy Apostles Convent, 2002, September 24, pp. 589-593.

<sup>189</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10, April 28. See: <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 30, November 10.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>190</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIV, vv. 1-5.

upon by others, but themselves did contrary things; so they edified the Church!  
They introduced a decree not to circumcise, and yet Paul circumcises!”

When Paul and Silas came through Iconium on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Thekla, who had been converted on the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, was probably not there anymore. By this time she had probably gone off to live a simple life of prayer and fasting in a cave near Seleucia (northwest of Antioch). After living in that cave for about 70 years, she was martyred by the local physicians who were seeing all their patients healed by Thekla. Thekla came to be called “Equal to the Apostles” as a result of this ministry<sup>191</sup>. In the vast majority of the lives of the saints, it is this devotion to the Lord through prayer and fasting that is rewarded with various spiritual gifts.

With Timothy gone from Lystra, Paul had to ordain someone else in his place. This would have had to have been Artemas<sup>192</sup>, of the Seventy, who was later regarded as the Bishop of Lystra. Paul later sent Artemas as a courier to Titus on Crete (Titus 3:12) c. 14 years later. Little is known about Artemas after the death of Peter and Paul in c. 67 AD except that he stayed in Lystra and he died in peace.

## **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey Moves to Macedonia**

After visiting the Churches of Asia Minor that Barnabas and Paul had established, Paul, Silas and those traveling with them tried to go to Phrygia, Galatia and Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit forbid them from doing that.

“As they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us’. Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel to them” (Acts 16:4-10).

Why would the Holy Spirit forbid Paul from preaching the Word in Asia? We note that Paul did not come back to Asia much at all after this. He spent two years in Ephesus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 19), and during that time, he probably visited the cities around Ephesus also. But his focus seems to be elsewhere.

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<sup>191</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 24.  
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 24](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20September%2024).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 24.

<sup>192</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.  
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

One possible reason for Paul being called elsewhere has to do with the Apostle John. After Pentecost, and before the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:57-60), the Twelve Apostles divided up the world into different regions, and then they drew lots to determine who would go where. For example, Thomas' lot was India and Matthew's lot was Ethiopia. John's lot was Asia Minor, but John was not able to go there immediately because he had also been given the command to care for the Virgin Mary by the Lord (John 19:26-27). After the Virgin Mary died in the mid 50's AD, John was now free to go to the territory that he had been given. Prior to that, Paul (and Barnabas, Silas and others) had been helping out by filling in for John. Once John was able to go to Asia Minor, he proceeded to deal with the people there very effectively and very authoritatively (Revelation 2-3). The "Angel of the Church" that John referred to is probably the Bishop of that Church. Timothy was Bishop in Ephesus after Paul ordained him, well before John arrived. Timothy traveled around a lot with Paul when Paul was alive, and served under John after that. Timothy was martyred in Ephesus just before John returned from exile on Patmos, and he was replaced by Gaius, also one of the Seventy.

### **The Church in Philippi**

Philippi was a city in Macedonia that was originally founded by Philip II<sup>193</sup>, king of Macedon, in 356 BC. The city had a long prosperous history due largely to gold mines nearby. The city had a relatively small urban area, with villages surrounding it, but it had a very privileged position due to the wealth coming from the mines. Philippi was located on the Via Egnatia, the main trade route constructed by Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, which connected Italy with Asia Minor. Cities along this trade route (from East to West) are Neapolis (Acts 16:11), Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia (Acts 17:1), Thessalonica and Dyrrhachium on the western coast of Greece.

From the account of the founding of the Church in Philippi (Acts 16), there are a number of insights into the workings of the Early Church. We will explore a number of these<sup>194</sup>.

The first city Paul, Silas, Luke, Timothy and Andronicus visited in Macedonia was Philippi, called the foremost (i.e. capital city) in Macedonia. Paul seems to have skipped the smaller cities such as Neapolis, Amphipolis and Apollonia in order to concentrate on the larger cities. The idea seems to be that the smaller cities would benefit as people came there from the larger cities. While the only people Paul is recorded as meeting in Philippi are Lydia and the Philippian jailer, there were definitely others (Acts 16:40).

When Paul, Silas, etc., first arrived in Philippi, they met with the righteous women of Philippi who met for prayers outside the city by the riverside (Acts 16:13). These women were very receptive, were baptized and Lydia invited Paul to stay with her (Acts 16:15). On the way to prayers again, a fortune-telling slave girl began announcing Paul as "servant of the Most High God who proclaims to us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). At first, Paul tolerated this; after all, it was true. But as days went by, the slave girl began turning things into a circus, distracting the serious matters of prayer that Paul was focusing on. [Does this ever happen today??] So,

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<sup>193</sup> Philip II was the father of Alexander the Great.

<sup>194</sup> For further study into the Church in Philippi, see the Study for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha.

Paul cast the demon out of the girl. The girl's eyes were opened as to what she was really doing: disrupting the prayer of the faithful.

### **A Spirit of Divination**

The fortune-telling slave girl (Acts 16:16) had what was called a "spirit of Python"; (Greek *pneuma puthona*). This term comes from the Oracle at Delphi in Greece<sup>195</sup> that was famous from about the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, and which was located at the Temple of Apollo. The priestess at the Oracle was known as the "Pythia", and was an older woman of blameless life chosen from among the peasants of the area.

John Chrysostom referred<sup>196</sup> to the Oracle at Delphi in passing to compare it to prophecy in the Church. At Delphi, there was coercion, frenzy and madness, whereas in the Church there is freedom, peace and understanding.

"The Pythoness, being a female, sat at times on the tripod of Apollo. Thus, the evil spirit ascended from beneath and entered the lower part of her body, and filled the woman with madness. She, with disheveled hair, began to become intoxicated and to foam at the mouth; thus, being in frenzy, she uttered the words of her madness. I know that you are ashamed and blush when you hear these things; but they glory both in the disgrace and in the madness which I have described. All these things Paul brought forward when he said, 'You know that when you were Gentiles, you were led away to those dumb idols, however you were led'" (1 Corinthians 12:2).

"Because he was speaking with those who knew well, he doesn't state all things with exact care, not wishing to be troublesome to them, but having reminded them only, he soon quits the point, moving on to his subject."

"What does he mean, 'to those dumb idols?' These soothsayers used to be led and dragged to them. But if they are themselves dumb, how did they give responses to others? And how did the demon lead them to the images? Just like men taken prisoner in war, and in chains, rendering his deceit plausible. To keep men from the notion that it was just a dumb stone, they were eager to rivet the people to the idols that their own style and title might be inscribed upon them."

"But our rites are not like this, which was well known to the Corinthians, including prophecy with understanding and with entire freedom. Therefore, they had power either to speak or to refrain from speaking. They were not bound by necessity, but were honored with a privilege. For this cause Jonah fled; (Jonah 1:3) for this cause Ezekiel delayed (Ezekiel 3:15); for this cause Jeremiah excused himself (Jeremiah 1:6). God didn't thrust them on by compulsion, but advised, exhorted, threatened; not darkening their mind; for to cause distraction, madness

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<sup>195</sup> For example, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delphi>. Apollo is connected with the Oracle for having slain the chthonic [serpent Python](#), named Pythia in older myths. Apollo dumped the body of the serpent into a hole in the ground. The priestess (or prophetess) called Pythia sat on a tripod seat over this hole and became intoxicated by the fumes from the decomposing body of the serpent. In her intoxicated state, the Pythia would fall into a trance allowing Apollo to possess her spirit. As she did this, she prophesied, speaking in riddles, which were interpreted by the priests of the temple. People consulted her on everything from important matters of public policy to personal affairs.

<sup>196</sup> John Chrysostom, [Homilies on 1 Corinthians](#), XXIX, 2.

and great darkness, is the proper work of a demon. It is God's work to illuminate and with consideration to teach things that are needed."

While it may seem strange for demons to point out the way of salvation, they may do so sometimes just out of fear. The Gadarene demoniac referred to Jesus as Son of the Most High God (Mark 5:7-8). The seven sons of the Jewish chief priest tried to cast out demons by "the Jesus whom Paul preaches" (Acts 19:13-16). The demon answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" Then the demon possessed man jumped them and began tearing them apart. Demons do recognize who has authority over them.

John Chrysostom added<sup>197</sup> that the demon accommodated Paul in order to make itself credible so it could later deceive the new believers. But Paul saw through the malice of the demon as he said later, 'For we are not ignorant of his devices' (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>198</sup> that the demon in the slave girl attempted the same thing Simon Magus requested. That is, Simon asked the Apostle Peter for the power to confer the Holy Spirit on whomever he wished (Acts 8:12). He even offered to pay Peter! The demon in the slave girl was fearful of being cast out; it thought it could remain in the body of the girl if it preached the same things (Acts 16:17). However, Chrysostom stated, "Praise is not beautiful in the mouth of a sinner for it was not sent him of the Lord" (Ecclesiastics 15:9 LXX).

### **How Does Demon Possession Occur?**

How does a demon come to "possess" a person like the slave girl? Who is susceptible to being possessed and how can possession be terminated? Many of the Desert Fathers spent considerable parts of their lives dealing with this, and they have written guidelines for us. John Cassian summarized the teachings of many of these Desert Fathers in his "Conferences". In the following Cassian describes some of the mechanisms and limitations of demon possession.

John Cassian wrote<sup>199</sup> that demons couldn't force themselves on us if we are unwilling; we must consent first in some way. The nature of spirits is very similar to the nature of our souls; both have a similar spiritual body. God, however, has a truly incorporeal nature; thus, only God can penetrate into the inner part of either the soul or the spirit. When a demon "possesses" another creature, it inhabits and overwhelms their flesh not their soul or spirit. When demons influence our thoughts, they pick up on subtle hints from our inclinations and words to know what we are thinking. They do not read the thoughts of our heart; only God can do that. Different demons are devoted to different kinds of evil; they cannot all act at once, but depend on circumstances for an opportunity. They cannot hurt any man on their own, but must wait for permission from God. To possess someone, they first need to overcome the man's mind and thought and to remove the recollection of God. When this happens, they take up residence as if it were given to them. Even though a possessed person may appear despicable, we should not hate those so delivered since this has all happened with God's permission.

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<sup>197</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXXV, vv. 16-17.

<sup>198</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXXV, v. 17.

<sup>199</sup> John Cassian, 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of Abbot Serenus, I, vii, 8, 10, 12-13, 15, 17, 22, 24, 28.

John Chrysostom gave<sup>200</sup> three homilies directed against those who said that demons govern human affairs. Using the cases of the Gadarene Demoniacs and the Patriarch Job, Chrysostom showed that if demons were in charge, everyone would be treated like the Gadarene swine and like Job's annihilated herds. In fact, demons are not in charge, but they are strictly limited in what they can do and how far they can go.

“Some dare to say that demons administer our affairs. God chooses rather to be blasphemed by them through these words, than to commit their affairs to the demons and persuade them by the reality how demons really administer. Certain men possessed of demons coming out of the tombs met Christ, and the demons kept asking Him to allow them to enter the herd of swine. He allowed them; they went away, and precipitated them all headlong into the lake. This is how demons govern! They didn't care about the swine, but with us there is a continuous war without a truce, and an undying hatred. With the swine, they did not even allow a brief breathing space. If they had gotten us in their power, what would they not have done? For this reason, God let them fall on the herd of swine, in order that we may learn their wickedness. They would have done to the possessed men the same things which they did to the swine, had not the demoniacs in their madness experienced the providence of God. Learn the wickedness of the demons! It is possible to see both things in the case of these demons, the loving kindness of God, and the evil of the demons. The evil of the demons harasses and disturb the soul of the demented, whereas the loving kindness of God restrains and hinders so savage a demon, who desires to hurl the man headlong. He does not allow the demon to use his own power to the full, but allows him to exhibit just so much strength, as both to bring the man to his senses, and make his own wickedness apparent.”

“Consider also the herds, the flocks of Job, how in one instant of time he annihilated everything; consider the pitiful death of Job's children, the blow that was dealt to Job's body. We see the savage, inhuman and unsparing character of the wickedness of the demons. From these things we know clearly that if God had entrusted the whole of this world to their authority, they would have confused and disturbed everything, and would have assigned to us their treatment of the swine, and Job's herds. If demons were to arrange affairs, we would be in no better condition than possessed men; rather we would be worse than they. God did not give over the demoniacs entirely to the tyranny of the demons; otherwise they would suffer far worse things than what they did. Regarding those who say that demons administer our affairs, what kind of disorder do they see that they imagine all our affairs to be the arrangement of demons?”

Chrysostom also mentioned<sup>201</sup> that the demons love the tombs and pretend that the souls of the dead become more demons. In line with this, 4<sup>th</sup> century sorcerers used dead children as mediums for their deceit. Chrysostom also compared demoniacs living in the tombs in his day to drunkards and fornicators. Both are naked and stripped of their proper glory.

“What is the reason that demons love to dwell in the tombs? They pretend to the multitude that the souls of the dead become demons, which God forbid we

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<sup>200</sup> John Chrysostom, Against Those Who Say That Demons Govern Human Affairs, I, 6.

<sup>201</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXVIII, 3, 5.

should ever admit into our conception. ‘But what then will you say’, one may ask, ‘when many of the sorcerers take children and slay them, in order to have their soul afterwards to assist them?’ Many tell us that the souls of the slain are with them; but how would they know, I ask? ‘The possessed themselves’, they reply, ‘cry out, I am the soul of such a one’. This is a kind of stage-play; a devilish deceit. It is not the spirit of the dead that cries out, but the evil spirit that pretends these things in order to deceive the listeners. It is not possible for a soul to enter into the substance of an evil spirit, or into its own dead body.”

“These things anyone may see happening right now. Many live in the tombs possessed of evil spirits, whom nothing restrains from their madness; not iron, chains, multitude of men, advice, admonition, threat, or any other such thing. When any man is drunken, eager for all embraces, he doesn’t differ at all from the demoniac, but goes about naked like him, clad indeed in garments, but deprived of the true covering, and stripped of his proper glory. He cuts himself not with stones, but with sins more hurtful than many stones. Who can bind such a person? Who can restrain his inappropriate frenzy, his way of never coming to himself, but forever haunting the tombs? For such are the resorts of the harlots, full of evil savor and rottenness.”

### **Why Would the Fortune-Telling Slave Girl Proclaim God?**

Luke stated, “Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of Python met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, ‘These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation’. And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed<sup>202</sup>, turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out of her’. And he came out that very hour” (Acts 16:16-18).

If the mode of operation of a “spirit of Python” was like a drunken, foaming-mouth, possessed frenzy, for this slave girl to follow Paul and Silas for many days, there would be quite a distraction from their concentration on prayer and preaching.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>203</sup> that the demon tried to accommodate himself in order to establish an opening later. Paul didn’t admit having anything to do with the demon and scorned it; when it began to encroach on the work of preaching, then Paul acted.

“What is the reason that both the demon spoke these words, and Paul forbids him? The demon acted maliciously, and Paul acted wisely, where the demon wished to make himself credible. If Paul had admitted the demon’s testimony, the demon would have deceived many of the believers, as being received by Paul. Therefore, the demon endured to speak what seemed to be putting himself down, that he may establish an opening for himself; that is, the demon used accommodation in order to obtain destruction. At first, Paul would not admit the demon’s testimony, but scorned it, not wishing to engage in miracles all at once; but when it continued to do this, and pointed to their work of

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<sup>202</sup> Greek: *diaponeo* means to be annoyed in the sense of working hard with much labor. Thus, the effect of the “Pythoness” was a lot more work for Paul.

<sup>203</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXV, vv. 16-17.



preaching, then he commanded it to come out. Luke says, ‘Paul being annoyed, turned and said to the spirit’ (Acts 16:18). Why was Paul annoyed? It means that he saw through the malice of the demon, as he said, ‘For we are not ignorant of his devices’ (2 Corinthians 2:11). Note that when the slave girl’s masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, then they acted. Everywhere money is the cause of evil. How cruel! They wanted the girl to remain a demoniac, that they might make money off her.”

There were other heathen prophets who also understood what God was saying. The Philistines, enemies of Israel, captured the Ark of the Covenant in the days of the Prophet Samuel. However, the Presence of the Ark caused all kinds of grief in Philistia, and their prophets knew it. Finally, they decided to send the Ark back to Israel, and they seemed to know exactly what kind of an offering would appease God (1 Samuel 6:1-16). The demons behind the Philistine idols knew what God had decreed, and they communicated this to the Philistine prophets.

In another case, King Saul wanted to hear from God, but the Lord would not answer him, either by dreams, by consulting the prophets of Israel, or by consulting the priests, who carried the Urim and Thummim before the Lord in the Tabernacle (Numbers 27:21, Exodus 28:30). Therefore, Saul consulted the medium at En Dor (a ventriloquist, probably with a crystal ball), who brought up the voice of Samuel, who had just died. This “Samuel” spoke to Saul about what was going to happen the next day, where Saul was going to be killed in battle. Thus, the demon that associated with the medium at En Dor was able to gather what would happen from the arrays of both armies and their fighting spirit, and he knew that Israel would be routed.

### **Servants of the Most High God**

Why would the demon in the slave girl, “The Pythoness”, use the words: “These men are the servants of the Most High God?” (Acts 16:17) These same words were used on other occasions also. Melchizedek, who prefigured the Son of God as a priest, was referred to as the Priest of God Most High (Genesis 14:18), just as Christ is referred to as a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 6:19-20). Also, when the Gadarene demoniac first met Jesus, he said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!” (Mark 5:7, Luke 8:28)

On another occasion, when King Nebuchadnezzar saw the three young men walking around in the Furnace, accompanied by a 4<sup>th</sup> person who looked like the Son of God, he spoke to them, “Servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here” (Daniel 3:26). John Chrysostom noted<sup>204</sup> the conflict between God and the demon behind the god of fire in Babylon. The ripple effect had a pronounced impact on the bystanders, such as King Nebuchadnezzar and his officers. The blaspheming king then referred to the three young men as “servants of the Most High God”.

“Let us bear the present state of things nobly, knowing that this tribulation will both bring us deliverance from that punishment, if we understand how to

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<sup>204</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Statues, VI, 11-12. This series of homilies were addressed to the people of Antioch after a popular uprising tore down the statues of the Emperor and his wife, and dragged them through the city. The people were expecting a Roman Division to massacre the city to put down the revolt.

practice true wisdom, and will also make us better here. Often those who get us into trouble, will be better if we are vigilant; so abundant is the force of this spiritual wisdom. This was the case also with the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar. When he knew that the three young men had suffered no harm in the Furnace, listen to how he changed his language. ‘You servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here’ (Daniel 3:26). Did he not say a little earlier, ‘Who is that God<sup>205</sup> that shall deliver you out of my hands?’ (Daniel 3:15) What had happened? Why this change? He saw those soldiers outside the Furnace destroyed by the intense heat (Daniel 3:20-22), and does he call to those inside the Furnace? How has it come to pass that he has grown wise in such matters? A great change took place in the monarch! When he tried to exercise his power over them, he blasphemed; but as soon as he had thrown them into fire, he began to show moral wisdom. For this reason, God permitted whatever the tyrant wished to take place, in order that He might make it clear, that no one will be able to injure those who are kept by Him.”

“What came to pass, that he called them the servants of God? Were they not his own servants? Nebuchadnezzar said in effect, ‘They have overthrown my sovereignty; they have trampled underfoot my pride. They have shown by deeds that He is their true Lord. If they were the servants of men, the fire would not have feared them; the flame would not have made way for them. The creation knows nothing about reverencing or honoring the servants of men’. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’” (Daniel 3:28).

### **The Way of Salvation**

The slave girl “Pythoness” stated that Paul and Silas “proclaim to us the way of salvation” (Acts 16:17). What is meant by “the way of salvation”? There are several implications. First it is the preaching of the Church by all, everywhere, and at all times. To those who are weighted down with sin, rest is the way of salvation. The way of salvation also implies that we do as we say. Yet it is not rigid and legalistic, but can take a different form for different people.

Irenaeus stated<sup>206</sup> that the way of salvation refers to the Church everywhere throughout the world.

“The preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world. To her is entrusted the light of God; and therefore the ‘wisdom’ of God. By means of this she saves all men, and ‘is declared in the open squares; it utters its voice faithfully in the streets, is preached on the tops of the walls, and speaks continually in the gates of the city’ (Proverbs 1:20-21). The Church preaches the truth everywhere, and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ.”

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<sup>205</sup> This was a conflict between gods in Babylon, since the Babylonians worshipped fire. Nebuchadnezzar heated the furnace to seven times hotter than normal, and then threw the three young men in. The god of fire (a demon) met the Son of God (Daniel 3:25), and was shown to be impotent.

<sup>206</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, V, xx, 1.

Basil the Great spoke<sup>207</sup> of the way of salvation as being a rescue for anyone from the death due to slaves of sin.

“We can escape now. While we can, let us lift ourselves from the fall; let us never despair of ourselves, if only we depart from evil. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. ‘O come, let us worship and fall down before Him; let us weep before the Lord that made us’ (Psalm 95:6 LXX). The Word, Who invited us to repentance calls aloud, ‘Come to me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28). There is, then, a way of salvation, if we will. ‘Death has prevailed and swallowed men up; but the Lord God has taken away every tear from every face’ (Isaiah 25:8 LXX) of them that repent. The Lord is faithful in all His words and holy in all His works (Psalm 145:13 LXX). He does not lie when He says, ‘Though your sins are scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson they shall be as wool’ (Isaiah 1:18). The great Physician of souls, Who is the ready liberator, not of you alone, but of all who are enslaved by sin, is ready to heal your sickness. From Him come the words, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance’ (Matthew 9:12-13). What excuse do you have, what excuse does anyone have, when He speaks thus? The Lord wishes to cleanse you from the trouble of your sickness and to show you light after darkness.”

Cyprian of Carthage stated<sup>208</sup> that our walk starts with learning and doing what the Lord taught; that is, keeping the Commandments; our walk advances in the way of salvation. On the other hand, those depart from the way of salvation when what they say doesn’t agree with what they do.

“Whoever hears my words, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it didn’t fall; for it was founded on a rock’ (Matthew 7:24). We ought therefore to stand fast on His words, to learn and do whatever He both taught and did. How can a man say that he believes in Christ, who does not do what Christ commanded him to do? How shall he attain the reward of faith, who will not keep the faith of the commandment? He must of necessity waver and wander; he will be caught away by a spirit of error; like dust which is shaken by the wind, he will be blown about. He will make no advance in his walk towards salvation, because he does not keep the truth of the way of salvation.”

“We ought to remember by what Name Christ calls His people, by what title He names His flock. He calls them sheep that their Christian innocence may be like that of sheep; He calls them lambs, that their simplicity of mind may imitate the simple nature of lambs. Why does the wolf lurk under the clothing of sheep? Why does he who falsely asserts himself to be a Christian, dishonor the flock of Christ? To put on the Name of Christ, and not to go in the way of Christ, what else is it but a mockery of the Divine Name, a desertion of the way of salvation? He Himself teaches that he shall come to life who keeps His

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<sup>207</sup> Basil the Great, Letter to a Fallen Virgin, XLVI, 6.

<sup>208</sup> Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, I, 2.

Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, X, 12.

commandments, and that he is wise who hears and does His words. He, moreover, is called the greatest doctor in the kingdom of heaven that thus does and teaches (Matthew 5:19). What has been well preached by the preacher will be an advantage to him, if what is uttered by his mouth is fulfilled by deeds following. But what did the Lord more frequently instill into His disciples, what did He more charge to be guarded and observed among His saving counsels and heavenly precepts, than that with the same love wherewith He Himself loved the disciples, we also should love one another?"

Gregory Thaumaturgus stated<sup>209</sup> that the way of salvation is not a rigid, legalistic decree, but takes a different form for each of us, as all things to all people.

"When the Gospels or the Epistles are read, don't let your attention center on the book or on the reader, but on the God, who speaks to you from heaven. The book is that which is seen, while Christ is the divine subject spoken of. The Readings bring us the good news, which is worthy of all praise. That is, though He was God, He became man through kindness toward man, and did not lay aside the dignity which was His from eternity, but assumed the Divine plan that should work salvation. He lived with us as a physician for the sick, who did not heal us with potions, but restored us. The Readings bring us the good news of this Divine plan: to those who had wandered, it shows the way of salvation; to the despairing it makes known the grace of salvation, which blesses everyone differently. Searching after the erring, enlightening the blinded, giving life to the dead, setting free the slaves, redeeming the captives, it becomes all things to all of us in order to be the true way of salvation for us."

### **Paul and Silas Began "Night Watches"**

With the demon gone from the slave girl, the fortune telling business failed and Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned for killing the business. The charges, of course, were trumped up:

- They trouble our city (i.e. they baptize people).
- They teach unlawful customs (i.e. they teach prayer).

One might note that the slave girl's owners could have brought Paul and Silas to the magistrates many days ago while the slave girl "Pythoness" was still generating good sales figures. Because they didn't do this, their true motives are very transparent: all they care about is their profit, not about troubling the city, not about unlawful customs, not about the slave girl. The magistrates did not inquire into the circumstances, and they did not allow Paul or Silas to speak in their own defense; both of these things were required by the Mosaic Law, but Philippi was not governed by the Mosaic Law.

We note that Paul and Silas did not even try to plead for themselves. They just submitted to the completely unjust punishment, where this kind of punishment generally left the victims

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<sup>209</sup> Gregory Thaumaturgus (i.e. Gregory the Wonder-Worker), "Second of Four Homilies on the Annunciation", in Dubious and Spurious Writings, Volume 6, Ante-Nicene Fathers. While this work is usually ascribed to Gregory, some think it may have been written by John Chrysostom.

almost dead. Paul explained the rationale for this later when he said, “For when I am weak, then I am strong. My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9):

John Chrysostom stated<sup>210</sup> that it was probably from the wish to cut short the disturbance, that the magistrates did these things; because they saw the crowd all worked up, and wished to restrain their passion at the instant, therefore they inflicted the stripes. At the same time it was their wish to hear the matter, and that was why they threw them into prison and gave charge “to keep them safely”. Therefore, the jailor “fastened their feet in the stocks” (Acts 16:23-24),

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>211</sup> the contrast between the demon and the slave girl’s owners: the demon said, “These are servants of the Most High God” (Acts 16:17); the owners said, “These men exceedingly trouble our city” (Acts 16:20). The demon said, “They proclaim to us the way of salvation” (Acts 16:17); the owners said, “They teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive” (Acts 16:21). The owners do not even listen to the demon, but look only to one thing: their covetousness.

After Paul and Silas were tried and convicted by the magistrate, “Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailor to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them” (Acts 16:22-25).

In prison that night, Paul and Silas were treated as the most desperate of criminals. They were in the inner prison (maximum security) with their feet fastened to leg irons. Plus, they were naked and bleeding from their wounds. So, what did they do? They prayed and sang!

Since Andronicus with his wife Junia were also traveling with Paul at this time, and since Paul later referred to Andronicus as his “fellow prisoner” (Romans 16:7), Andronicus must have been in prison with Paul and Silas. Andronicus may not have had his feet in leg irons, however.

### **Orthodox Midnight Prayers Compared to Paul’s and Silas’ Prayers**

Paul and Silas’ midnight vigil (Acts 16:25), along with the vigil at the home of the mother of John Mark, where everyone prayed for Peter’s release from prison (Acts 12:12), became the theme later in the 1<sup>st</sup> century for Midnight Prayers<sup>212</sup>. The Apostles had already established Matins (i.e. morning) and Vespers (evening) Prayers<sup>213</sup> as well as 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Hour Prayers along with Compline (bedtime) Prayers. The Midnight Prayers (or the Prayer of Watching) are divided into three kinds depending on the day of the week: Midnight Prayers for a

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<sup>210</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXXV, v. 17.

<sup>211</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXXV.

<sup>212</sup> Rev. Seraphim Nassar, Divine Prayers and Services, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, Englewood, NJ, 1993, p. 1071.

<sup>213</sup> Matins and Vespers took the place in the Early Church of the Morning and Evening Continual Burnt Offering (Exodus 29:38-46). For example, at Great Vespers we say, “Let my prayer arise in Your sight as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.”

Sunday, Daily Midnight Prayers and Midnight Prayers for a Sabbath or Saturday. All three speak of the Second Coming of Christ, but different Psalms are used in each.

Each of the Midnight Prayers uses Psalm 50. The Midnight Prayers for a Sunday follows Psalm 50 with the Triadika Megalynaria. The Daily Midnight Prayers substitutes Psalm 118 for the Triadika Megalynaria, and the Midnight Prayers for a Sabbath substitutes Psalms 64 to 69.

### **Psalms Used for Midnight Prayers**

| <b>Sunday</b> | <b>Daily</b>             | <b>Sabbath (Saturday)</b>     |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Psalms 50     | Psalms 50, 118, 120, 133 | Psalms 50, 64 to 69, 120, 133 |

The persistent theme of the Midnight Prayers is the immanent wrath of God, coming down on the heads of evil doers. Like the Second Coming of Christ, there is a judgment about to come down on evil doers. The righteous are currently in a state of affliction, shot at in secret, subject to snares, overpowered, afflicted on their backs and hated without a cause. When the Lord comes, there will be fire before Him, a tremendous blast of wind and an earthquake. The people will be judged; His enemies will be scattered and melted like wax before fire; His wrath will be poured out on them and their houses will be made desolate.

Some excerpts from Psalm 50 are: “God, our God, shall come manifestly, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall be kindled before him, and round about him there shall be an exceedingly great blast of wind. Call on Me in the day of affliction; and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me. Pause and consider this! Your mouth has multiplied wickedness, and your tongue has framed deceit. You sat and spoke against your brother. I will reprove you, and set your offences before you” (Psalm 50:3, 15, 19-21 LXX).

Some excerpts from Psalm 118 are: “I called on the Lord out of affliction, and He listened to me, so as to bring me into a wide place. The Lord is my helper; and I will not fear what man shall do to me”. “The Lord has chastened me severely; but He has not given me over to death” (Psalm 118:5-6, 18 LXX).

Some excerpts from Psalms 64 to 69 are: “They have sharpened their tongues as a sword; they have bent their bow maliciously; to shoot in secret at the blameless; they will shoot him suddenly, and will not fear. They have set up for themselves an evil matter, they have given counsel to hidden snares; they have said, ‘Who shall see them?’” (Psalm 64:3-5 LXX) Hear my prayer; to Thee all flesh shall come. The words of transgressors have overpowered us; but do pardon our sins” (Psalm 65:2-3 LXX). “You, O God, have proved us; You have tried us with fire as silver is tried. You brought us into the snare; You laid afflictions on our back” (Psalm 66:10-11). “Let the nations rejoice and exult, for You shall judge the people in equity, and shall guide the nations on the earth. Pause and consider this!” (Psalm 67:4 LXX) “Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; and let them that hate him flee from before him. As smoke vanishes, let them vanish; as wax melts before the fire, so let the sinners perish from before God. When You went before Your people, when You went through the wilderness; Pause and consider this! The earth quaked; the heavens dropped water at the presence of the God of Sinai, at the presence of the God of Israel” (Psalm 68:1-2, 7-8 LXX). “They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; my enemies that persecute me unrighteously are strengthened.

Turn not away Your face from Your servant; for I am afflicted; hear me speedily. Draw near to my soul and redeem it; deliver me because of my enemies. Let their eyes be darkened that they should not see; and bow down their back continually. Pour out Your wrath on them, and let the fury of Your anger take hold on them. Let their habitation be made desolate; and let there be no inhabitant in their tents” (Psalm 69:4, 17-18, 23-25 LXX).

Since these Midnight Prayers were put together shortly after Paul and Silas’ ordeal, the Psalms used in the Midnight Prayers were probably the same ones that Paul and Silas were singing. In the ancient Middle East, Psalms were usually chanted, where the chanting of different Psalms may be in different keys. Many people were so familiar with the Psalms that they knew them all by heart, and the chanting of Psalms was an integral part of the worship of the Church. Similarly, today, the chanting of Psalms is an integral part of the worship of the Orthodox Church.

Jerome wrote<sup>214</sup> to the priest Riparius regarding the heretic Vigilantius, whose name means “The Wakeful One”, but who opposed night vigils. Jerome pointed out that the Lord, the Prophets and the Apostles used night watches to great advantage.

“The Lord had said, ‘What, could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak’ (Matthew 26:40-41). And in another place a prophet sings, ‘At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You because of Your righteous judgments’ (Psalm 119:62). We read also in the Gospel how the Lord spent whole nights in prayer (Luke 6:12) and how the Apostles when they were shut up in prison kept vigil all night long. They sang their Psalms until the earth quaked, the keeper of the prison believed, and the magistrates and citizens were filled with terror (Acts 16:25-38). Paul says, ‘Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving’ (Colossians 4:2), and in another place he speaks of himself as ‘in watching often’ (2 Corinthians 11:27). Let us say with David, ‘Behold, he that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep’ (Psalm 121:4). So will the Holy One and the Watcher come to us (Daniel 4:13). And if ever by reason of our sins He falls asleep, let us say to Him, ‘Wake up, why do You sleep, O Lord? Do not cast us off forever’ (Psalm 44:23); and when our ship is tossed by the waves let us rouse Him and say, ‘Lord, save us; we are perishing’” (Matthew 8:25).

John Cassian wrote<sup>215</sup> that it is not just among the monks in Egypt that night watches are done, but elsewhere also. A few at a time take their turn for a week, and this duty rotates through their numbers week by week. At the end of the week, those on duty wash the feet of their brethren as their brethren pray over them.

“In other countries as well, there is a daily service undertaken by the brethren. For throughout the whole of Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Cappadocia and the entire East, the brethren succeed one another in turn every week for the performance of certain duties, so that the number serving is according to the whole number of monks in the Coenobium. They hurry to fulfill these duties with zeal and humility more than any slave bestows in his service to a harsh and

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<sup>214</sup> Jerome, Letter to Riparius, CIX, 3.

<sup>215</sup> John Cassian, Institutes of the Coenobia, IV, 19.

powerful master. Not satisfied only with these services which are rendered by canonical rule, they actually rise by night in their zeal and relieve those whose special duty this is. Each one, who undertakes these weeks, is on duty and has to serve until supper on Sunday; when this is done, his duty for the whole week is finished. When all the brethren come together to chant the Psalms (which according to custom they sing before going to bed) those whose turn is over wash the feet of everyone in turn, seeking faithfully from them the reward of this blessing for their work during the whole week. The prayers offered up by all the brethren together accompany them as they fulfill the command of Christ (Ephesians 6:18). Interceding for their ignorance and for their sins committed through human frailty, the prayers of the brethren commend to God the complete service of their devotion like some rich offering. On Monday after the Matins hymns, they hand over the vessels and utensils with which they have served to others who take their place.”

### **The Prisoners Were Listening to Paul and Silas**

“At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed” (Acts 16:23-24).

The other prisoners were listening intently and expectantly. The jailor was listening also. Paul and Silas were bleeding all over from being beaten with rods, where they could have undergone over a hundred strokes with an iron rod<sup>216</sup>. A beating with rods was applied to both the back and the chest, and left the subject very weak and usually with a few broken bones. Paul's and Silas' behavior was very unusual; people beaten with rods generally moaned all night from their wounds and bruises, murmuring against God and reviling whoever gave them the beating. But Paul and Silas were singing praises to God!

In Jewish society, a beating would have been limited to forty strokes; but in this case Gentiles, not Jews, administered it. For sure, Paul and Silas were in considerable pain and their backs were raw and bleeding.

When the “great earthquake” struck, (Acts 16:26) and the doors were opened, and it came as an answer to Paul's and Silas' prayer and singing. Normally, an earthquake wouldn't unfasten leg irons. But it may pull the building down on top of them. This earthquake had some intelligence to it and the prisoners had their eyes opened quite clearly to see this.

Earthquakes occur in that part of the world more than in California. The jailor, who would answer with his life if any prisoners escaped, figured they were all gone when he saw the damage and the doors open. Paul had to restrain him from suicide by telling him that everyone was still there. Chrysostom said<sup>217</sup> that the jailor was more amazed that all the prisoners were

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<sup>216</sup> Paul Copan, “The Ancient Near East Was No Picnic” suggests that ancient Egyptian law permitted beating criminals for perjury with between 100 and 200 strokes. According to the Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, a 100-stroke beating was the mildest form of punishment.

<sup>217</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXXVI, v. 25.



still there than he was at the earthquake. The other prisoners didn't leave either since they knew this was no ordinary jailbreak. For most people, if they were in the prisoners' place, heard some people keeping an all-night vigil and praying for an earthquake – and then it happened – they'd be wondering what else these guys could do! There's more with them than any army Rome can muster!

John Chrysostom stated<sup>218</sup> that Paul's experience in Philippi demonstrated what he said about God's strength being perfected in Paul's weakness. Paul was exhausted, bleeding and chained up, but he rocked the prison, broke open the doors and broke off everyone's chains.

“Unbelievers may think that God is weak, and allows people to be continually afflicted, from not being able to deliver His own from dangers. Observe how Paul has demonstrated not only that the events were far from accusing God of weakness, but also that they proved His power more strikingly to everyone. Paul said, ‘There was given me a thorn in the flesh; a messenger of Satan to punch<sup>219</sup> me’, and having mentioned his repeated trials, he goes on to add, ‘Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times, that it might depart from me; and He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). ‘My power’, He means, ‘is seen then when you are in weakness; and yet through you, who seem to grow weak, the word preached is magnified, and is sown everywhere’. When he was led to the dungeon, after having received a great number of stripes, he took prisoner the keeper of the prison. His feet were in the stocks, and his hands in chains; and the prison shook at midnight, while they were singing hymns (Acts 16:25). Do you see how God's power was made perfect in weakness? If Paul had been free and had shaken that building, the thing would not have been so wonderful. ‘For this reason,’ He said, ‘remain bound; and the walls shall be shaken on every side, and the prisoners shall be freed; in order that My power may appear the greater, when through you, confined and chained, all that are in bonds shall be freed’. This circumstance astounded the keeper of the prison, that being so forcibly confined, he through prayer alone, prevailed to shake the foundations, throw open the doors of the prison, and free all the prisoners. This is not the only occasion. With Peter too, as well as the other Apostles, one may see this occurring constantly; in the midst of persecution, the grace of God flourishes, appears alongside the tribulations, and thus proclaims His power. Therefore, He said, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness’”.

### **The Jailer Was Listening to Paul and Silas**

The jailor realized that Paul saved his life by not escaping and his eyes were opened too; so, he asked Paul what he must do to be saved. Paul responded by speaking the word of the Lord to the jailor, the other prisoners and the jailor's household. The jailor then washed and dressed Paul's and Silas' wounds and Paul and Silas held a midnight baptism followed by feasting and rejoicing.

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<sup>218</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues*, I, 16.

<sup>219</sup> The Greek word means “to punch with the fist”.

John Chrysostom commented<sup>220</sup> that this ordeal was a blessing in disguise. The earthquake did not come all by itself, which one can see by the loosening of everyone's chains. The loosening of the chains prefigured the loosening of the jailor's heart.

“What could equal these souls? These men had been scourged, had received many stripes; they had been misused, were in peril of their lives, were thrust into the inner prison, and fastened in the stocks. Yet they did not allow themselves to sleep, but kept vigil all night. Do you take note what a blessing tribulation is? That the earthquake should not seem to have come of itself, there was this concurrent circumstance bearing witness to it; the doors were opened and all their bonds were loosed. This happened at night, for the Apostles did not work for display but for men's salvation. Here, they no sooner showed the doors standing open, and it opened the doors of the jailor's heart. It loosened two sorts of chains. That prisoner (Paul) kindled the true light; for the light in his heart was shining. The jailor said immediately, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ What then does Paul answer? ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your house.’ For this above all wins men, that one's household also should be saved. The faith of the jailor was a voice in itself. What could be equal to this? Paul is put in bonds, and loosens, being bound. These are indeed workings of grace”.

Chrysostom also noted<sup>221</sup> that while the earthquake roused the keeper of the prison from sleep, the doors flew open, and he wondered at what had happened, the other prisoners didn't notice that the doors were open; otherwise they all would have fled. The wonder overpowered him! He wondered more at Paul's kindness; he was amazed at his manly boldness; that he had not escaped when he had it in his power; that he hindered him from killing himself. There was no need for other miracles, since the earthquake was sufficient for the jailor's conversion, seeing that he was personally in danger if the prisoners escaped. It is not so much miracles that overpower us, as the things which bring our own deliverance. The keeper was not an evil-disposed man that he ‘thrust them into the inner prison’ (Acts 16:24); this was because of his ‘having received such a command’ (Acts 16:23-24), not of himself.

Chrysostom also compared<sup>222</sup> Joseph's prison time with that of Paul. Both were imprisoned unjustly as a result of their trying to stand up for righteousness. While the keepers of prisons tend to be brutal to those inside, Joseph and Paul were able to win the affection of their keeper. Paul applied this lesson-learned to Bishops in the Church. To be a good governor, one first needs to learn to be governed; then he needs to rule his own house well.

“Those who have the custody of prisons tend to practice cruelty more than most people. They harass those in afflictions, with a more than brutal cruelty. They take advantage of those wretched circumstances which ought to elicit their pity. They do not treat all their prisoners in the same manner; those prisoners who are accused only, and who are harmfully treated, they perhaps pity. But they punish with numberless inflictions those who are imprisoned for shameful and atrocious crimes. The keeper of the prison might have been incensed against the

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<sup>220</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXXVI, vv. 25-39.

<sup>221</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXXVI, v. 27.

<sup>222</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Titus, IV, Moral.

young man, Joseph, who was charged with repaying favors by a base attempt on the master's wife (Genesis 39). Considering the honor to which Joseph had been raised, and the crime for which he was imprisoned, would he not have treated him with more than brutal cruelty? But the keeper of the prison was raised above all these things by his hope in God. For the virtue of the soul can soothe even wild beasts. By the same meekness which had gained his master, Joseph captivated also the keeper of the prison. Thus, Joseph was again a ruler; he ruled in the prison as he had ruled in the house. For since he was destined to reign, it was fit that he should learn to be governed and while he was governed he became a governor, and presided in the house."

"For if Paul requires this of one who is promoted to a Church, saying, 'If a man doesn't know how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?' (1 Timothy 3:5), it was fit that he who was to be a governor, should first be an excellent ruler of the house. Paul, like Joseph, presided over the prison, not as over a prison, but as if it had been a house. He alleviated everyone's calamities, and took charge of those who were imprisoned as if they had been his own members. He not only took an interest in their misfortunes and consoled them, but if he saw anyone absorbed in thought, he went to him and inquired the cause; he could not bear to see anyone dejected, or be easy till he had relieved his dejection. Such love as this, many people don't show even to their own children."

### **Evangelism Methods in Philippi**

When the Lord sent the Twelve Apostles out two by two, He told them to first "Inquire who is worthy, and stay there" (Matthew 10:11). The person that they stayed with received a significant blessing from the Lord. This is exactly what Paul did in Philippi. "On the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there*. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay'. So, she persuaded us" (Acts 16:13-15).

Traditionally, the next thing that the Church established is prayer in the city that they came to. This had already been started with Lydia and the other women. Today, if the Bishop or priest comes to a city, he may begin praying all by himself at first; that is OK. The prayer life forms the foundation for the Lord's work as He answers the prayers of the faithful. This is what happened in Philippi also, and the demon in the slave girl "Pythoness" was trying to disrupt this prayer life.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>223</sup> several things about Paul's and Silas' contact with Lydia. First, she was not wealthy or a leading citizen, but a humble seller of purple. Second, Paul was following the Lord's instructions to the Twelve by inquiring who was worthy and staying with them. Third, the work in Philippi began with Lydia's willing and eager heart.

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<sup>223</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXV, Recapitulation.

“The place where Paul and Silas first met Lydia was convenient for hearing the word, aloof from troubles and dangers. Since it was ‘On the Sabbath’ (Acts 16:13), there was no work going on, and they could be more attentive to what was spoken. ‘Lydia was a seller of purple’ (Acts 16:14); observe how the writer of the history is not ashamed of the occupations of the converts. Having learned these things, let us also be ashamed of no man. Peter stayed with a tanner (Acts 9:43); Paul, with a woman who was a seller of purple and a foreigner. There is no pride in Paul and Silas for accepting these humble accommodations from someone ‘Whose heart the Lord opened’. We need God, to open the heart; but God opens the hearts that are willing, for there are hardened hearts to be seen also. ‘Lydia attended to the things which were spoken by Paul’ (Acts 16:14). The opening, then, was God’s work; the attending was hers; so that it was both God’s doing and man’s. She was baptized (Acts 16:15), and received the Apostles with such earnestness of entreaty, with more than that used by Abraham. She spoke of no other token than that whereby she was saved (Genesis 18:3). She does not say, ‘If you have judged me a great, a devout woman’; but, ‘faithful to the Lord’ (Acts 16:15). She doesn’t say, ‘Stay with me’, but, ‘Come to my house and stay’. With great earnestness, she says it; indeed a faithful woman!”

### **Paul and Silas Took a Beating for the Philippian Christians**

The next day (Acts 16:35), the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas released quietly. Paul and Silas had been beaten and jailed just to satisfy the mob that was aroused by the slave girl’s owner. And Paul took the beating without saying anything. [Paul and the Twelve were beaten a number of times during their missionary journeys.] Why would they not speak up for their rights? In this case, the answer is that Paul was looking out for the new Philippian converts who might incur the same treatment.

When the magistrates beat Paul without a trial, they violated Roman law and could be severely punished – and they knew it. All Paul had to do was appeal to Rome (Acts 25:11) and their heads would roll. Roman citizens were not allowed (1) to be beaten without a trial, and (2) to be incarcerated without a trial. As in Paul’s case later, if the Roman citizen was not satisfied with the outcome of the trial, he could appeal to the Emperor himself.

At first the magistrates sent officers to release Paul and Silas (Acts 16:35). Undoubtedly, they had discovered overnight what actually happened, and that the masters of the slave girl “Pythoness” were just mad at losing their profitable business. However, Paul told the officers that the magistrates had just beaten and incarcerated Roman citizens; they need to come themselves and bring us out of prison! Thus, the magistrates had to come crawling on their knees to Paul to beg him not to prosecute them for this injustice.

With this hanging over the heads of the magistrates, they were very unlikely to harass Lydia, the jailor, the prisoners, etc., in response to the owners of the slave girl or any others who sought to persecute the new Church.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>224</sup> another aspect of this situation. If Paul and Silas just left when the magistrates allowed them to, they would be leaving as if they were already condemned. Paul wanted to turn this around so that the magistrates would be the ones condemned.

“The magistrates said, ‘depart, and go in peace’ (Acts 16:36); that is, go in safety, fearing no man. But Paul said to them, that he did not want to seem to be receiving his liberty as one condemned, and as one that has done wrong. Therefore, he said, ‘Having openly beaten us innocent Roman citizens’ (Acts 16:37), that it may not be a matter of grace on the part of the magistrates. Besides, they wanted the jailor himself to be out of danger, that he may not be called to account for this afterwards. They do not say, ‘Having beaten us’, who have worked miracles; for the magistrates did not even pay attention to these. Instead they said that which was most effective to shake their minds, ‘innocent Roman citizens’. Observe how diversely grace manages things: how Peter went out of prison, how Paul was released, though both were Apostles. ‘The magistrates feared’ because the men were Romans (Acts 16:38), not because they had unjustly thrown them into prison. ‘The magistrates asked Paul and Silas to leave the city’ (Acts 16:39), begging them as a favor.”

### **The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi**

Following this incident, Paul and Silas left Philippi, but Luke evidently stayed behind in Philippi. We can see this by looking closely at Luke’s words; when they arrived in Philippi, Luke said, “As we went to prayer” (Acts 16:16). When it comes to the departure from Philippi, Luke switches to “they departed” (Acts 16:40) and “they passed through Amphipolis” (Acts 17:1). The third person “they” continues for about five years until Paul came to Macedonia again on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, at which time Luke again resumes the first person “We sailed away from Philippi” (Acts 20:6). In addition, from Paul’s Epistles to the Thessalonians, written from Corinth on Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Silas and Timothy were with Paul but not Luke (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1).

As Paul and Silas left Philippi on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, the only Christians that are mentioned are Lydia from Thyatira in Asia Minor and the jailor and the other prisoners along with their families. Others are also implied (Acts 16:40), however, such as those that met for prayer at the river side. When Paul returned to Macedonia five years later, he took up a significant collection in alms for the impoverished Jerusalem Church<sup>225</sup>. By then, the Church in Philippi had grown considerably and was able to contribute to these alms. Luke’s efforts in this regard may not have been limited to Philippi, but may have included Berea, Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-15) and even Illyricum (Romans 15:19).

### **Others of the Seventy Worked with Luke in Macedonia**

Since Andronicus and his wife Junia were also traveling with Paul’s company, they probably also stayed behind with Luke, since Andronicus has traditionally been referred to as the Bishop of Pannonia in Illyricum. During these five years, Luke got around to the whole area.

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<sup>224</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXV, Recapitulation.

<sup>225</sup> See Acts 24:17, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4; Romans 15:25-27.

Paul left Luke in Philippi c. 49-50 AD. By 55 AD when Paul wrote to the Romans, he said, “From Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:19). Paul is never recorded as going to Illyricum himself; but Luke could easily have been there during the five years that he was in Philippi.

In addition, according to tradition<sup>226</sup>, Andronicus is regarded as the first Bishop of Pannonia in Illyricum. According to these accounts, Andronicus and Junia traveled widely around the area of Illyricum, evangelizing the whole area, perhaps with Luke, perhaps separately. Paul refers to the work of Andronicus and Junia when they were in Rome in c. 55 AD:

“Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me” (Romans 16:7).

Since Andronicus and Junia are referred to as Paul’s “countrymen”, Paul can say that he went to Illyricum because his kin went there with his instructions. Junia is sometimes referred to<sup>227</sup> as being “Equal to the Apostles” for her work with Paul and with her husband.

Urbanus is remembered as the Bishop of Macedonia who was ordained by the Apostle Andrew<sup>228</sup>. He served for a long time there and was eventually tortured to death by the Jews and the pagans for his zeal in preaching the Gospel. In the Scriptures, we see Urbanus only in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:9). If Luke had been left behind in charge in Macedonia<sup>229</sup> during the middle of Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (c. 50 AD), and this continued until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (c. 55 AD); and if Urbanus was in Rome in 55 AD, he had to have been sent there along with the other 17 of the Seventy Apostles who had been sent there (Table 6). Most likely Urbanus was in Macedonia with Luke from 50 to 55 AD and had proven himself in the work there with his zeal for the Faith. When Paul came through Macedonia on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul sent Urbanus to Rome to help the others with dealing with the Heresiarch Simon Magus<sup>230</sup>. A few years later Urbanus returned to Macedonia.

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<sup>226</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17; 2008, July 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>227</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

<sup>228</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31>.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>229</sup> For more details regarding this, see the section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey titled “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

<sup>230</sup> For more details regarding Simon Magus, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004. See <http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/e-books/>.

Others helping out in Macedonia were Epaphroditus and Hermas. Epaphroditus was one of the original Seventy Apostles. He was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). We first see him in Paul's letters in c. 62 AD when Paul sent him to Philippi from Rome. Epaphroditus had been longing for the Philippians and was distressed because they were worried about him when he was very sick (Philippians 2:26-30). This implies that he had been working with Paul for quite a while already. Earlier in c. 49-50 AD, when Paul passed through Philippi on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Epaphroditus was probably there also. On Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Luke started traveling with Paul again<sup>231</sup>, and probably Epaphroditus did so also, while Hermas of the original Seventy was left behind in Philippi. Hermas thus became known as the first Bishop of Philippi<sup>232</sup>. Hermas is best known for an instructive book he wrote called "The Shepherd", which was very popular in the first few centuries, and was treated as Scripture by many until the canon of the Scripture was settled.

### The Church in Thessalonica

The city of Thessalonica (also known as Salonika and Thessaloniki) was founded by King Cassander of Macedonia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and was named after his wife Thessaloniki, who was a half-sister of Alexander the Great. Thessalonica was located on the Via Egnatia, the main trade route constructed by Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, which connected Italy with Asia Minor. Cities along this trade route (from East to West) are Neapolis (Acts 16:11), Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia (Acts 17:1), Thessalonica and Dyrrhachium on the western coast of Greece. Thessalonica also lay at the southern end of the main north-south route through the Balkans, thereby linking the Balkans with the rest of Greece.

Arriving in Thessalonica, Paul stayed at the house of Jason (Acts 17:7), one of the original Seventy. Jason, who had been Bishop of Tarsus when Paul started the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, may have been sent ahead to prepare a house as lodging for Paul and those traveling with him. While there, Paul reasoned with the Jews at the synagogue for three successive Sabbaths. While Philippi did not seem to have a synagogue, Thessalonica did.

"When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ'. And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas" (Acts 17:1-4).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>233</sup> that even though Paul had turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46), he still started with the synagogues due to his own affection for his Jewish brethren.

"Paul, as his manner was, went into the synagogue of the Jews. Although he had said, 'We turn to the Gentiles'; he did not leave these alone; such was the

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<sup>231</sup> See the Section, "The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi".

<sup>232</sup> There were two cities not too far apart: Philippi and Philippoupolis. Philippi was on the coast of the Aegean Sea while Philippoupolis was inland about 100 miles almost due North. Both cities were named after Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. Philippoupolis today is named Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

<sup>233</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXVII, vv. 1-4.

longing affection he had towards them. Listen to him saying, ‘Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved’ (Romans 10:1); and, ‘For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh’ (Romans 9:3). He did this because of God’s promise; and also, that it might not be a cause of offense to the Gentiles. We note how before all other things Paul preaches the Passion; so, little were they ashamed of it, knowing it to be the cause of salvation. Luke mentions only the sum and substance of the speaking; he is not given to redundancy, and does not on every occasion report the sermons.”

John Chrysostom further commented<sup>234</sup> on why Paul spoke to the Jews first. (1) This was over and above his calling. (2) He persuaded the Gentiles through the Jews. (3) Most of his work was with the Gentiles. (4) In a similar fashion, the other Apostles spoke to many Gentiles.

Paul had said, ‘That we should go unto the heathen, and they to the circumcision’ (Galatians 2:9), and yet here he spoke to the Jews! Paul did this as a thing over and above. He did other things also more than he was obliged. For instance, Christ ordained that the Apostles should ‘live by the Gospel’ (1 Corinthians 9:14; 1:17), but Paul worked with his own hands to support himself. Christ didn’t send him to baptize, yet he did baptize. Peter went to the circumcision and Paul to the Gentiles, to the greater part. If it was necessary for him to speak to Jews, why did Paul say, ‘For He that wrought effectually in him toward the circumcision, the same was mighty also in me toward the Gentiles’ (Galatians 2:8)? In the same way as the other Apostles also spoke with the Gentiles, though they had been set apart for the circumcision; so likewise, did Paul. Most of his work indeed was with the Gentiles; still he did not neglect the Jews either, that they might not seem to be severed from the Gentiles. How was it, you will ask, that he entered first into the synagogues, as if this were his primary object? He did this, but he persuaded the Gentiles through the Jews, and from the things which he spoke of to the Jews. He knew that this was most suitable for the Gentiles, and most conducive to belief. Therefore, he said, ‘Inasmuch as I am the “Apostle of the Gentiles”’ (Romans 11:13). His Epistles all fight against the Jews.

While Luke does not record Paul doing any miracles in Thessalonica, Paul’s comments later indicate that he did do some. Paul stated a few months after he left Thessalonica,

“For our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

### **The Reaction of the Jews**

The Jews at this synagogue, who were not persuaded after three weeks of listening to Paul, began to align themselves with the dark side.

“The Jews, who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar

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<sup>234</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXVII, Recapitulation.



and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, ‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king – Jesus’. And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. So, when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go” (Acts 17:5-9).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>235</sup> that again the Jews accused Paul of treason. Jason, one of the original Seventy Apostles, was worthy to be admired in how he put himself in danger for Paul’s sake.

“What an accusation! Again, they get up a charge of treason against the Apostles, saying, ‘There is another king named Jesus’. Jason was a man worthy to be admired, in that he put himself in danger, and sent Paul away from it.”

We might note that just as Paul and Silas took a beating for the sake of the Christians in Philippi, so Jason does here in Thessalonica. Jason here is imitating Paul; he was probably traveling with Paul and Silas and saw what happened in Philippi. Jason could see the benefit to others in taking a beating on their behalf. Jason also put up money so that everyone might be released. Then he arranged for Paul and Silas to leave before the Jews had time to regroup. The Thessalonians were quite aware of how Paul had been treated in Philippi, and how he had taken a severe beating so that the Philippians would not have to (1 Thessalonians 2:1-2).

John Chrysostom continued to say<sup>236</sup> that the Jews conspired with the agitators in the marketplace. They claimed that the Apostles did things contrary to the decrees of Caesar; yet the emperors were very harsh toward people who instigated riots. What were the Jews afraid of? Someone who had been crucified 20 years ago? In defending Paul during the riot, Jason took a huge risk in his own safety.

“The unbelieving Jews, becoming envious, took certain agitators in the marketplace, gathered a mob, and set the whole city in an uproar’ (Acts 17:5), so that the Gentiles were more in number. The Jews didn’t think they were numerous enough to raise the disturbance; because they had no reasonable pretext, they always affect such purposes by means of uproar, and by collaborating with agitators. ‘When they couldn’t find Paul’, they dragged out Jason and certain brethren’ (Acts 17:6). What tyranny! Dragging them without any cause out of their houses! ‘These all’, they say, ‘do contrary to the decrees of Caesar’ (Acts 17:7). But the Apostles spoke nothing contrary to what had been decreed by Caesar, nor made any commotion in the city; so, the Jews brought them in under a different charge: ‘saying that there is another king, one Jesus’. The Jews agitated the people’ (Acts 17:8); but what were they afraid of, seeing He<sup>237</sup> is dead? Notice how by giving security Jason sent Paul away; he put his life

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<sup>235</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXVII, vv. 5-9.

<sup>236</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXVII, Recapitulation.

<sup>237</sup> i.e. Christ is dead due to the Crucifixion. The Jews wouldn’t admit the Resurrection; so, to them He was still dead. How could He have any effect on anything? They are reacting to their emotional frustration at not being able to refute Paul; but their logic makes no sense.

on the line for him. Notice also how the persecutions in every case extend the preaching.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>238</sup> that it took a great deal of love – which involved a great deal of labor -- on the part of Jason and others in helping Paul. They risked their lives dealing with people who were intent on murder.

“Merely to love is not labor at all. But to love genuinely is great labor. When a thousand things are stirred up that would draw us away from love, and we hold out against them all, is it not labor? The Apostles suffered a great deal that they might be drawn to revolt from their love. Those that warred against the Preaching went to Paul’s host, and not having found him, dragged Jason before the rulers of the city (Acts 17:5-6). Tell me; is this a slight labor, when the seed had not yet taken root, to endure so great a storm, so many trials? They demanded security from Jason. Having given security, Luke says, Jason sent Paul away. Is this a small thing, tell me? Did not Jason expose himself to danger on behalf of Paul? This Paul calls a labor of love, because they were thus bound to him.”

“Notice: first Paul mentions their good actions, then his own, that he may not seem to boast, nor yet to love them by anticipation. They had great patience also, for that persecution was not confined to one time, but was continual, and the Jews warred not only with Paul, the teacher, but with his disciples also. If they had a murderous attitude towards those who wrought miracles, what do you think were their feelings towards those who dwelt among them, their fellow-citizens, who had all of a sudden revolted from them? Paul also testifies of them, saying, ‘For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea’” (1 Thessalonians 2:14).

John Chrysostom also examined what Jason did: he put himself in danger in order that the other Apostles might escape. The Jews, on the other hand, allied themselves with those who could be manipulated by the demons. The charges against the Apostles were preposterous! They claimed the Apostles taught about another king. But yet according to the Jews, this King (Jesus) was dead from the Crucifixion!

“What an accusation! Again, the Apostles get charged<sup>239</sup> with treason, saying, ‘There is another king one Jesus’. The Jews troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. Jason was a man worthy to be admired, that he put himself into danger, and sent the other Apostles away from it. When the Jews who didn’t believe took to them certain of the baser sort, and set the entire city on an uproar (Acts 17:5), the Gentiles were more in number. The Jews didn’t think there were enough of them to raise a disturbance because they had no reasonable pretext. They always affect such purposes by means of uproar, and by taking to themselves base men. ‘When they didn’t find Paul and the others they hauled Jason and certain brethren out of their house’ (Acts 17:6.). This was tyranny! They dragged them out of their house without any cause. The Jews claimed that the Apostles do contrary to the decrees of Caesar (Acts 17:7). The

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<sup>238</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians, I, vv. 1-3.

<sup>239</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXVII, vv. 4-8.

Apostles spoke nothing contrary to what had been decreed by Caesar, nor did they make any commotion in the city; the Jews brought them under a different charge, saying ‘that there is another king, one Jesus. This troubled the people since the Roman emperor could send troops to suppress a rebellion (Acts 17:8.). But what were the Jews afraid of, seeing that this other king was dead (according to their understanding)? Notice how by giving security Jason sent Paul away; he gave his life to the hazard for Paul’s. Notice also how the persecutions in every case extend the preaching.”

Luke mentions<sup>240</sup> that Jason sets before us his manliness, when he says, that ‘they dragged him to the rulers of the city’ (Acts 17:5). It is likely that the others also were men of note. Paul does not mention relatives, unless they were also like him in the Faith.

Earlier we saw that Jason had been the overseer (Bishop) of Tarsus, and that he had left Tarsus to follow Paul and Silas. Jason evidently had a real vision for the impact that Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey would have on the world. Jason evidently stayed behind in Thessalonica to oversee the new Christians. According to tradition<sup>241</sup>, Silvanus was the first Bishop of Thessalonica, and he probably stayed behind also until Jason could be free to continue with Paul. Jason later joined up with Paul in Corinth (Romans 16:21) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, probably leaving Silvanus behind in Thessalonica as Bishop. In later years, Jason teamed up with Sosipater to travel as evangelists<sup>242</sup> to the island of Corfu in the Peloponnesus. Paul also sent Timothy back to Thessalonica from Athens to check on how things were going and to bring a report back.

“Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this” (1 Thessalonians 3:1-3).

Paul reminded the Thessalonians to recognize their overseers (or Bishops), referring to Jason, Silvanus and Timothy among the rest.

“We urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

During the 18 months that Paul spent in Corinth, Silvanus seems to have joined Paul for a while.

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<sup>240</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXII, v. 21.

<sup>241</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.  
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 30.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2030)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>242</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.  
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 28.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%2028)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 28.

“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:1-2).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>243</sup> that reasoning with people from the Scriptures was a really great thing, better than performing miracles.

“Three Sabbath-days was the time when they had leisure from work<sup>244</sup>, ‘Paul reasoned with them, opening the Scriptures’ (Acts 17:2). Christ used to do this also; on many occasions we find Him reasoning from the Scriptures, and not on all occasions urging men by miracles. By performing miracles, they stood in a position of hostility; people called them deceivers and magicians; but he that persuades men by reasoning from the Scriptures, is not liable to this imputation. On many occasions we find Paul convincing men simply by force of teaching. In Antioch of Pisidia ‘the whole city was gathered together’ (Acts 13:44), so great a thing is this. This itself is no small miracle; it is even a very great one. That the people of Thessalonica might not think that they did it all by their own strength, but rather that God permitted it, two things resulted. ‘Some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women’ (Acts 17:4). But those others did the contrary: ‘The Jews, who were not persuaded, became envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob’ (Acts 17:5). That the people were called was itself a matter of God’s fore-ordering. The Apostles neither thought great things of themselves as if the triumph were their own, nor were they terrified as being responsible for everything.

Paul worked at his tent-making trade when he was among the Thessalonians, so as to avoid being a burden on anyone.

“You remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:9-10).

“For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us” (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9).

## The Church in Berea

Berea (or Beroea or Veria) was founded c. 1000 BC and was named either after the daughter of the king of Berroia, the son of Macedon, or after its mythical creator Beres. Berea was a prosperous city that was located a few miles south of the Via Egnatia road that linked Rome with Byzantium. Also located in Berea was a Jewish settlement that had a synagogue.

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<sup>243</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXVII, Recapitulation.

<sup>244</sup> That is, the Apostles worked six days per week – Paul at his tent-making trade – and taught from the Scriptures just on the three successive Sabbaths.

As was his custom, when Paul arrived from Thessalonica, about 60 miles to the Northeast, he stopped first at the synagogue in Berea.

“Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so. Therefore, many of them believed and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds. Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there” (Acts 17:10-14).

We find a similar pattern here to Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, where the Jews hound him<sup>245</sup> from one city to another. Yet the Jews don’t seem to bother Silas and Timothy when they remain behind! What is it that Paul is saying that irritates the Jews so much? He doesn’t have to go to the Jews; he could avoid them completely and speak just to the Gentiles like he and Peter agreed (Galatians 2:7-9). As John Chrysostom said, Paul had this really tender spot for his own countrymen. What Paul was doing was:

1. He explained and demonstrated that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead (Acts 17:2).
2. He portrayed Jesus as King over all creation (Acts 17:7).
3. He taught in such a way as to make the Jews extremely envious (Acts 17:5, 13:45), meaning he was very convincing.
4. He had turned the world upside down in the eyes of the Jews (Acts 17:6), meaning that he was having a huge impact.
5. He only performed one miracle in Philippi (exorcizing the demon of the Pythoness), but none in Thessalonica and Berea that we are recorded in Scripture.
6. He was teaching from the Scriptures in a way that the Jews could not refute him (Acts 17:11-12).

When Paul left Berea, accompanied by the other Apostles who were traveling with him, Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Berea (Acts 17:15). Silas and Timothy didn’t stay long, however. They stayed just long enough to ordain presbyters for Berea, and then they were called to Athens to join Paul.

“So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed” (Acts 17:15).

According to tradition<sup>246</sup>, the first Bishop of Berea was Carpus (or Karpos), one of the original Seventy Apostles. For Silas and Timothy to ordain a presbyter by themselves indicates that they had become mature Apostles and they were capable of embarking on their own

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<sup>245</sup> Compare Acts 14:19

<sup>246</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 26.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for May 26.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 26.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

missionary journeys at this time. Paul left Berea in c. 50 AD. In c. 67 AD, just before Paul's martyrdom in Rome, Carpus was in Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), directly across the Aegean Sea from Berea, working as an Apostle there.

John Chrysostom had<sup>247</sup> a lot to say about things in Berea. Thessalonica was a larger city and it had collected all the worst men of the area. Paul described the Jews in Thessalonica in some pretty harsh words in his first Epistle to Thessalonica, written from Corinth about 6 months after his visit. Chrysostom also noted the lack of miracles during this time. The Apostles persuaded more without miracles than they could have done with miracles. The Apostles were very protective of Paul, hustling him out of danger immediately, having seen from the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey how things can get ugly very quickly.

“The Jews at the synagogue in Berea were nobler than those in Thessalonica”; i.e. they were not men practicing degrading things. Some were convinced, and the others, who were not, did nothing of the sort that the Jews in Thessalonica did. ‘They examined the scriptures daily to see if these things were so’ (Acts 17:11); they didn’t do this just on a sudden impetus or burst of zeal; they were nobler due to their virtue. ‘Therefore, many of them believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing’ (Acts 17:12). And here again are Greeks. ‘When the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, stirring up and inciting the crowds (Acts 17:13). This was because there were lewd persons in Thessalonica, since the city of Thessalonica was larger. It is no wonder that in the larger city the people were worse, since to the greater city go the worse men, where the occasions of disturbances are many. Notice how the Apostles’ fleeing was providentially ordered, but it was not from cowardice. Otherwise they would have ceased to preach, and they would not have exasperated the Jews from Thessalonica still more. From this flight two things resulted: both (1) the rage of those Jews was quenched, and (2) the preaching spread.

Fitly describing the disorderly conduct of the Jews, Luke says they, ‘Agitated the multitude’ (Acts 17:13). This is just what was done at Iconium -- that the Jews may have the additional condemnation for destroying others besides themselves (Acts 14:2, 19). Paul said of the Jews of Thessalonica: ‘They imitate the Jews of Judea; they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost”’ (1 Thessalonians 2:15-16).

Why didn’t Paul stay in Berea? At Lystra, (Acts 14:19, 21), where Paul was stoned, he nevertheless stayed a long time; why not here? The Lord did not wish them to be always doing signs; for this is itself a sign, greater than the working of signs — that being persecuted, they overcame without signs. Consequently, neither did the Apostles run after signs; as Paul says, ‘We preach Christ crucified’ (1 Corinthians 1:23). To those that crave signs, to those that crave wisdom, we give that which cannot persuade as much as signs, and yet we do persuade! So, this was a mighty sign! Notice that when the preaching is

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<sup>247</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXVII, Recapitulation.

extended, the Apostles are not in a hurry to run after signs. It was right that the believers themselves should be mighty signs to the rest as time went on.

“‘And immediately the brethren sent away Paul to the sea’ (Acts 17:14). The other Apostles feared for Paul, lest he should suffer some harm; they sent him toward the sea that it might not be easy for the Jews to seize him. At this time they could not have done much by themselves; but with Paul they accomplished many things.

In Berea, the Jews received Paul’s preaching more readily than at Thessalonica until Jews from Thessalonica found out. Then the Thessalonian Jews came to Berea (60 miles southwest) and stirred up the crowds such that Paul had to leave, sailing to Athens. However, Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Berea, probably to confirm the things Paul had started, and appoint presbyters. Since Paul wouldn’t be coming back this way for several years, it was necessary to ordain presbyters with Timothy doing so in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:1-3), Silas doing so in Berea (Acts 17:15, 18:5), and Luke in Philippi<sup>248</sup>.

### **The Beginning of the Church in Athens**

Athens is one of the oldest cities in the world<sup>249</sup>, being continuously inhabited for well over a thousand years prior to Moses. It was the leading city of ancient Greece during Paul’s days and prior to that, the cultural achievements of Athens laid the foundations of western civilization. The city is named after the goddess Athena, whose name comes from a pre-Greek language. The instrument of government in Athens from about the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC was a Council that met on the Hill of Ares, called the Areopagus.

The conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC widened Greek horizons but made the traditional Greek city-state obsolete. Athens remained a wealthy city with a brilliant cultural life, but ceased to be a fully independent power after that. Under Roman rule, Athens was given the status of a free city because of its widely admired schools.

The Athenians of Paul’s day were polytheistic and had many gods and goddesses who all acted like humans and had human vices. They would interact with humans, sometimes even spawning children with them. At times certain gods would be opposed to others, and they would try to outdo each other. Yet a god or goddess in Athens was not necessarily identical to one of the same names in another city.

Athenians had a well-developed sense of the place of the dead, called the place of Hades, where Hades was the brother of Zeus, the king of the gods. Within Hades (often shortened for “the place of Hades”) were Tartarus<sup>250</sup> for the damned and Elysium for the virtuous. Yet it was unheard of in Greek myths for people to come back from Hades<sup>251</sup> via resurrection. This became an important issue when Paul spoke in the Areopagus.

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<sup>248</sup> For more details regarding this, see the section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey titled “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

<sup>249</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Athens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Athens).

<sup>250</sup> Peter refers to Tartarus as the abode of the fallen angels (2 Peter 2:4).

<sup>251</sup> Orpheus tried to bring his wife Eurydice back from Hades, but he was frustrated in his attempt.

When Paul came to Athens, he came with “those who conducted him” (Acts 17:15). On each of Paul’s Missionary Journeys, there was a large traveling party that traveled with him, where many of this traveling party were members of the original Seventy Apostles. See Tables 1 and 2. One of the first things that Paul did on arriving in Athens was to send some of his traveling party back to Berea to get Silas and Timothy to rejoin him. Silas and Timothy would be Paul’s more trusted Apostles at this point; those who he could count on to establish a Church by themselves.

While Paul waited for Silas and Timothy to arrive, “his spirit was provoked<sup>252</sup> within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols” (Acts 17:16). Therefore, Paul reasoned with Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue on the Sabbath; on other days, he reasoned in the marketplace with Epicureans<sup>253</sup> and Stoics<sup>254</sup>, who were opposed to each other. The Epicureans and Stoics brought Paul to the Areopagus to have him speak about this strange new God that he was proclaiming, since they spent all their time listening to new things. Paul began by referring to their altar “to the unknown god”, and contrasted the idols to the true God. They listened attentively until Paul got to the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>255</sup> how different Paul’s experiences were among the Gentiles as compared to among the Jews.

“Notice how Paul met with greater trials among the Jews than among the Gentiles. Thus, in Athens he underwent nothing of this kind; they ridiculed him, but stopped there. Yet he did make some converts. Whereas among the Jews he underwent many perils; so much greater was their hostility against him.”

John Chrysostom also stated<sup>256</sup> that the philosophers (the Stoics and Epicureans) did not understand, or comprehend the subjects that Paul was speaking of. How could they? Athens was a city of talkers; “All the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21). Here the thing noted is, that though always occupied only in this telling and hearing, yet they thought those things strange -- things which they had never heard<sup>257</sup>. The Athenians, on many occasions, had received gods from foreign parts also -- for instance, the temple of Minerva<sup>258</sup>, Pan<sup>259</sup>, and others from different countries. They were afraid that there might be some other God not yet known to them, but worshipped elsewhere; so, they erected an altar to that god also; and as the god was not

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<sup>252</sup> Paul was not angry; he was just exasperated that everyone was given over to foolishness.

<sup>253</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epicureanism>. Epicureans were materialists, opposed to superstition and divine intervention, who believed that pleasure and the absence of pain is the highest good. Epicureanism became the main opponent of Stoicism.

<sup>254</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoicism>. Stoics taught that destructive emotions resulted from errors in judgment, and that a sage or person of "moral and intellectual perfection," would not suffer such emotions. The Stoics presented their philosophy as a way of life, and they thought that the best indication of an individual's philosophy was not what a person said but how he behaved.

<sup>255</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, XXXVIII, vv. 16-17.

<sup>256</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, XXXVIII, vv. 18-30.

<sup>257</sup> That is, the things that Paul was speaking of were so different from the pagan philosophy current in Athens that the Athenians thought what Paul was saying was strange. Chief among the strangeness was the concept that God made the world, rather than seeing all matter as uncreated, and the gods just adapting to it. See John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, XXXVIII, Recapitulation.

<sup>258</sup> Minerva is the Etruscan equivalent of the Greek Athena.

<sup>259</sup> Pan was the Greek god of the wild, half man, half goat, and the companion of nymphs.



known, the altar was inscribed, “To an Unknown God” (Acts 17:23). Paul began speaking to the Athenians from this point.

As Paul spoke to them, he contrasted their practice. He introduced “God that made the world and all things therein, He being Lord of heaven and earth”, not someone who “dwells in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). The Athenians viewed created things as gods: Zeus was the sky god; Poseidon was the sea god; Hades was the god of the underworld; Helios controlled the sun and Aphrodite controlled love. Paul presented God as creating all this.

Paul also mentioned that “We are also His offspring. Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold, silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising” (Acts 17:29). This was a direct reference to all the idols present. In saying this Paul quoted the Greek poet Aratus of Soli<sup>260</sup>, whose writings were quoted widely in ancient times, and who was born near Tarsus where Paul grew up. This God that Paul proclaimed “overlooked these times of ignorance, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, and has appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:30-31). John Chrysostom said<sup>261</sup>, “Among the Greeks, as is their notions of Creation, so likewise is their notion of the Judgment; it is like children’s fancies and the ravings of drunken men.”

The Athenians listened attentively until Paul got to the Resurrection of Christ from the dead (Acts 17:31). The Resurrection in any form was so foreign to the Epicureans and the Stoics that some mocked Paul and others just dismissed him off hand saying, “We will hear you again on this matter” (Acts 17:32). In spite of this ridicule, however, some men joined Paul and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris<sup>262</sup>, and others with them (Acts 17:34). Dionysus was of noble birth and was educated in Alexandria. While he was there in Alexandria, the sun was darkened as Jesus died on the cross (Luke 23:44-45). Dionysus remarked<sup>263</sup>, “Either God, the creator of the world is suffering, or the world is ending!” When Paul spoke in Athens at the Areopagus twenty years later, everything started making sense to Dionysus.

John Chrysostom concluded<sup>264</sup> that Paul left Athens quickly, even though there was no danger, because the Athenians were really not ready to listen to him. The Athenians just didn’t know what to make of what Paul was saying.

“What can be the reason that Paul is in such a hurry to leave Athens, having persuaded some, the others saying that they would listen to him again, and there being no dangers? Probably he knew that he would do them no great good. The Athenians, although fond of hearing strange things, nevertheless did not

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<sup>260</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aratus>. Aratus’ hexameter poem “Appearances” dealt with the constellations of the sky and with weather forecasts. Aratus referred, “We are God’s offspring” to Jupiter; Paul turned the reference to the true God.

<sup>261</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXVIII, Recapitulation.

<sup>262</sup> Damaris was the wife of Dionysius the Areopagite.

<sup>263</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 3. [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp\\_for\\_October\\_3](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp_for_October_3).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 3.

<sup>264</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIX, vv. 32-34.

listen to him; this was not their study; they were only looking for something to talk about. But if this was their custom, why did they say of him, ‘he seems to be proclaiming foreign gods?’ (Acts 17:18) These were matters that they did not at all know what to make of. The people that Paul did convert in Athens were those who were careful of right living, and who quickly received the word; but the others not so.”

Instead of spending more time in Athens, Paul ordained Hierotheos<sup>265</sup> as Bishop of Athens to do this for him. Hierotheos was one of the “others” that believed as a result of Paul speaking at the Areopagus. Dionysius had been a student of Hierotheos, which would make Hierotheos an older man. Hierotheos was renowned for his great wisdom in the Early Church and for composing many wonderful hymns. He was present at the funeral of the Virgin Mary in c. 55 AD, and all the Apostles gathered there were impressed with his singing of his hymns, which were far superior to any that existed then. When Hierotheos died, Paul ordained Dionysius in his place as Bishop of Athens.

### **The Church in Corinth**

The site<sup>266</sup> of the city of Corinth was occupied for thousands of years before Moses. One ancient myth states that the city was founded by Corinthos, a descendant of the sun god Helios. Another ancient myth states that the city was founded by the goddess Ephyra, a daughter of the Titan Oceanus. Corinth was one of the wealthiest cities of the ancient world, alongside Athens and Thebes.

In 146 BC, Rome declared war on the Achaean League, and after victories over league forces in the summer of that year, the Romans besieged Corinth. When the Roman General Lucius Mummius entered the city, he killed all the men with the sword and sold the women and children into slavery; then he torched the city. While there is archeological evidence of some minimal habitation in the years afterwards, Julius Caesar re-founded Corinth as *Colonia laus Iulia Corinthiensis* in 44 BC shortly before his assassination.

Under the Romans, Corinth was rebuilt as a major city in Southern Greece. It had a large mixed population of Romans, Greeks, and Jews. When the Apostle Paul first visited the city (51 AD), Gallio, the brother of Seneca, was proconsul.

### **Paul Worked with His Own Hands in Corinth**

“After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome<sup>267</sup>; and he came to

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<sup>265</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 4.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 4.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%204)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 4.

<sup>266</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient\\_Corinth.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Corinth)

<sup>267</sup> Some say that the Jews were expelled from Rome because they were in a continuous state of tumult due to the advance of Christianity in Rome. Claudius was thus expelling them as trouble-makers.

them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks (Acts 18:1-4).

Before Silas and Timothy arrived<sup>268</sup> from Berea (in Macedonia), Paul left for Corinth. There he came across a Jew named Aquila of Pontus<sup>269</sup> and his wife Priscilla. Both Aquila and Paul were tentmakers by trade (Acts 18:3); because of this natural affiliation, Paul stayed with Aquila in Corinth. Aquila was one of the original Seventy and had recently been expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius along with all the Jews from the city. After working together in Corinth for 1 1/2 years (Acts 18:11), Aquila and Priscilla began to travel and work with Paul a lot. For example, Aquila and Priscilla traveled to Ephesus with Paul (Acts 18:18) toward the end of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Journey (c. 52 AD). They were still in Ephesus on Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (c. 55 AD), when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:19). Later that year (55 AD), Aquila and Priscilla had moved to Rome and the Church was meeting in their house (Romans 16:3). Aquila was probably the first Bishop of Ephesus<sup>270</sup> from c. 52 to 55 AD. By the time Paul arrived in Rome in 62 AD, Aquila had left and was back in Ephesus serving as a Bishop. When Paul wrote to the Colossians from house-arrest in Rome (c. 62 AD), he does not mention Aquila as being in Rome anymore (Colossians 4:7-18). Aquila and Priscilla were beheaded by the pagans in Asia Minor<sup>271</sup>, probably near Ephesus, but there is very little information on their martyrdom. According to the Memoirs of Edessa<sup>272</sup>, Luke gave them his copy of the Book of Acts for safe-keeping after Paul's death. This suggests that their martyrdom was later in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, quite a bit after Paul's death. Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus<sup>273</sup> after Aquila and Timothy was martyred in Ephesus just before the Apostle John returned from exile on Patmos in 96 AD. Gaius was Bishop of Ephesus after Timothy<sup>274</sup>.

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<sup>268</sup> We note that Andronicus is no longer traveling with Paul, since he and Luke were left behind in Macedonia. For details, see the section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey titled "The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi".

<sup>269</sup> Pontus is on the Southeast shore of the Black Sea.

<sup>270</sup> From the Scriptures, comparing Acts 18:18 with 1 Corinthians 16:19. See also: Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 14. [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 14](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2014).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2004, February 13; 2008, July 14.

<sup>271</sup> According to the Roman Martyrology. There is also an ancient Church dedicated to Aquila and Priscilla on the Aventine Hill in Rome (one of the seven hills on which Rome is built), where their relics may have been taken to. See Thurston and Attwater, Butler's Lives of the Saints, Christian Classics, Westminster MD, 1981, July 8.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 14. [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 14](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2014).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2004, February 13.

<sup>272</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "The Teaching of the Apostles", 8-10, in Memoirs of Edessa, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

<sup>273</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, January 22. [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for January 22](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20January%2022).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, January 22.

<sup>274</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5. [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for November 5](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20November%205).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

John Chrysostom commented<sup>275</sup> on the significance of the Jews being driven from Rome in the early 50's AD. This was a precursor to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

“Though it was in the reign of Nero that the war against the Jews was consummated, yet from the time of Claudius, it was fanning up at a distance, so that they might come to their senses; from Rome they were now driven as common pests. This is why it is so ordered by Providence that Paul was led there as a prisoner, that he might not as a Jew be driven away, but as acting under military custody might even be guarded there.”

### **Silas and Timothy Arrive from Macedonia**

When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus is* the Christ. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, ‘Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles’. And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized” (Acts 18:5-8).

Once Silas and Timothy arrived from Berea, Paul began to testify about Jesus being the Christ whereas before, he merely reasoned with the Jews every Sabbath. When the Jews opposed him and blasphemed, Paul moved next door to the house of Justus<sup>276</sup>. However, Crispus<sup>277</sup>, the synagogue ruler, believed along with his whole household and joined Paul. Sosthenes, one of the original Seventy, was then installed as synagogue ruler by the Jews.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>278</sup> that the Synagogue Ruler converted as soon as Paul left. In Paul's vision he was not being reprov'd for being fearful; he was just being told what was to happen. The Apostles didn't always suffer; if they did, they might get worn down and become weak. To Paul, men's unbelief was worse than the dangers.

““And having removed thence he came into the house of one named Justus, that worshipped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue’ (Acts 18:7), and stayed there, by this wishing to persuade them that he was eager to go to the Gentiles. Accordingly, note immediately the ruler of the synagogue

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Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>275</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIX, vv. 1-2.

<sup>276</sup> This Justus is not the same person as Justus, the Lord's brother (Acts 1:23).

<sup>277</sup> John Chrysostom stated that he thought that Crispus and Sosthenes were the same person, since they were both synagogue rulers. But Sosthenes was one of the original Seventy and Crispus was not. So we also need to ask why Sosthenes would backslide from his calling to become synagogue ruler. Why didn't he believe before Paul came? This was now over 20 years after the Crucifixion, and some people may have changed. There was some backsliding among Jesus' disciples earlier. For example, in John 6:66, some of Jesus' disciples walked with Him no more after He said that unless you eat His body and drink His blood (the Lord's Supper), you have no life in you (John 6:54). Another factor with the Seventy was the possibility that they were in Jerusalem only for Passover and then left shortly afterward. So, after they returned from being sent out two by two, they may have gone home to their native country and weren't present for the Resurrection and Pentecost.

<sup>278</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIX, Recapitulation.

converted, and many others, when he had done this. ‘Crispus the ruler of the synagogue believed in the Lord, with his whole house: and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized’ (Acts 18:8). Observe the converts in those times doing this with their entire household. This Crispus he means where he writes, ‘I baptized none except Crispus and Gaius’ (1 Corinthians 1:14). The number of the many people persuaded Paul, but Christ’s claiming them for His own moved him more. Yet the Lord said also, ‘Fear not’ for the danger had become greater now, both because more believed, and also the ruler of the synagogue. This was enough to energize Paul! Not that Paul was being reproved as fearing; but that he should not suffer anything. ‘I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you’ (Acts 18:10). The Lord did not always permit the Apostles to suffer evil, that they might not become too weak. Nothing so grieved Paul as men’s unbelief and setting themselves against the Truth; this was worse than the dangers. Therefore, it is that Christ appeared to him now.”

John Chrysostom also stated<sup>279</sup> that when the Jews began to blaspheme, and Paul moved next door, this was intended to draw them even more. When he left, he shook his garments and said their blood is on their own head; this was to emphasize the seriousness of what they were doing; but he is not neglecting them.

“‘Paul began by disputing in the synagogue every Sabbath day, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks’ (Acts 18:4); but ‘when they opposed and blasphemed’ he withdrew. Why having left that house did he come to live next door to the synagogue? In order to draw them more! It was not that he saw any danger here. In this way Paul testified to them — he is not teaching now, but testifying — ‘having shaken his garments’, to terrify them not by word only but by action. Paul said to them, ‘Your blood be on your own heads’ (Acts 18:6); he speaks the more vehemently as having already persuaded many. ‘I am clean’. Then we also are accountable for the blood of those entrusted to us, if we neglect them. So that also when he says, ‘Henceforth let no man trouble me’ (Galatians 6:17), he says it to terrify. Not so much did the punishment terrify, as this stung them.”

### **Paul Has a Vision to Become Bold; Extensive Miracles Occurred**

Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, ‘Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city’. And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them” (Acts 18:9-11).

Early into Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, extensive miracles were done via Paul. At Ephesus, even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched Paul’s body were taken to heal the sick (Acts 19:11-12). Probably these miracles started on Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey in Corinth because of the extensive faith on the part of the Corinthian Christians. We can see how this works by comparing what happened to the Lord Himself in Nazareth.

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<sup>279</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIX, Recapitulation.

## Faith is Required for Miracles to Occur

John Chrysostom commented<sup>280</sup> on the lack of “mighty works” that Jesus was able to do in Nazareth. Since the people of Nazareth were so apostate, Jesus did not do much there so as to avoid inflaming them to envy and condemning them for their unbelief. Instead of marveling at Him, they belittled Him because of the humility of His stepfather, Joseph. Jesus was not concerned about the display of Himself, but about the salvation of the people of Nazareth. He kept coming back, but it was the same thing each time. He did a few miracles there so that they couldn’t consider Him an enemy.

“What did Jesus call ‘His own country’? It seems to me, Nazareth. ‘For He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief’ (Matthew 13:58); but in Capernaum He did miracles. Therefore, He said also, ‘And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day’” (Matthew 11:23).

“After coming there, Jesus slackened somewhat in His miracles, so as not to inflame them to more envy, nor to condemn them more grievously, by the aggravation of their unbelief. Yet He put forth a doctrine, having no less of wonder in it than the miracles. For these utterly senseless men, when they ought to have marveled, and to have been amazed at the power of His words, they on the contrary belittle Him because of him who seemed to be His father. Yet we know they had many examples of humble fathers who had illustrious children. David was the son of a certain undistinguished husbandman, Jesse; Amos, the child of a goatherd, was himself a goatherd; and Moses the lawgiver, had a father very inferior to himself. They ought to adore and be amazed, that being of such parents He spoke such things; it being quite clear, that this was not of man’s care, but of God’s grace. Yet they despised Him for what they should admire Him for. He continually frequented the synagogues, lest if He were always staying in the wilderness, they would the more accuse Him as making a schism.”

“Being amazed and in perplexity, they said, ‘Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works?’ (Matthew 13:54), either calling the miracles powers, or even the wisdom itself. ‘Is not this the carpenter’s son?’ (Matthew 13:55) The greater the marvel, and the more abundant the grounds for amazement! ‘Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude? And His sisters<sup>281</sup>, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things? So, they were offended at Him’” (Matthew 13:55-57).

“Nazareth had to be where He was speaking. ‘Are not his brethren such a one, and such a one?’ By this especially they ought to have been led on to faith. But envy is a poor degrading thing, and often falls foul of itself. The things were unusual and marvelous, and sufficient to have gained them over; but these offended them.”

“What then did Christ say to them? ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house. Now He did not do many mighty

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<sup>280</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XLVIII, 1.

<sup>281</sup> That is, Jesus’ “own country” was Nazareth since they refer to his brothers and sisters as to some people they were very familiar with.

works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:57-58). Mark said, ‘Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*’ (Mark 6:5). Yet it was to be expected He should have done them. If the feeling of wonder towards Him was gaining ground (for indeed even there He was marveled at), why did He not do them? Because He wasn’t concerned about the display of Himself, but about their profit! Therefore, when this did not succeed, He overlooked what concerned Himself, in order not to aggravate their punishment. Notice how He kept coming back to them for a long time. Notice also after a great display of miracles, they did not endure it, but were inflamed again with envy.”

“Why then did He yet do a few miracles? That they might not say, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country’ (Luke:4:23). That they might not say, ‘He is an enemy to us, and overlooks His own’; that they might not say, ‘If miracles had been done, we also would have believed’. Therefore, He both wrought them, and stayed: the one, that He might fulfill His own part; the other, that He might not condemn them the more.”

Jesus could not do much in Nazareth and other places because there was apostasy on the part of the supposed believers (Matthew 13:58, Mark 6:5-6). Not so in Corinth. The Lord had said to Paul in a vision, “I have many people in this city!” (Acts 18:10) When the Jews created a disturbance, the ruler of the city refused to listen to them (Acts 18:12-16). Thus, Paul was allowed to teach the Word peacefully for 18 months.

On the other hand, the Christians of Corinth were subject to many attacks by the demons to counteract their faith. These attacks are documented in Paul’s Epistles to Corinth, written on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey. There was the temptation to divide into factions (1 Corinthians 1:12-13), the temptation toward moral degenerateness (1 Corinthians 5:1) and arrogance (1 Corinthians 5:2), and the temptation to be self-centered about spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12) among others. All these things were part of a well-coordinated attack.

One of the more dramatic examples of this attack involved Paul’s teaching on the resurrection of the dead. Paul was in Corinth for 18 months teaching this from 51-52 AD. By the time that Paul wrote what we know as the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle to Corinth in 55 AD, Peter then Apollos had stopped by preaching the same thing (1 Corinthians 1:12). Yet three years later Paul wrote that there were some in Corinth who say there is no resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12). How did that happen? The only reasonable explanation is that the demons were really after the folks in Corinth to counteract their faith<sup>282</sup>.

### **The Jews Create a Disturbance Again**

“When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, “This fellow persuades men to worship God

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<sup>282</sup> A very influential character in the 1<sup>st</sup> century was Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-24). Simon’s influence is documented, especially in Corinth, in Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004. Since four of the original Seventy Apostles apostatized to follow the teachings of Simon, small wonder the folks in Corinth had trouble.

contrary to the law'. And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such matters'. And he drove them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things. So, Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow" (Acts 18:12-18).

Paul was then emboldened by a vision from the Lord, and spoke up all the more. After a year and a half of this, the Jews couldn't take it any longer and hauled Paul to the judgment seat of the proconsul for Achaia named Gallio. Gallio wouldn't even listen to the Jews' complaint so the Jews instead vented their wrath against Sosthenes, beating him in front of the judgment seat. Sosthenes was probably just trying to be the peacemaker and win over his fellow Jews like James was doing in Jerusalem. About three years later, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus (on his way to Corinth), Sosthenes was now traveling with Paul as an Apostle (1 Corinthians 1:1).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>283</sup> that this incident was a great victory for Paul and a great shame for the Jews. The Jews presented themselves as if they were drunken and mad while Paul and Sosthenes presented themselves as reasonable men.

"Gallio the proconsul taught the Jews that they did all things out of order. He does not say, 'It is not my duty', but, 'I do not choose', that they may not trouble him again. This is what Pilate said in the case of Christ, 'Take Him, and judge him according to your Law' (John 18:31). But the Jews were just like men who are drunken and mad. So Gallio drove them from the judgment-seat — he effectually closed the tribunal against them. Then all the Jews, having seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, beat him in front of the judgment-seat. But Gallio didn't care. This incident, of all others, set the Jews off on this violence — their persuasion that the governor would not even come down to notice. It was a splendid victory for Paul and great shame for the Jews! It is one thing for Paul to have come off victorious from a controversy, and another for the Jews to learn that Gallio didn't even care, even though the whole scene was meant as an insult to him! Why did Sosthenes, though he also had authority, not fight back? He was otherwise trained, so that the judge should learn which party was more reasonable. This was no small benefit to those present — both the reasonableness of Paul and Sosthenes, and the audacity of the Jews."

### **Paul Writes Epistles from Corinth to the New Church in Thessalonica**

Just for reference, during this year and a half stay in Corinth, Paul wrote two Epistles to the Thessalonians he had just established.

The result of Paul's efforts in Thessalonica was that the Church there became a light on a hill for everyone to see. The faithful in Thessalonica evangelized all of Macedonia.

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<sup>283</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIX, Recapitulation.



“You became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything” (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8).

“Concerning brotherly love, you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed, you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you. That you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing” (1 Thessalonians 4:9-12).

Paul further mentioned to the Thessalonians how they have become imitators of the Churches in Judea in their persecution by the Jews in Thessalonica. Paul again hints at the destruction coming on the Jews in Judea.

“You, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost” (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16).

“We ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer. It is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you” (2 Thessalonians 1:4-6).

### **Silas Remains in Corinth as Bishop**

Following Paul’s year and a half in Corinth, we do not hear about Silas any more. Since tradition ascribes the role of the first Bishop of Corinth to Silas<sup>284</sup>, he must have remained there all the way through the crisis Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians. Silas certainly must have had his hands full in Corinth.

### **Paul’s Return to Antioch**

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<sup>284</sup> Hippolytus, On the Seventy Apostles, 16.

Nikolai Velimirovic, The Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

Paul Hetherington, tr., The Painter’s Manual of Dionysius of Fournia, Oakwood Publications, 1974.

Demetrius of Rostov, The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints, January 4, tr. by Fr. Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2002

Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

## Paul Leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Charge in Ephesus

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>285</sup> that while Paul was everywhere working with the Gentiles, for the year and a half that he spent in Corinth, he was living in the same house as Aquila and Priscilla, who were Jews. The seeds of the war against the Jews by the Romans were beginning already then. Paul was not ashamed to live with lowly tentmakers rather than in a luxury condo. Even though Paul had been sent to the Gentiles, he was living with Jews without trying to get them to give up their Jewish traditions.

“Paul was led by the Spirit to Corinth, in which city he was to stay. ‘Having found a certain Jew named Aquila, of Pontus by birth, lately come from Italy, for the greater part of his life had been passed there — and Priscilla his wife, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome’ (Acts 18:2). Though it was in the reign of Nero that the war against the Jews was consummated, yet from the time of Claudius and it was fanning up, at a distance, so that they might come to their senses; from Rome they were now driven as common pests. This is why it was so ordered by Providence that Paul was led there as a prisoner, that he might not as a Jew be driven away, but as acting under military custody might even be guarded there. Having found these, ‘Paul came to them; and because he was of the same craft, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tent-makers’ (Acts 18:3). What a justification he found for dwelling in the same house with them! For because here, of all places, it was necessary for Paul to stay, ‘That I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast’ (2 Corinthians 11:12), it is providentially ordered that he stays there.”

“After leaving Athens, Paul ‘found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.’<sup>3</sup> So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers’ (Acts 18:1-3). Notice how, not in Jerusalem, nor near it the crisis was hastening to come, but at a greater distance. Paul stayed with Aquila, and is not ashamed to stay there; for this very reason he stays, as having a suitable lodging-place, for to him it was much more suitable than any king’s palace. Don’t smile, beloved, to hear of Paul’s occupation. It was good for him just as to the athlete the gymnasium is more useful than delicate carpets; so to the warrior the iron sword is more useful than a golden sword. Paul worked, even though he preached. Let us be ashamed, who though we have no preaching to occupy us, we live in idleness.”

Luke wrote, “So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow” (Acts 18:18). John Chrysostom noted<sup>286</sup> that Paul was keeping the Mosaic Law fairly strictly at this time, and so were the Jews he was staying with. But the keeping of the Law was fading; this was a time of transition. Paul stayed just a short time in Ephesus; he left

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<sup>285</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIX, vv. 2-3, Recapitulation.

<sup>286</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, vv. 18-21.

behind the Jews Priscilla and Aquila to teach the new converts, while he himself went to Jerusalem to keep the Feast (probably of Pentecost<sup>287</sup>).

“Notice how the Law was breaking up; notice how they were bound by conscience. This was a Jewish custom, to shear their heads agreeably with a vow. The Law also required a sacrifice (Acts 21:26), which was not the case here. It was necessary that Paul should stay, and comfort the Ephesians concerning these things. Paul then sailed for Syria since it was there that ‘the disciples were ordered to be called Christians’ (Acts 11:26); there Paul had been ‘commended to the grace of God’ (Acts 14:26); there Paul had effected such things concerning the doctrine. Priscilla and Aquila were with him up until Ephesus. But these he left at Ephesus; and with good reason, namely, that they should teach. For having been with him so long time, they were learning many things, and yet he did not at present withdraw them from their custom as Jews. Paul came to Ephesus, and left Priscilla and Aquila there; but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to stay longer with them, he did not consent; but bid them farewell, saying, ‘I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem’. Therefore, it was that he was hindered from coming into Asia, being impelled to what was of pressing moment. Thus, we observe him here, entreated by the Ephesians to stay, but because he could not comply, being in haste to depart, ‘he took leave of them’. However, he did not leave them without help, but with a promise to return, ‘But I will return again to you, God willing. And he sailed from Ephesus’” (Acts 18:21).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>288</sup> that Paul intentionally left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus so that they would be available to help Apollos. They all did everything by listening to the Holy Spirit. Thanks to Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos was able to come to Corinth with greater force in refuting the Jews from the Scriptures.

“‘And Paul came to Ephesus, and left Aquila and Priscilla there’ (Acts 18:19); for he did not wish to take them about with him, but left them at Ephesus. They subsequently dwelt at Corinth, and he bears high testimony to them, and writing to the Romans, greets them (Romans 16:3). It seems to me that they afterwards went back to Rome, in the time of Nero, as having an attachment for those parts where they had been expelled from in the time of Claudius. ‘But Paul himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews’. It seems to me that the faithful still assembled there, for they did not immediately withdraw them. ‘When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent’ (Acts 18:20), for he was hastening to Caesarea. ‘When he had landed at Caesarea, and had gone up and greeted the Church, he went down to Antioch. After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples’ (Acts 18:22-23). Through these

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<sup>287</sup> Paul stated, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem” (Acts 18:21). Sailing season on the Mediterranean is from April to October, and sailors usually spent the winter (November to March) in a sheltered harbor to avoid shipwreck from unpredictable storms. The Feast that Paul referred to was unlikely to be Passover, since Passover was likely over before the sailing season began. It is possible that Paul could have been referring to the Feast of Tabernacles in October, but more likely is the Feast of Pentecost. See also Acts 20:16.

<sup>288</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, vv. 19-28.

regions also he merely passes again, just enough to establish them by his presence. Then Apollos arrived in Ephesus (Acts 18:24). Now Apollos was an awakened man, traveling in foreign parts for this very purpose. Writing of him Paul said, ‘Now concerning Apollos our brother’ (1 Corinthians 16:12). When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately’ (Acts 18:26). It was not for nothing that Paul left them at Ephesus, but for Apollos’ sake, the Spirit so ordered it, that Apollos might come with greater force to the attack at Corinth. What may be the reason that they did not assault Apollos, but Paul they did? They knew that Paul was the leader, and great was the name of the man. ‘When Apollos desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace’ (Acts 18:27). That is, in faith; he did everything by faith; nowhere is there envy, nowhere is there an evil eye. Aquila teaches, or rather Apollos lets himself be taught. Apollos intended to depart, and they send letters ahead. ‘For he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ’ (Acts 18:28). Now by this, that he ‘publicly’ convinced them, his boldness was shown; by the clearness of his arguing, his power was declared; by his convicting them out of the Scriptures, his skill of learning was demonstrated. Neither boldness by itself contributes anything, where there is not power; nor power where there is not boldness.”

We note that Paul picked up two more members of his missionary band as he left Ephesus. Tychicus and Trophimus, both of the Seventy, have now joined Paul’s entourage (Acts 20:4). Trophimus was an Ephesian (Acts 21:29); Tychicus may have been from the Ephesus area also.

### **Paul Takes a Vow**

After leaving Corinth, Paul sailed for Ephesus, then home to Caesarea, Jerusalem and Antioch. He left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21) -- eventually Aquila became Bishop of Ephesus.

Of note on Paul’s return to Antioch is that “he had shorn his head in Cenchrea<sup>289</sup>, for he had taken a vow” (Acts 18:18). Thus, Paul took this vow after he left Corinth but before he arrived in Ephesus. Why? Taking vows was an Old Testament custom, and they were binding. The Lord had said, “It is better to not vow than to vow and not pay” (Ecclesiastes 5:5). But if Paul was proclaiming to the Gentiles that they don’t need to keep the Mosaic Laws (with a few exceptions as decreed by the Church in Jerusalem), why was Paul being so open about keeping the Mosaic Law himself? Paul used the Mosaic Law to his advantage. Prior to stopping in Ephesus, Paul followed the rules of the Mosaic Law for taking a vow (Acts 18:18-22, Numbers 6:1-21); when he stopped in Ephesus to reason with the Jews at the synagogue, this was very obvious to them due to Paul’s shaved head. Then Paul departed early in order to keep a Feast in Jerusalem – also part of the Mosaic Law. He left behind Priscilla and Aquila – also Jews – in

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<sup>289</sup> Corinth is located on a peninsula. Cenchrea was the port for Corinth on the eastern side of the peninsula.

order to teach the Jews in Ephesus additional things. These things Paul did in order to set up his return to Ephesus on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey with spectacular results.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>290</sup> that the practice of the Mosaic Law was still widespread, but it was breaking up. At this point Paul was on his way back to Antioch to report the results of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey.

“Notice how the Law was breaking up; notice how they were bound by conscience. This was a Jewish custom, to shear their heads agreeably with a vow. There ought to have been a sacrifice also (Acts 21:26), which was not the case here. Paul desired to come to Syria because it was there that ‘the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch’ (Acts 11:26); and because it was there that he had been ‘commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed’ (Acts 14:26). Paul also had had a major effect on the Doctrine there.”

“After taking this vow, Paul went to Ephesus and reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue. ‘Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him’ (Acts 18:18) — notice, a woman also. These he left at Ephesus, with good reason; namely, that they should teach. Having been with him so long, they had learned many things. Yet he did not at present withdraw them from their custom as Jews.”

“When the Ephesians desired him to stay longer with them, he didn’t consent; but said farewell, saying, ‘I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing’ (Acts 18:21). He was hindered from coming into Asia, being impelled to what was of pressing moment. Even though Paul was entreated by the Jews of Ephesus to stay, he could not comply, being in haste to depart due to his vow and the Feast Day in Jerusalem. However, he did not leave them without help, and promised to return.”

In summarizing Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, he started with Silas, picked up Andronicus in Tarsus, Timothy in Lystra, Luke in Troas and Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth. Urbanus was left behind in Tarsus, Luke, Andronicus and Junia in Macedonia, Olympas in Philippi, Jason in Thessalonica, Silas in Corinth and Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus.

When Paul returned to Antioch, Evodius was still the Bishop of Antioch. Since Evodius had been involved as Bishop in sending off Paul and Silas, it was common courtesy that Paul report back to him what he had accomplished. Evodius may have sent others back to the new Churches Paul had started to help out.

### **Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey**

#### **Members of the Seventy Accompanying Paul**

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<sup>290</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, v. 18.

**Table 3**  
**Those of the Seventy Who Served with Paul on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey**  
For More Details, see Appendix B

| Member of Seventy     | Native To    | Journey       | Later Bishop of         | Comments                         | Rome 55AD |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Amplias               |              | 2, 3          | Lydda, Odessus          |                                  | Yes       |
| Andronicus & Junia    | Tarsus       | 1, 2, 3       | Pannonia in Illyricum   | Prisoner with Paul               | Yes       |
| Apelles               | Smyrna       | 2, 3          | Smyrna                  | Acquaintance of Paul             | Yes       |
| Aquila & Priscilla    | Pontus       | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Ephesus before Timothy  | Acts 18:19                       | Yes       |
| Aristarchus           | Thessalonica | 3, 4, 5       | Apamea                  | Joined at end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> |           |
| Aristobulus           | Cyprus       | 1, 2, 3       | Sent to Britain         | Barnabas' brother                | Yes       |
| Asyncritus            |              | 3             | Hyrkania (Persia)       | Acquaintance of Paul             | Yes       |
| Carpus                |              | 2, 3, 5       | Berea, Troas            |                                  |           |
| Cephas                |              | 2, 3, 4       | Iconium after Tertius   |                                  |           |
| Crispus               | Corinth      | 2, 3          | Island of Aegina        | Synagogue ruler                  |           |
| Dionysius             | Athens       | 2, 3, 5       | Athens                  |                                  |           |
| Epaenetus             | Achaia       | 2, 3          | Carthage, Spain         |                                  | Yes       |
| Epaphras              |              | 3, 4, 5       | Colossae area           | Colossians 1:7, 4:12             |           |
| Epaphroditus          | Philippi     | 2, 3, 4       | Colophon in Pamphylia   |                                  |           |
| Erastus               |              | 3, 5          | --                      | Expert at finances               |           |
| Gaius                 | Derbe        | 1, 2, 3       | Ephesus after Timothy   | Presbyter in Derbe               |           |
| Hermas                |              | 2, 3          | Philippi                | Wrote "Shepherd"                 | Yes       |
| Hermes                |              | 3             | Dalmatia                |                                  | Yes       |
| Herodion              | Tarsus       | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Neoparthia, Patras      |                                  | Yes       |
| James, Lord's Brother | Bethlehem    | 2, 4          | Jerusalem               | Council of Jerusalem             |           |
| Jason                 | Tarsus       | 1, 2, 3       | Tarsus, Thessalonica    | Sent to Corfu                    |           |
| Linus                 |              | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Rome                    |                                  | No        |
| Lucius                |              | 3, 5          | Laodicea in Syria       | Paul's kinsman                   |           |
| Luke                  | Antioch      | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Roving Apostle          |                                  |           |
| Narcissus             |              | 2, 3          | Athens after Dionysius  | Acquaintance of Paul             | Yes       |
| Olympas               |              | 5             | --                      | Beheaded with Paul               | Yes       |
| Onesiphorus           | Iconium      | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Colophon near Ephesus   |                                  |           |
| Patrobus              |              | 3             | Naples, Puteoli         |                                  | Yes       |
| Philologus & Julia    |              | 3             | Sinope                  |                                  | Yes       |
| Phlegon               |              | 2, 3          | Marathon (Thrace)       | Worked with Luke                 | Yes       |
| Rufus                 | Cyrene       | 1, 2, 3       | Thebes in Greece        |                                  | Yes       |
| Silas                 |              | 2, 3          | Corinth                 |                                  |           |
| Sosipater             | Berea        | 1, 2, 3       | Iconium, Corfu          | Presbyter in Iconium             |           |
| Sosthenes             | Corinth      | 2, 3          | Caesarea                |                                  |           |
| Stachys               |              | 2, 3          | Byzantium               | Met Paul at Troas                | Yes       |
| Tertius               |              | 2, 3          | Iconium after Sosipater |                                  |           |
| Timothy               | Lystra       | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Ephesus                 |                                  |           |
| Titus                 | Crete        | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Crete                   |                                  |           |
| Trophimus             |              | 3, 4, 5       | --                      | Beheaded with Paul               |           |
| Tychicus              | Asia Minor   | 3, 4, 5       | Caesarea after Philip   |                                  |           |
| Urbanus               | Tarsus       | 2, 3          | Tarsus, Macedonia       |                                  | Yes       |

Table 3 shows the members of the Seventy Apostles who worked with Paul at some point on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.

## Visiting the Churches Already Established

Paul began his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey in a similar fashion to his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey; that is, visiting the Churches he had already established, starting with Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia.

“After Paul had spent some time in Antioch, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples” (Acts 18:23).

Figure 4 shows the route of Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey by following the numbers in bold green text. Most maps of Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey show him following a similar path as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey for the first part of the Journey. If he “strengthened all the disciples” (Acts 18:23), then he moved overland from Antioch through Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia to Ephesus. Along the way, he greeted (and strengthened) the presbyters and Bishops that he had ordained previously.

### A Change in the Bishops of the Churches

As Paul passed through various towns, he changed Bishops in some of them. This was something he deliberated about as he saw a need for the talents of some of these men in what he was heading for.

Starting his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul began the same as his 2<sup>nd</sup> Journey: that is, through Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia.

**Table 4**  
**Bishops of Asia Minor**

|                                    | <b>Tarsus</b> | <b>Derbe</b> | <b>Lystra</b> | <b>Iconium</b> | <b>Antioch Pisidia</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey | Jason         | Gaius        | Timothy       | Sosipater      | No record              |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey | Urbanus       | Not Gaius    | Artemas       | Not Sosipater  | No record              |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey | Not Urbanus   | Not Gaius    |               | Tertius        | No record              |
| Later                              |               |              |               | Cephas         |                        |

**Table 5**  
**Bishops of Macedonia and Achaia**

|                                    | Macedonia                     | Philippi | Thessalonica | Berea  | Corinth | Ephesus              |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|--------------|--------|---------|----------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey | --                            | --       | --           | --     | --      | --                   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey | Luke,<br>Andronicus,<br>Junia | Olympas  | Jason        | Carpus | Silas   | Aquila,<br>Priscilla |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey |                               |          | Silvanus     |        | Silas   |                      |
| Later                              |                               |          |              |        |         | Timothy              |

**Figure 4**  
**Map of Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey**<sup>291</sup>



<sup>291</sup> © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available.



As Paul began his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, very little is mentioned of what he did in Galatia and Phrygia (Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia). Cephas and Onesiphorus, two of the Seventy were mentioned on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journeys, in Iconium, where Cephas was Bishop of Iconium according to tradition<sup>292</sup>. Therefore, the first part of Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Journey was probably spent deliberately strengthening each Church from his 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey with the help of Timothy, Titus, Gaius, Aristarchus and Erastus.

Prior to Paul's arrival in Ephesus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Apollos, one of the Seventy, came through Ephesus and vigorously refuted the Jews publicly showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. When he arrived<sup>293</sup>, he "knew only the baptism of John". Aquila, the presbyter, and his wife Priscilla took Apollos aside and brought him up to date on what had happened since John the Baptist. Apollos received their word gratefully and then left for Achaia (and Corinth) to do the same for the Jews there. When Paul arrived at Ephesus, one of the things he had to address (in writing 1 Corinthians) was the factions in the Corinthian Church: some of Apollos, some of Peter, etc. Perhaps Silas -- whom Paul left in charge -- wasn't as gifted a speaker as the others and was having difficulty holding everything together.

Apollos did not intend to create a personality cult in Corinth. There was some contact between Paul and Apollos (1 Corinthians 16:12) and Apollos didn't want to go back to Corinth for fear of amplifying the personality cult he inadvertently created. Later in about 65 AD, when Titus was the Bishop of Crete, Paul encouraged Titus to receive Apollos (and Zenas) as they came through (Titus 3:13).

Since Apollos traveled so extensively, he may not have had the time to become established as Bishop anywhere. We know that he was in Ephesus (Acts 18:24), Corinth (Acts 19:1), Crete (Titus 3:13), and back in Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:12). Other accounts say that he was Bishop of Smyrna<sup>294</sup>, Caesarea in Bithynia<sup>295</sup>, Colophon<sup>296</sup>, Caesarea<sup>297</sup> and Corinth<sup>298</sup>.

### **Aquila & Priscilla Encounter Apollos; Paul Encounters John's Disciples**

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the Baptism of John. So, he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla

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<sup>292</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, January 4.

Note that [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 8](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%208) states that Cephas was Bishop of Colophon in Pamphylia.

<sup>293</sup> Apollos must have left Jerusalem for Alexandria, his home town, shortly after the Lord sent the Seventy out two by two (Luke 10:1-20). He seems to have missed Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>294</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 10.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for March 30](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20March%2030).

<sup>295</sup> [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for January 4](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20January%204).

<sup>296</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, December 8.

<sup>297</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, December 8.

<sup>298</sup> Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 72.

heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 18:24-28).

It happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ So, they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit’. And he said to them, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ So, they said, ‘Into John's baptism’. Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus’. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all” (Acts 19:1-7).

To understand the impact of John’s baptisms, one can look at the effects of John’s impact a generation after his death. Luke tells us about Apollos who was “fervent in spirit” and who taught accurately the things of the Lord even though he knew only the baptism of John (Acts 18:24, 25; 19:1-3). This occurred at the beginning of Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, which was 25 years after the death of John. Apollos had been instructed in the way of the Lord (by John) and was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24-25). For a follower of John to be this zealous long after his death indicates the enormous impact of John’s life.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>299</sup> a huge difference between Apollos and the twelve disciples of John the Baptist. Apollos was fervent in Spirit; the twelve didn’t even know that there was a Holy Spirit, even though both only knew the Baptism of John. Thus Paul, Aquila and Priscilla treated them differently. To Apollos, they just explained things more accurately; the twelve, they had to baptize.

“Notice that even learned men are now urgently needed. Notice also the spread of the preaching!”

“If Apollos knew only the baptism of John, how is it that he was ‘fervent in the Spirit’, for the Spirit was not given in that way? And if the twelve disciples of John the Baptist needed the baptism of Christ, why wouldn’t Apollos need it? What can we say of this? It is not without a meaning that Luke has strung the two incidents together. The same thing that took place in the case of Cornelius (Acts 10), must have taken place also in the case of Apollos. Note that Apollos did not receive baptism. The other twelve followers of John the Baptist knew nothing accurate, not even what related to Jesus.”

“These twelve disciples were very different from Apollos, men who did not even know whether there was a Holy Spirit. ‘Apollos, on the other hand, was fervent in spirit; he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John’ (Acts 18:25). Aquila and Priscilla ‘explained to him the way of God more accurately’ to Apollos so that Apollos could do the same thing in Achaia; they also gave him letters of introduction. When Apollos arrived in Achaia, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he

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<sup>299</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, vv. 24-28.

vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 18:28).

“While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul found the twelve disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:1). Since they had not so much as heard whether there is any Holy Spirit’, Paul said, ‘John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe on Him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus’ (Acts 19:2-4). That the twelve disciples of John did not even believe in Christ is plain from Paul’s saying, ‘that they should believe on Him that was to come after John’. Paul did not say that the baptism of John is nothing, but it is incomplete. After the twelve disciples of John were baptized and Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied (Acts 19:5-7). It was likely that the twelve disciples of John had some measure of the Holy Spirit, but it did not appear very obviously.”

John Chrysostom continued to point out<sup>300</sup> how awakened was Apollos in the Spirit. The saints in the various Churches recognized this and treated Apollos accordingly. The twelve disciples of John the Baptist – who had been dead now for about 25 years -- illustrate how incomplete the Baptism of John was. Yet John’s baptism of repentance was a very useful thing to have along with the fervor that often came with it, that makes us diligent for virtue.

“Apollos was an awakened man, traveling in foreign parts for this very purpose. Writing of him Paul said, ‘Now concerning our brother Apollos’ (1 Corinthians 16:12). It was not for nothing that Paul left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus; for Apollos’ sake, the Spirit so ordered it, that Apollos might come with greater force to Corinth. Why did the Jews in Corinth do nothing to Apollos, but Paul they assaulted? They knew that Paul was the leader, and great was the name of the man. When Apollos wanted to pass into Achaia (Acts 18:27), he did everything by faith. The brethren wrote letters to help him; nowhere was there envy; nowhere was there an evil eye. Aquila teaches, and Apollos lets himself be taught. He wanted to depart, and they sent letters. ‘For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly’ (Acts 18:28). That he ‘publicly’ convinced the Jews, his boldness was shown; by the clearness of his arguing, his power was declared; by his convicting them out of the Scriptures, his skill of learning was demonstrated. For neither boldness by itself contributes anything, where there is not power, nor power where there is not boldness.”

“Why did the twelve disciples in Ephesus have only the baptism of John? Probably they had been on a visit to Jerusalem at the time of John’s preaching, and did not even know Jesus. Paul did not say to them, ‘Do you believe in Jesus?’ But he said ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ (Acts 19:2). He knew that they had not, but he wished for them to say it, that having learned what they lack, they may ask. From the baptism itself John prophesies: Paul leads them to see that this is the meaning of John’s baptism, ‘That they should believe on Him that was to come’ (Mark 1:7, John 1:27). John said, ‘I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire?’ (Matthew

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<sup>300</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, Recapitulation.

3:11). ‘When Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied’ (Acts 19:6). The gift was twofold: tongues and prophesying. Thus, an important doctrine is revealed: that the baptism of John is incomplete.”

“Paul does not say, ‘Baptism of forgiveness’, but, ‘Baptism of repentance’. What is it then? These twelve did not have the Holy Spirit; they were not so fervent, not even instructed. Why did Apollos not receive baptism? The case seems to me to be this: Great was the boldness of the man. ‘He taught diligently the things concerning Jesus’, but he needed more diligent teaching. Thus, though not knowing everything, by his zeal he attracted the Holy Spirit, in the same manner as Cornelius and his company.”

“It would be good if we had the baptism of John now! But if we did, many would still be careless in attaining a life of virtue, and it might be thought that each aimed at tongues and prophesy, not at virtue for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. There would be many false prophets; for then ‘those who are approved’ would not be very ‘clear’ (1 Corinthians 11:19). Just as, ‘Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed’ (John 20:29), so those that believe without signs. Jesus said, ‘Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe’ (John 4:48). We lose nothing by lack of miracles, if we only pay attention to ourselves. We have the sum and substance of the good things; through baptism we received remission of sins, sanctification, participation of the Spirit, adoption, eternal life. What more could we want?”

John Chrysostom took a closer look<sup>301</sup> at where Apollos was at when he came to Ephesus. He taught diligently the things of the Lord, but he knew only the baptism of John. He was fervent in the Spirit, but Aquila and Priscilla expounded to him the way of God more perfectly. Apollos may have been one of the 120 who were baptized with the Apostles, or he may have been back home in Alexandria at the time of Pentecost. He had attracted the Holy Spirit due to his boldness and he used that gift in a very powerful manner. The twelve other disciples of John were much different. They had probably been baptized by John on a visit to Jerusalem when John was preaching, but they had probably never met Jesus, and did not have the Holy Spirit.

“‘A certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus’ (Acts 18:24). Notice that even learned men are now urgently seeking the Faith, and the disciples are going abroad. Note also the spread of the preaching! ‘This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So, he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately’ (Acts 18:25-26). One might say, ‘If this man knew only the baptism of John, how is it that he was ‘fervent in the Spirit’, for the Spirit was not given in that way? And if those after him needed the baptism of Christ, much more would he need it.’ What can be said? For it is not without a meaning that Luke has strung the two incidents together. It seems to me that Apollos was one of the hundred and twenty who were baptized with the

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<sup>301</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, vv. 18:24-19:6.

Apostles; or, if not so, then the same that took place in the case of Cornelius took place also in the case of Apollos. But it doesn't say that he received baptism. The other twelve knew nothing accurate, not even what related to Jesus. It is likely that Apollos had in fact received baptism. But if these disciples of John, after John's baptism again received baptism, did they need this? Why the need of water? These twelve are very different from Apollos, men who did not even know whether there was a Holy Spirit. When he wanted to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; when he came, he helped them much who had believed through grace, for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:27-28).

"Apollos was an awakened man, traveling in foreign parts for this very purpose. Writing of him Paul said, 'Now concerning Apollos our brother' (1 Corinthians 16:12). It was intentional that Paul left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus (Acts 18:26), for Apollos' sake, the Holy Spirit so ordered it, that Apollos might come with greater force to the attack on Corinth. What may be the reason that the Jews in Corinth did nothing to Apollos, but Paul they assaulted? They knew that Paul was the leader, and great was the name of the man. When Apollos wanted to pass into Achaia'; i.e. in faith, he did everything by faith; 'the brethren wrote'. Nowhere was there envy; nowhere was there an evil eye. Aquila taught, or rather Apollos let himself be taught. He intended to depart, and they sent letters. 'For Apollos vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ' (Acts 18:28) Now by this, that he 'publicly' convinced them, his boldness was shown; by the clearness of his arguing, his power was declared; by his convicting them out of the Scriptures, his skill of learning was demonstrated. Neither boldness by itself contributes anything, where there is no power, nor power where there is no boldness. Where had those twelve disciples, being in Ephesus, obtained the baptism of John? Probably they had been on a visit at Jerusalem at the time of John's preaching, and did not even know Jesus. Paul does not say to them, 'Do you believe in Jesus?' but 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' (Acts 19:2) Paul knew that they had not, but wishes themselves to say it, that having learned what they lack, they may ask. From John's baptism itself, John prophesies; and he leads them to see that this is the meaning of his baptism. 'That they should believe on Him Who was to come'. John had said, 'I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire' (Matthew 3:11). When Paul 'had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied' (Acts 19:6). The gift is twofold: tongues and prophesying. From this is shown an important teaching, that the baptism of John is incomplete. John does not say, 'Baptism of forgiveness', but, 'of repentance'. These twelve did not have the Holy Spirit; they were not as fervent; they were not even instructed. Why did Apollos not receive baptism? The case seems to me to be this: Great was the boldness of the man. 'He taught diligently the things concerning Jesus', but he needed more diligent teaching. Thus, though not knowing all, by his zeal he attracted the Holy Spirit in the same manner as Cornelius and his company."

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>302</sup> briefly how some women served in the early Church. They were more spirited than lions and traveled with the Apostles, facing dangers with them. Yet they didn't do the same things that the men did, but did similar things in a different way. Priscilla taught the Apostle Apollos, but privately. Mary (Magdalene) labored behind the scenes for Paul. Women are not forbidden from teaching; they just don't do it from the Bishop's seat.

“How is this? A woman again is honored and proclaimed victorious! Again, we men are put to shame. Or rather, we are not put to shame only, but have even an honor conferred upon us. We are honored in that we have such women among us; but we are put to shame, in that we men are left so far behind by them. But if we come to know why it comes about that they are so adorned, we too shall speedily overtake them. Why are these women adorned? Let both men and women listen. It is not from bracelets, necklaces, or from the abundance of eunuchs; it is not from their maid-servants, and gold-broidered dresses, but from their labors in behalf of the truth. Paul said, ‘Greet Mary<sup>303</sup>, who labored much for us’ (Romans 16:6); that is, not for herself only, or on her own advancement. Many women of the present day do this, by fasting, and sleeping on the floor; but they labor for others also, so carrying on the race Apostles and Evangelists ran. In what sense then does Paul say, ‘I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence?’ (1 Timothy 2:12) He means to hinder her from publicly coming forward (1 Corinthians 14:35), and from the seat on the bema<sup>304</sup>, not from the word of teaching. If this were the case, how would he have said to the woman that had an unbelieving husband, ‘How do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband?’ (1 Corinthians 7:16) Or how did Paul allow her to admonish children, when he says, ‘She will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control?’ (1 Timothy 2:15) How did Priscilla come to instruct even Apollos? (Acts 18:26) It was not then to cut off useful private conversation that Paul said this; but that above all, it was the teacher's duty to address the public assembly. In the case where the husband was a believer and thoroughly furnished, he might be able to instruct his wife. When the wife is the wiser, then Paul does not forbid her from teaching and improving her husband. Paul does not say that Mary taught much, but that she ‘labored much for us’, because along with teaching she performs other ministries besides; those in the way of dangers, in the way of money, in the way of travels. The women of those days were more spirited than lions, sharing with the Apostles their labors for the Gospel's sake. In this way they traveled with the Apostles, and also performed all other ministries. Even in Christ's day many women followed Him, ‘who provided for Him from their substance’ (Luke 8:3), and waited upon the Teacher.”

John Chrysostom had especially strong praise<sup>305</sup> for Aquila and Priscilla, especially for Priscilla as a woman of God. She was just the wife of a tent-maker, a rather lowly occupation. Yet she instructed the Apostle Apollos and with her husband, laid down her own neck for the Apostle Paul. She helped Paul in all things, provided monetary assistance, housed Paul for two

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<sup>302</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 6.

<sup>303</sup> From tradition, this was Mary Magdalene.

<sup>304</sup> The “bema” was a slightly raised platform where the Bishop's chair was located.

<sup>305</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXX, vv. 2-5.

years and opened her house for the Church to meet in both in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:19) and in Rome (Romans 16:3). Even though she was a Jew, she did this for Gentiles! Her fame has spread throughout the world for what she has done. This is one woman well worth emulating!

“Paul greeted Priscilla and Aquila<sup>306</sup> when he wrote to the Church in Rome in c. 55 AD. ‘Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 16:2). To the excellence of these Luke also bears witness. Partly when he says that Paul ‘stayed with them, for by their occupation they were tentmakers’ (Acts 18:3); and partly when he points out Priscilla as receiving Apollos, and instructing him in the way of the Lord (Acts 18:26). Now these are great things, but what Paul mentions are greater. And what does he mention? In the first place he calls them ‘helpers’, to point out that they had been sharers of his very great labors and dangers. Then Paul says, ‘Who risked their own necks for my life’ (Romans 16:4). They are thoroughly furnished martyrs. For in Nero’s time it is probable that there were thousands of dangers, at the time as he even commanded all Jews to be removed from Rome (Acts 8:2). ‘To whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles’” (Romans 16:4).

“Here he hints at their hospitality, and monetary assistance, holding them in admiration because they had both poured forth their blood, and had made their whole property open to all. These were noble women, hindered no way by their sex in the course of virtue. This is as might be expected. ‘There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Galatians 3:28). What Paul had said of Phoebe (Romans 16:1), that he said also of Priscilla. Of Phoebe, Paul had said, ‘she has been a helper of many and of myself also’ (Romans 16:2). So too of Priscilla ‘to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles’ (Romans 16:4). In order that Paul might not seem to be a flatterer, he mentions many more witnesses to these women.”

“In Rome the Church met in Priscilla and Aquila’s house (Romans 16:5). Priscilla had been so estimable as even to make their house a Church, both by making all in it believers, and because they opened it to all strangers. Paul was not in the habit of calling any houses Churches, only where there was much piety, and much fear of God deeply rooted in them. On this ground he said to the Corinthians also (from Ephesus), ‘Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the Church that is in their house’ (1 Corinthians 16:19). When writing about Onesimus, ‘Paul to Philemon, and to the beloved Apphia, and to the church in your house’ (Philemon 1:1-2). It is possible for a man even in the married state to be worthy of being looked up to, and noble. Notice how Aquila and Priscilla were married and became very honorable, and yet their occupation was far from being honorable; for they were ‘tent-makers’. Still their virtue covered all this, and made them more conspicuous than the sun. Neither their trade nor their marriage (Philippians 4:3) was any bit harmful to them, but the love which Christ required of them, that they exhibited. ‘Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends’ (John 15:13). That which is a proof of being a disciple, they achieved, since they took up the Cross and followed Him. Those who did this for Paul would much rather have displayed their fortitude in Christ’s

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<sup>306</sup> We note that Priscilla and Aquila were no longer in Ephesus where Paul had left them toward the end of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (c. 52 AD). Nero was now on the Throne and Jews were allowed to return to Rome.

behalf. Let rich and poor both hear all this. If Aquila and Priscilla who lived from their labor, and were managers of a workshop, exhibited such profuseness as to be of service to many Churches; what pardon can they expect, who are rich, and yet neglect the poor? They did not spare even their blood for the sake of God's will, but we are sparing even of scanty sums, and many times we don't risk our own soul. So, Priscilla and Aquila risked their lives for Paul, but did they do so with regard to the disciples? Yes! For 'the churches of the Gentiles thank them' (Romans 16:4). Yet they were Jews! But still they had such a clear faith, as to minister to the Gentiles also with all willingness. Such ought women to be, not adorning themselves with 'braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing' (1 Timothy 2:9), but in these good deeds. What empress was so conspicuous or so celebrated as this wife of the tent-maker? Everybody talks about her, not for ten or twenty years, but until the coming of Christ, and all proclaim her fame for things such as adorn far more than any royal diadem. What is greater than to have been a helper of Paul? And at her own peril to have saved the teacher of the world? Consider: how many empresses there are that no one ever speaks of. But the wife of the tent-maker Aquila is everywhere reported of with the tent-maker Paul; and her fame has spread throughout the world. Persians, Scythians, Thracians, and they who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, sing of the Christian spirit of this woman, and bless it. How much wealth, how many diadems and purples would you not be glad to give just to obtain such a testimony? Paul calls them 'fellow workers and helpers' on this ground. Paul, the 'chosen vessel' (Acts 9:15), does not feel ashamed to call a woman (Priscilla) his helper but even finds an honor in doing so. It is not the sex that Paul was addressing; but the will is what he honors. What is equal to this ornament? Notice that the dress of woman is not that put about the body, but that which decorates the soul, which is never put off, which does not lie in a chest, but is laid up in the heavens. Look at their labor for the preaching, the crown in martyrdom, the munificence in money, the love of Paul, the charm they found in Christ. We might compare this with our own ways, our anxiety about money, our vying with harlots (i.e. in dress), and then we will see who they were and who we are. Or rather do not compare only, but compete with Priscilla, and after laying aside the burdens of clothing, take the dress from heaven, and learn how Priscilla became such as she was. How did they become so? For two years they entertained Paul as a guest (Acts 19:10, 18:3) and these two years were done for their souls. What can we do then, you will say, because we don't have Paul? If we want, we can have him in a truer sense than they did. For them the sight of Paul was not what made them of such a character, but the words of Paul. So if we are so minded, we can have both Paul, Peter, John and the whole choir of the Prophets, with the Apostles, associating with us continually. If we take the books these blessed ones wrote, and hold a continual exchange with their writings, they will be able to make us like the tent-maker's wife."

John Chrysostom stated<sup>307</sup> that not many people who are wise according to the flesh were called. Some exceptions were the Proconsul on Cyprus, Dionysius the Areopagite and Apollos,

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<sup>307</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, V, 1-2.



where Apollos was wise enough to allow himself to be corrected by Priscilla. Most of the rest were untrained teachers and untrained disciples, who ended up surpassing the wise of their age. Paul did not intentionally call the ignorant; he received both, but the ignorant in much larger numbers. The reason for this is that the wise of this world have a greater hurdle to overcome in that much more of their “wisdom” is useless and prideful.

“Paul said, ‘For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise’ (1 Corinthians 1:26-27). Paul said that, ‘the foolishness of God is wiser than men’ (1 Corinthians 1:25); to demonstrate this, he showed that wisdom is cast out, both by the testimony of Scripture and by the issue of events. By the testimony, where he says, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise’ (1 Corinthians 1:19), Paul put his argument in the form of a question, ‘Where is the wise? Where the scribe?’ (1 Corinthians 1:20) At the same time Paul proved that the thing is not new, but ancient, as it was foretold from the beginning. Paul shows that it was expedient for things to take this course, that the Cross is a demonstration of ineffable power and wisdom, and that the foolishness of God is far mightier than the wisdom of man. Paul proves this not by means of the teachers, but by means of the disciples themselves. ‘Behold your calling’ he said, ‘that not only teachers of an untrained sort, but untrained disciples were objects of His choice; that Christ chose ‘not many wise according to the flesh’ (1 Corinthians 1:26). That of which he is speaking is proved to surpass both in strength and wisdom, in that it convinces both the many and the unwise. It is extremely hard to convince an ignorant person, especially when what is said concerns great and necessary things. However, they did work conviction. Paul calls the Corinthians themselves as witnesses. ‘Behold your calling, brethren’. Consider: doctrines so wise, wiser than all, should be received by ordinary men, testifies the greatest wisdom in the teacher.”

“What does it mean, ‘according to the flesh?’ According to what is in sight; according to the life that now is; according to the discipline of the Gentiles. Paul did not say, ‘No wise man’, but, ‘Not many wise men’ (1 Corinthians 1:26). He had convinced both the Proconsul, (Acts 13:12), the Areopagite (Acts 17:34) and Apollos (Acts 18:26: through Aquila and Priscilla) and other wise men, too, coming over to the Gospel. Paul did not intentionally call the ignorant and pass by the wise, but these also he received, yet the others in much larger number. Why? Because the wise man according to the flesh is full of extreme folly; and it is he who especially answers to the term ‘foolish’, when he will not abandon his corrupt doctrine. As in the case of a physician who might wish to teach certain persons the secrets of his art, those who know a few things, having a perverse mode of practicing the art which they make a point of retaining, would not endure to learn quietly. But they who knew nothing would most readily embrace what was said; even so it was here. The unlearned were more open to conviction, for they were free from the extreme madness of accounting themselves wise. The excess of folly is in these more than any, these, I say, who commit unto reasoning things which cannot be ascertained except by faith. Thus, suppose the smith by means of the tongs drawing out the red-hot iron; if anyone should insist on doing it with his hand, we should vote him guilty of extreme folly: so in like manner the

philosophers who insisted on finding out these things for themselves disparaged the faith. And it was owing to this that they found none of the things they sought for.”

John Chrysostom referred<sup>308</sup> to Aquila and Priscilla as Evangelists as opposed to Apostles, even though Aquila was numbered among the Seventy Apostles, like Mark and Luke, due to the work that they did in the Churches.

“First, Paul lists, ‘Apostles’; for these had all gifts; secondarily, ‘prophets’; for there were some who were not indeed apostles, but prophets, such as Agabus. Thirdly, ‘evangelists’, who did not go about everywhere, but only preached the Gospel, as Priscilla and Aquila. ‘Pastors and teachers’ were those who were entrusted with the charge of a whole nation. What then? Are the pastors and the teachers inferior? Yes, surely; those who were settled and employed about one spot, as Timothy and Titus, were inferior to those who went about the world and preached the Gospel. However, it is not possible from this passage to frame the subordination and precedence, but from another Epistle. ‘He gave’, Paul said; we must not say a word to contradict it. Perhaps by ‘evangelists’, Paul includes those who wrote the Gospels. ‘For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ’” (Ephesians 4:12).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>309</sup> that even though Paul said that the Gospel is not preached “with wisdom of words”, this does not make Apollos useless. In fact, he was very helpful.

“If it was ‘not with wisdom of words’ (1 Corinthians 1:17), why did the Church send Apollos, who was eloquent? It was not through confidence in his power of speech, but because he was ‘mighty in the Scriptures’, and ‘confuted the Jews’ (Acts 18:24, 28). Besides the point in question was that the leaders and first disseminators of the word were not eloquent; since these were the very persons to require some great power, for the expulsion of error in the first place; then at the outset, the abundant strength was needed. God could do without educated persons at first; if afterwards some being eloquent were admitted by Him, He did so not because He wanted them, but because He would make no distinctions. He did not need wise men to accomplish whatever He would; if any were afterwards found such, He did not reject them on that account.”

John Chrysostom took a close look<sup>310</sup> at Priscilla’s instructing Apollos and compared that to Paul’s words forbidding women to teach. Paul forbid women from public preaching, but not from private conversation. Even though Mary Magdalene (here referred to) did not preach, she was still referred to in the Early Church as “Equal to the Apostles” along with Priscilla, who instructed Apollos.

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<sup>308</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XI, vv. 11-12.

<sup>309</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, III, 7.

<sup>310</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 6.

“Paul wrote, ‘Greet Mary<sup>311</sup>, who bestowed much labor on us’ (Romans 16:6). How is this? A woman again is honored and proclaimed victorious! We men are honored in that there are such women among us, but we are put to shame, in that we men are left so far behind by them. But if we come to know why they are so adorned, we too shall speedily overtake them. Let both men and women listen. It is not from bracelets or necklaces, but from their labors in behalf of the truth. For Paul says, ‘who bestowed much labor on us’; that is, not on herself only, nor upon her own advancement, (for these many women of the present day do, by fasting and sleeping on the floor), but upon others also, so carrying on the race that the Apostles and Evangelists ran. In what sense then does Paul say, ‘I don’t permit a woman to teach?’ (1 Timothy 2:12) He means to hinder her from publicly coming forward (1 Corinthians 14:35), and from the seat on the bema<sup>312</sup> occupied by the Bishop, not from the word of teaching. If this were the case, how would he have said to the woman that had an unbelieving husband: ‘How do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband?’ (1 Corinthians 7:16) Or why did he allow her to admonish children, when he says, ‘She will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control?’ (1 Timothy 2:15) How was Priscilla allowed to instruct even Apollos? It was not then to eliminate private conversations that may be advantageous that he said this, but for public speaking, and which it was the teacher’s duty to give in the public assembly. In case of the unbelieving husband his wife was allowed to thoroughly furnish him, that he might be able also to instruct her. When she is the wiser, then he does not forbid her teaching and improving him. Paul does not say of Mary, who taught much, but ‘who bestowed much labor’; along with teaching she performed other ministries besides, those relating to dangers, money and travels. The women of those days were more spirited than lions, sharing with the Apostles their labors for the Gospel’s sake. In this way they traveled with them, and also performed all other ministries. Even in Christ’s day women followed Him, ‘who provided for Him from their substance’ (Luke 8:3), and waited on the Teacher.”

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>313</sup> that Paul fought against various false apostles who taught different doctrines, but Apollos was not one of them. While Paul didn’t come with great learning, Apollos did, and he complemented Paul very nicely.

“Paul had said, ‘If he that comes preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach’; and ‘you receive a different Spirit, which you did not receive; or a different Gospel, which you did not accept’ (2 Corinthians 11:4). Paul shows that it is proper to listen to them, not simply if they say something more, but if they said anything more which ought to have been said and was omitted by us. But if it ought not to have been said, and was therefore not said by us; or if they say only the same things as we, why do you gape so admiringly upon them? Yet if they say the same things, why does Paul hinder them? Because they use hypocrisy; they introduce strange doctrines. For the present Paul does not say this, but

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<sup>311</sup> This is Mary Magdalene, who had been in Rome since just after Pentecost, 30 AD. For her efforts in Rome and later in Ephesus, Mary Magdalene was referred to in the Early Church as “Equal to the Apostles”.

<sup>312</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bema>. The Bema in ancient Churches was a slightly raised platform area similar to a pulpit area in modern Churches, but larger in area. Only the clergy occupied the Bema.

<sup>313</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXIII, v.4.

afterwards asserts it, when he says, ‘Such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ’ (2 Corinthians 11:13) for the present he withdraws the disciples from their authority by less offensive considerations. This was not out of envy of them; it was to secure the Corinthians in the Faith. Otherwise why doesn’t he hinder Apollos, who was a ‘learned man, and mighty in the Scriptures’ (Acts 18:24; 1 Corinthians 16:12 ) but even begs him, and promises he will send him? Because together with his learning he preserved also the integrity of the doctrines; but with the false apostles it was the reverse. Therefore, Paul wars with them and blames the disciples for gaping admiringly upon them, saying, ‘if anything that should have been said we omitted and they supplied, we do not hinder you from paying attention to them. But if all has been fully completed by us and nothing left deficient, why is it that they caught you?’” (2 Corinthians 11:14-16 paraphrase)

Gregory of Nyssa wrote<sup>314</sup> that while Paul planted the Church of Corinth, Apollos “watered” the Church (1 Corinthians 3:6) by baptizing many of the new Christians.

“Those in whom the Holy One dwells, He makes holy, even as the Good One makes men good. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are holy and good, and act as a guide to those who approach the mystery. This may well be said of Apollos who watered what Paul planted. Paul planted by his guidance, and Apollos, when he baptizes, waters by Sacramental regeneration, bringing to the mystery those who were instructed by Paul. Thus, we place on a level with Apollos that Spirit Who perfects men through baptism.”

Augustin of Hippo wrote<sup>315</sup> of Paul planting the Church at Corinth, but then Apollos as watering the Church by baptizing many there; Apollos becomes more important because of this.

“The Apostle Paul himself said, ‘For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel’ (1 Corinthians 1:17). To this we may add, that according to this, Apollos, who watered by baptizing begins to be more important than Paul, who planted by preaching the Gospel. Paul claims to himself the relation of father towards the Corinthians in virtue of this very act, and does not grant this to those who came to them after him. Paul says, ‘Though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel’ (1 Corinthians 4:15). He says, ‘I have begotten you’ to the same men to whom he says in another place, ‘I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, and I baptized also the household of Stephanas’ (1 Corinthians 1:14-16). He had begotten them, therefore, not through himself, but through the Gospel.”

John Chrysostom didn’t go into detail<sup>316</sup> about what Apollos did in Corinth, but simply noted that it was essential.

“Paul said, ‘I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase’ (1 Corinthians 3:6). That is, I first cast the word into the ground; but in order that the seeds might not wither away through temptations, Apollos added his own part.

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<sup>314</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius, II, 15.

<sup>315</sup> Augustin of Hippo, Answer to the Letters of Petilian the Donatist, III, lv, 67.

<sup>316</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, VIII, v. 6.

But the whole was of God. ‘So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase’” (1 Corinthians 3:7).

Alexander Roberts wrote<sup>317</sup> that he attributed the great Alexandrian School to the Apostle Apollos. “I have not infrequently treated the rise of the great Alexandrian school as an outcrop from the learning and piety of Apollos; I take this space to record my reasons”:

1. I hold that the character and influence of this brilliant Alexandrian must have operated on Alexandrian converts.
2. The frequent employment by the Alexandrians of the expressions (Acts 18:24) used concerning him by Luke, almost textually, confirms my suspicion that they had his high example always before them.
3. The catechetical school was certainly established in Alexandria from apostolic times. By whom more probably than by Apollos?
4. The Evangelist Mark’s connection with Alexandria rests on no scriptural evidence, yet it is credited.
5. Apollos’ connection with Alexandria is narrated in Scripture, and I can conceive of nothing so probable as that, remembering his own instruction by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:26), he should have founded catechetical schools for others.
6. All this is conjectural, indeed, but it agrees with known facts.
7. The silence of Clement and the rest suggest that the Evangelist Mark did not start the catechetical schools.
8. The unanimity of the Alexandrians, from Pantaenus downward, in assigning to Paul the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, while it was so much debated elsewhere, suggests that the Alexandrians had early evidence on this point.
9. Clement’s testimony about Luke convinces me that Apollos was not the author of Hebrews, but had testified to the Alexandrians that Paul was the author. Luke, Paul’s inspired scribe, did not just copy (or translate) the words, but reported in idioms of his own; whether out of Paul’s “Hebrew” or not, is another question.
10. Apollos disappears from history about A.D. 64, on his way homeward, bearing the Epistle to Titus, and possibly a copy of that to the Hebrews, written the previous year. All these facts agree with my conjectures that Apollos closed his labors in his Alexandria.

Alexander Roberts further clarified<sup>318</sup> what place Alexandria had in the first three centuries of Christendom. It was Alexandria, not Rome, which was the center of the Christian world, thanks in part to the foundation laid by the Apostle Apollos.

“Entering the fourth century, we may well pause to reflect upon what Alexandria has been to the Church of Christ, — the mother of churches, the mother of saints, maintaining always the intellectual and even the ecclesiastical primacy of Christendom. ‘You are the light of the world’, said the great Enlightener to the Galileans of an obscure and despised Roman province. But who could have prophesied that Egypt should again be the pharos of the world, as it was in Moses’ day? Who could have foreseen the ‘men of Galilee’ taking

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<sup>317</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Elucidation 4”, in Archelaus, Disputations with Manes, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

<sup>318</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Introductory Notice to Peter of Alexandria”, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995

possession of the Alexandrian Library; demonstrating the ways of Providence in creating the Bible of the Seventy; and in the formation of the Hellenistic Greek, for their ultimate use? Who could have imagined the Evangelist Mark and the eloquent Apollos to be the destined instruments for founding the schools of Christendom, and shaping scientific theology? Who would not have looked for all this in some other way, and preferable in Athens or in Rome? But then who would have expected the visit of God Incarnate to Nazareth, and not to Alexandria?"

"In the days of Peter of Alexandria, Antioch was coming to be a school under the influence of Malchion's genius and that of the bishops who withstood Paul of Samosata. Malchion had taught there in the 'School of Sciences', and learning was once more to be made the handmaid of the True Faith. But Alexandria was still the seat of Christian illumination and the fountain of orthodoxy; its ferment always clarified its thinking, and leaving 'wine well refined', and pure from the dregs."

Alexander Roberts described<sup>319</sup> the Alexandrian School as developing significantly under Pantaenus in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

"The world owes more to Pantaenus than to all the other Stoics put together. His mind discovered that true philosophy is found, not in the Porch, but in Nazareth, in Gethsemane, in Gabbatha, in Golgotha; and he set himself to make it known to the world. We are already acquainted with the great master of Clement, 'the Sicilian bee', that forsook the flowers of Enna, to enrich Alexandria with what is 'sweeter than honey and the honey-comb' (Psalm 19:10); and we remember that he became a zealous missionary to the Oriental Ethiopia, and found there the traces of the Apostle Matthias' labors, and those also of the Apostle Nathanael. From this mission he seems to have returned about A.D. 192. Possibly he was master of the Alexandrian school before he went to India, and came back to his chair when that mission was finished. There he sat till about 212 AD, and under him this Christian academy became famous. It had existed as a catechetical school from the Apostles' time, according to Jerome. I have elsewhere noted some reasons for supposing that its founder may have been Apollos<sup>320</sup>. All the learning of Christendom may be traced to this source; and blessed be the name of one of whom all we know is ennobling to the Church, and whose unselfish career was a track of light 'shining more and more unto the perfect day'".

## **Paul's Return to Ephesus**

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<sup>319</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, "Introduction to Pantaenus of Alexandria", in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

<sup>320</sup> Roberts also states that Theophilus (Luke 1:4), to whom Luke addressed his Gospel and Acts, may have been a catechumen of Apollos (Footnote in previous reference). Apollos' instruction is narrated in Scripture (Acts 18:26); I can conceive of nothing so probable as that, remembering his own instruction by Aquila and Priscilla, he should have founded catechetical schools for others (Elucidation 4 to Archelaus, Volume 6)

Ephesus<sup>321</sup> was one of the largest cities in the Mediterranean world in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and it was renowned for the Temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World<sup>322</sup>. Ephesus had been occupied by many different people beginning thousands of years before Moses.

The mythical founder of the city was a prince of Athens named Androklos, who had to leave his country after the death of his father, King Kadros. According to the legend, he founded Ephesus on the place where the oracle of Delphi became reality. Androklos drove away most of the native Carian and Lelegian inhabitants of the city and united his people with the remainder. He was a successful warrior, and as a king he was able to join the twelve cities of Ionia together into the Ionian League.

The Temple of Artemis<sup>323</sup> was first built in the Bronze Age and Callimachus attributed its construction to the Amazons. It was destroyed by a flood in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC and rebuilt about 550 BC, only to be destroyed by arson in 356 BC. Construction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple began in 323 BC and resulted in a building larger than the first two: 450' long by 225' wide and 60' high, with more than 127 columns. In 268 AD, this Temple was destroyed by the Goths; it may have been repaired, but it never was restored to the opulence it had before. Stones from the Temple were eventually used in the construction of other buildings, and some of its columns were used in the construction of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.

Paul's stay in Ephesus lasted two years which dated from c. 53 AD to c. 55 AD. This was his longest stay anywhere except for his imprisonment. Quite a bit was accomplished there: there were considerable miracles (Acts 19:11-12); there was extensive teaching (Acts 19:9); such that "all who dwelt in Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord Jesus". The Roman province of Asia included the cities of Colossae, Assos, Hieropolis, Miletus, Smyrna (Rev 2:8), Pergamos (Rev 2:12), Thyatira (Rev 2:18), Sardis (Rev 3:1), Philadelphia (Rev 3:7), and Laodicea (Rev 3:14).

According to tradition<sup>324</sup>, the Twelve Apostles divided the world up into various regions after Pentecost 30 AD; then they drew lots to determine who would go where. John's lot was

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<sup>321</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus>.

<sup>322</sup> The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World were the Great Pyramid at Giza (still in existence), the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes and the Lighthouse of Alexandria. Other earlier lists had the Ishtar Gate instead of the Lighthouse of Alexandria. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wonders\\_of\\_the\\_World](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wonders_of_the_World).

<sup>323</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_of\\_Artemis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Artemis).

<sup>324</sup> Eusebius, Church History, III, 1.

Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas", Introductory Argument, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 6, October 9, November 30.

Socrates Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, I, 19.

Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, p. 234.

Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "The Acts of Andrew and Matthias in the City of the Cannibals", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "The Teaching of the Apostles", Addendum, 7, Ancient Syriac Documents, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 33 Against Thearians, XI.

Asia Minor, which is why he was so connected to this area in Revelation 2 and 3. But John couldn't devote much time to Asia Minor immediately, since Christ also had assigned him the care of the Virgin Mary (John 19:25-27). Instead the Churches of Asia Minor were raised up by Paul and many of the Seventy during Paul's two years in Ephesus. John then came to Ephesus sometime after the death of the Virgin Mary. John had visited Ephesus from c. 44 to c. 48 AD along with the Virgin Mary when they had to leave Jerusalem because of Herod's persecution (Acts 12).

Paul went into the synagogue at Ephesus and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia<sup>325</sup> heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them (Acts 19:8-12).

Some modern opinions<sup>326</sup> regarding the School of Tyrannus say that Paul used this facility during the off-hours. In that climate in the summer, people usually took a break from work during the afternoon when it was very hot. Thus, Paul could have worked at his tent-making trade in the mornings and taught in the afternoons at the now-empty School of Tyrannus.

We notice that Paul's work in Ephesus was dominated by a Jewish influence. When he first arrived, he came into the synagogue with a shaved head – indicating to everyone that he was in the process of keeping a vow according to the Mosaic Law. The Ephesians were very receptive to him and wanted him to stay longer, but he declined saying that he needed to go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost<sup>327</sup>. In doing this, Paul presented himself to those at the synagogue as someone who was extremely devout regarding the Mosaic Law and Jewish customs. He left behind Priscilla and Aquila – also Jews – in order to teach the Jews in Ephesus additional things.

On Paul's return to Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla had been teaching in the synagogue for about a year. Paul continued to speak boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. Nowhere else did the Jews at any synagogue tolerate Paul speaking like this for anywhere near three months. But seeing the extensive

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Jerome, Letter 59 to Marcella.

Hippolytus, On the Twelve Apostles, Where Each Preached, II.

<sup>325</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLI, vv. 8-9 stated that this was the reason why the Holy Spirit forbid Paul from preaching the Word in Asia earlier on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 16:6).

<sup>326</sup> <http://www.israeljerusalem.com/school-of-tyrannus.htm>.

<http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/4419.htm>.

<sup>327</sup> Paul stated, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem" (Acts 18:21). Sailing season on the Mediterranean is from April to October, and sailors usually spent the winter (November to March) in a sheltered harbor to avoid shipwreck from unpredictable storms. The Feast that Paul referred to was unlikely to be Passover, since Passover was likely over before the sailing season began. It is possible that Paul could have been referring to the Feast of Tabernacles in October, but more likely is the Feast of Pentecost. See also Acts 20:16, where Paul was also hurrying past Ephesus to be in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.



miracles that followed, we can conclude that the faith of the Ephesians had developed considerably. There were undoubtedly some Gentiles involved also, but seeing the activity of the Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:13-19), the initial body of believers had to have been primarily Jewish.

During Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Ephesus on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, there was a whole separate drama going on in Corinth. A detailed discussion of this is included in the section called "Paul's Epistles to Corinth". The bottom line is that while Paul was in Ephesus for two years, he was busy fighting wars on several fronts.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>328</sup> how Paul planned his activities based on the acceptance of the Jews. He persisted as long as they received him and left when they hardened their hearts.

"Notice how Paul departs from the synagogue only when the Jews have been provoked to jealousy. He wished to separate the disciples, but he wanted to have the beginning for ceasing to assemble with them, given by the Jews themselves. He did this intentionally since the Gentiles readily received him, and the Jews, upon the Gentiles receiving him, repented. This is why he continually made a stir among them, 'for three months arguing and persuading concerning the kingdom of God' (Acts 19:8). Do not suppose because you hear of his 'speaking boldly', that there was any harshness; it was of good things that he spoke, of a kingdom. Who would not have listened to him? Only when 'some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples' (Acts 19:9). Note how much was effected by Paul's persisting?"

Chrysostom also noted<sup>329</sup> that Paul continued in the synagogue until the doctrines were slandered. Then to keep peace, he avoided an avenue of retaliation; the Jews simply repelled salvation.

"When Paul entered the synagogue in Ephesus, he was ready to confront dangers, and disputed more openly, not veiling the doctrines. When some were hardened, and spoke evil of the way, he departed from them; he separated the disciples. He put a stop to their evil-speaking; he did not wish to kindle their envy, or to bring them more contention. Let us also learn not to put ourselves in the way of evil-speaking men, but to depart from them. Paul did not speak evil, when he was evil-spoken of. He reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus, and by this gained many; being evil spoken of, he did not utterly break away from them, and keep aloof. The evil-speakers were thus defeated. They slandered the doctrine itself; therefore, so as neither to rouse the disciples to wrath, nor them to retaliate he withdrew, showing that everywhere alike they repel salvation from themselves. Paul does not even apologize, seeing that the Gentiles everywhere have believed. The school of one Tyrannus was not a place that he sought, but without more ado where there was a school, there he spoke."

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<sup>328</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLI, vv. 8-9.

<sup>329</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLI, Recapitulation.

We note that Paul “reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9). This is a small departure from Paul’s methods in other cities. At other places, Paul worked at his tent-making trade six days a week, then spent the Sabbath reasoning with everyone who was ready to listen.

### **The Jewish Exorcists and the Magicians**

“Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches’. Also, there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’ Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” (Acts 19:13-20).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>330</sup> that the Jewish exorcists had no intent to believe in Jesus; their impotence was publicly exposed and their weapons were used against them. Chrysostom marveled that the demon did not cooperate with the imposture, but expressed great wrath against the exorcists. The result was that the Christians of Ephesus came to possess great power.

“Notice the itinerant Jewish exorcists: they had no mind to believe; but by that Name they wanted to cast out the demons. Notice what a name Paul had gotten! The Jewish exorcists did this in secret; then their impotence was publicly exposed. The Name didn’t do anything, unless it was spoken with faith. Notice how they used their weapons against themselves! They were far from thinking Jesus to be anything great; they needed Paul, as thinking him to be something great. Here one might marvel how it was that the demon did not cooperate with the imposture of the exorcists, but on the contrary exposed them, and laid open their stage-play. The demon seems to me to have done this in great wrath: just as it might be if the demon wished to vent all his rage upon him. The demon first confesses Jesus, and then has permission given him. There was no weakness of the Name; everything turned on the imposture of the Jewish exorcists. Why didn’t the same take place in the case of Paul? The demon-possessed man battered their heads, perhaps tore off their garments, such that fear fell upon them all, both Jews and Greeks that dwelt at Ephesus and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. The result was that many of them that had believed came confessing and making known their practices. The Christians had gotten to possess such power to do such things; well might this be the consequence. The people of Ephesus had no more use for their books on magic; so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.”

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<sup>330</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLI, vv. 13-20.

Chrysostom also took<sup>331</sup> a close look at the Jewish Exorcists. They had hard hearts, just like Simon Magus, who tried to purchase the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18-20). They continued to be Jews, but wanted to profit by the Name of Jesus. As a result, the power of the demons against unbelievers was shown to be fierce. The Jewish exorcists caused everyone in Asia to hear the Word of the Lord; but it didn't convert them since nothing convinces malice. The exorcists seem even to be calling on the Name of Jesus in mockery. But when the demons, who had been their helpers, now, become their accusers, it was shown that there is no other hope but the confession of sins.

“Notice the infatuated Jewish hardness of heart. Having seen Paul's garments working miracles, they paid no attention to it. What could be greater than this? On the contrary, it resulted in just the opposite effect. How great the power of those that have believed! Simon Magus for the sake of merchandise sought to purchase the grace of the Holy Spirit, and these Jewish exorcists for the same reason did this. What hardness of heart! Paul didn't rebuke them because it would have looked like Paul envied them; therefore, it is so ordered as it happened. This same thing took place in the case of Judas Iscariot, who was not restrained (John 13:26-27), whereas Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead (Acts 5:3-10). Many Jews opposed Christ but suffered nothing, while Elymas was blinded (Acts 13:8-11). Jesus said, ‘I have not come to judge the world, but that the world might be saved’” (John 3:17).

“Note the villainy of the seven sons of Sceva; they continued to be Jews, while wanting to profit by that Name. Everything that they did was for glory and profit (Acts 19:13-17). Note how men are converted not so much as a consequence of good things but rather as a result of fearful things. In the case of Sapphira, fear fell upon the Church, and men dared not join themselves to them (Acts 5:11-13); here they received handkerchiefs and aprons, and were healed. After this, they came confessing their sins (Acts 19:18). The power of the demons is shown to be great, when it is against unbelievers. Why did the demon not say, ‘Who is Jesus?’ He was afraid, lest he also should suffer punishment; but that it might be permitted him to take revenge on those who mocked him, he said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’ (Acts 19:15) Why didn't the Jewish exorcists say, ‘We believe?’ How much more splendid an appearance they would have made had they said this; that is, if they had claimed Him as their Master? Instead they spoke those senseless words, ‘By the Jesus whom Paul preaches’” (Acts 19:13).

“And why were they itinerant? They did that for the sake of profit; certainly not to bear witness to the Word. As a result, ‘all that dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord’ (Acts 19:10). Shouldn't this have converted everyone? Don't marvel; nothing convinces malice. Let us look at the affair of the exorcists, with what an evil disposition they acted. It seems to me that the Jewish exorcists did this in mockery and that in consequence of this punishment, no one dared even at random to name that Name. Why did this cause many to come confessing their sins? (Acts 19:18) Because this was a very strong argument for God's omniscience; people couldn't hide from this; therefore before they could be exposed by the demons, they accused themselves, fearing lest they should suffer

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<sup>331</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLI, Recapitulation.

the same things. When the demons, their helpers, are their accusers, what hope is there except the confession of sins?”

### **The Controversy over the Temple of Diana**

When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, ‘After I have been there, I must also see Rome’. So, he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time” (Acts 19:21-22).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>332</sup> that Paul was looking ahead – even prophesying about his trip to Rome. He had some very tangible results in Ephesus and he was very much needed there. His ability to persuade people was prevailing over a significant force of unbelievers.

“Paul intended to pass through Macedonia and Achaia without staying longer. Why does he send Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia? He sent away ‘two of those who ministered to him’ (1 Thessalonians 3:1), both to announce his coming, and to make them more eager. ‘But he himself stayed in Asia for a time’ (Acts 19:22). Paul had to spend more time in Asia; and with reason: namely, there was the tyranny of the philosophers. The superstition there was excessive due to the Temple of Diana. Very tangible were the results that were taking place throughout all Asia; by persuading Paul turned many people away from idolatry, not by violence. This is the way to persuade an entire city! What touched them most closely were Paul’s words, ‘things made with human hands are not gods’ (Acts 19:26). How did Paul persuade since he was a man of very humble consideration? How did he prevail over so great a force of the Jews and philosophers of Ephesus? Paul said the temple ought to have been condemned long ago. If it was strong, it ought not to have been overthrown so quickly.”

### **The Widespread Renown of the Apostle Paul**

About that time a great commotion arose about the Way. A certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana<sup>333</sup>, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said, ‘Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover, you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship” (Acts 19:23-27).

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<sup>332</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLII, Recapitulation.

<sup>333</sup> “These silver shrines of Diana (Artemis) were miniatures of the sanctuary where the colossal statue of Artemis resided. Once purchased, these shrines were placed by devotees in the sanctuary as dedicatory offerings to propitiate the goddess. The value of the silver in the miniatures was considerable and would have been periodically melted down for its monetary return. This is presumably the reason why none of the miniature shrines has survived” to the present. See Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol 42, No. 4, July/August 2016, pp. 24-32. This also explains why the silver shrine business was so lucrative for Demetrius and the silversmiths.

This is an amazing account! Standing in the shadow of the Temple of Diana, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the silversmith Demetrius stated that this Temple was on the verge of being destroyed due to the influence of the Apostle Paul. Demetrius said that Paul “has turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands” (Acts 19:26). This was true; Paul did say that! Demetrius was probably correct also when he stated that “the goddess Diana may be despised”, and that “all Asia and the world worship” Diana (Acts 19:27). As one of the Wonders of the Ancient World<sup>334</sup>, this Temple received many visitors every year, bringing much profit for the craftsman.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>335</sup> something that was going on, but not all recognize it. The main concern of the idolaters was their lucrative jobs, not their goddess. By recognizing that one man (Paul) was undoing centuries of worship of an idol, they could have come to the true Faith. Not recognizing this, they just created a riot. If Paul has this much power, what must his God be capable of? Demetrius was just like other idolaters, including the Jews in Jerusalem.

“Demetrius, a silversmith, made silver temples of Diana, perhaps as small boxes. Great was the honor paid to this Diana in Ephesus; when their temple was burned, it so grieved them that they forbade even the name of the arsonist<sup>336</sup> ever to be mentioned. Notice that wherever there is idolatry, in every case we find money at the bottom of it. Both in the case of Herostratus, and in the case of Demetrius, it was for money. (Acts 19:26-27). It was not that they thought that their religion was in danger; it was their lucrative craft. Notice also the maliciousness of Demetrius. He was wealthy himself, and to him it was no such great loss; but to the others, the loss was great, since they were poor, and subsisted on their daily earnings. Demetrius collected the workmen and said, ‘Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade’ (Acts 19:25); then he brought the danger home to them, that they were in danger of falling from this profitable craft into starvation. The things Demetrius spoke were enough to bring them to the true Faith; but being poor senseless creatures, they create a riot instead. If Paul, being man, is strong enough to turn away everyone from idols, and the worship of the gods is in jeopardy, one ought to reflect, how great must Paul’s God be, and that he will much more give you those things for which you are afraid. Notice what it is that the heathens are so indignant at; because Paul said, ‘they are not gods which are made with hands’ (Acts 19:26), the issue is their craft. Notice how Demetrius showed Paul’s power to be so great, proving all their gods were wretched and miserable creatures, since a mere man, who was driven about, a mere tentmaker, had so much power. Notice the testimony borne to the Apostles by their enemies, that the Apostles overthrew their worship. At Lystra they brought ‘garlands and oxen’ (Acts 14:13). Here Demetrius said, ‘This trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute’ and ‘You have filled Jerusalem

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<sup>334</sup> The Temple of Diana in Ephesus was the largest building in the Hellenistic world, and was ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World by the Greek poet Antipater of Sidon. See [Biblical Archaeology Review](#), Vol 42, No. 4, July/August 2016, pp. 24-32.

<sup>335</sup> John Chrysostom, [Commentary on Acts](#), XLII, vv. 26-27.

<sup>336</sup> This refers to the destruction of the Temple of Diana in 356 BC by Herostratus, who set fire to the wooden roof-beams, seeking fame at any cost. For this outrage, the Ephesians sentenced Herostratus to death and forbade anyone from mentioning his name. Theopompus later noted it. The temple’s destruction coincided with the birth of Alexander the Great. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_of\\_Artemis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Artemis).

with your doctrine' (Acts 19:27, 5:28). The Jews said about Christ, 'You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!' (John 12:19); and, 'The Romans will come and take away both our place and nation' (John 11:48). On another occasion, 'These who have turned the world upside down have come here too' (Acts 17:6).

### **The Riot over the Temple of Diana**

"Now when they heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, 'Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!' So, the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus<sup>337</sup>, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. When Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater<sup>338</sup>. Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. They drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, 'Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!' When the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, 'Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image<sup>339</sup> which fell down from Zeus? Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. We are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering'. When he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly" (Acts 19:28-41).

Because Aristarchus dressed like he did (i.e. similar to John the Baptist), he was a very visible target for the rioters in Ephesus. Quoting the account in Acts, John Chrysostom stated<sup>340</sup> that Gaius and Aristarchus, who had been so visibly associated with Paul, were dragged around like rag dolls by the rioters who felt their livelihood threatened if people gave up idolatry.

"On another occasion, when the unbelieving Jews dragged Jason around, they said, 'The men who have turned the world upside down have come here too

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<sup>337</sup> Aristarchus lived very much like John the Baptist, wearing a garment of animal skin, a leather belt and eating locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6). Thus, Aristarchus was a very visible target for the people who were angry at Paul. See [The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church](#), translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 14. The term "locusts" refers not to an insect, but to the bean of the "locust tree", which was ground into flour. The "locust tree" is similar to a carob tree. See [http://www.sierrapotomac.org/W\\_Needham/BlackLocust\\_060515.htm](http://www.sierrapotomac.org/W_Needham/BlackLocust_060515.htm).

<sup>338</sup> The Roman Theater at Ephesus is described in [Biblical Archaeology Review](#), Vol 42, No. 4, July/August 2016, pp. 24-32. The theater seated 25,000 people and hosted dramas, musical performances, public events, religious observances and blood and battle extravaganzas, such as wild animal hunts, gladiatorial fights and simulated naval battles.

<sup>339</sup> The image of Diana was in the great temple of Ephesus. It was probably found there by the Greeks when they colonized Ionia. Many ancient superstitions spoke of statues falling from heaven.

<sup>340</sup> John Chrysostom, [Commentary on Acts](#), XLII, vv. 28-32.

(Acts 17:6). At this occasion, ‘When the Ephesians heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out’ (Acts 19:28). What was it that got them angry? On hearing about Diana, and about their source of income! ‘They cried out, saying, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” So, the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord’ (Acts 19:28-29). Such is the way with vulgar minds; any trivial occasion hurries them away and inflames their passions. Therefore, we ought to do all things with strict examination. Notice how contemptible they were, to be so exposed to such excitements! ‘Having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions, they dragged them around’. Here again recklessly, they dragged them around just as did the Jews in the case of Jason; and everywhere they set upon them. ‘When Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him’ (Acts 19:30) so far were the Apostles from all display and love of glory. ‘Then some of the officials of Asia, who were Paul’s friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater’ (Acts 19:31) to a disorderly populace and tumult. Paul complied with their request for he was not vainglorious and he was not confused. Such is the nature of the multitude: it recklessly follows, like fire when it has fallen on fuel! On this occasion, most of the rioters didn’t even know why they had come together for this riot (Acts 19:32).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>341</sup> the unstable and reckless mind of a mob. Even though Paul had stayed there for two years, there were very many heathens still present.

“Rioting like this is the way with vulgar minds; any trivial occasion hurries them away and inflames their passions. Therefore, we should do things after careful examination. They dragged Gaius and Aristarchus around just like the Jews did in the case of Jason (Acts 17:5-9). Note that the disciples did not allow Paul to get near the riot (Acts 19:30), so far were they from all display and love of glory. Paul complied for he was not vainglorious. Such is the nature of the multitude; it recklessly follows, like fire when it has fallen on fuel; most didn’t even know why they came together. The Jews put Alexander forward, but he did not speak. When they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice for two hours cried out, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians?’ (Acts 19:34). A childish understanding indeed! As if they were afraid that their worship should be extinguished, they shouted without intermission. Paul stayed there for two years; notice how many heathens there were still! The image which fell from Zeus was not palpable. There was another sacred object that was so called, but this is a lie. When the city clerk had spoken to the rioters, he reminded them that the whole city is in danger of being called to account for sedition.”

Chrysostom also noted<sup>342</sup> the concern of the other disciples and Apostles for Paul. They were very reluctant for him to face any danger, knowing how it has gotten out of hand quickly in the past. Alexander seemed to want to inflame the situation against the Christians even more so. But God did not permit this. The purpose of this persecution was to draw the believers together.

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<sup>341</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLII, vv. 28-41.

<sup>342</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLII, Recapitulation.

“Paul wished to enter the theater in that he might speak to them, for he took his persecutions as occasions for teaching. But the disciples did not allow him. Note how great forethought we always find them taking for him. At the very first they brought him out that they might not in his person receive a mortal blow; and yet they had heard him say, ‘I must also see Rome’ (Acts 19:21). It was providential that he so predicts beforehand, that they might not be confounded at the event. They did not want Paul to suffer any evil. ‘Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater’ (Acts 19:31). They knew his eagerness, and they begged him; so much did all the believers love him.”

“Why did Alexander, the Jew, want to speak? Was he accused? No, but it was to find an opportunity, and inflame the anger of the people. ‘But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians’” (Acts 19:33-34).

“Do you see how God permits trials, and by them stirs up and awakens the disciples, and makes them more energetic? Let us not sink down under trials; for He Himself will ‘also make the way of escape, that we may be able to bear them’ (1 Corinthians 10:13). Nothing so makes friends, and rivets them so firmly, as affliction; nothing so fastens and draws together the souls of believers; nothing is so seasonable for us teachers in order that the things said by us may be heard. The hearer when he is in ease is listless and indolent, and seems to suffer annoyance from the speaker; but when he is in affliction and distress, he falls into a great longing for the hearing.”

John Chrysostom stated<sup>343</sup> that Paul sent Timothy and Erastus<sup>344</sup> to Macedonia because he was having such good results in Asia and couldn’t leave. Paul’s results were so good that the silversmiths who made small idols created a riot against Paul because of fear of losing their jobs.

“After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia to go to Jerusalem’ (Acts 19:21). Paul no longer speaks here after the manner of a man, or, He purposed to pass through those regions, without staying longer. Why does he send away Timothy and Erastus? (Acts 19:22) Of this I suppose it is similar to his short stay in Athens when he could no longer refrain from speaking his mind, ‘we thought it good to be left at Athens alone’ (1 Thessalonians 3:1, Acts 17:16). Here Paul sent away ‘two of those who ministered to him’, both to announce his coming, and to make them more eager. ‘But he himself stayed in Asia for a time’ (Acts 19:22). Most of all Paul spends his time in Asia, and with reason; there was the tyranny of the philosophers. The superstition there was excessive; not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia. Paul was persuading people to turn away from idol worship, and not by violence; this is the way to persuade a city. What touched them closely were Paul’s words, ‘They are not gods which are made with hands’ (Acts 19:26). ‘He overturns our craft; from this work we have our income’ (Acts 19:27). How did Paul persuade? How did he prevail over so great a force of man? Paul said it ought to have been condemned long ago; if it was strong, it

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<sup>343</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, XLII, vv. 21-26.

<sup>344</sup> Erastus was the Treasurer of the city of Corinth (Romans 16:23, 2 Timothy 4:20). This was a political office of high civic status. See also [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erastus\\_of\\_Corinth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erastus_of_Corinth).



ought not to have been overthrown so quickly. Lest they should admit that a human being should have such power to affect such things, they said that their craft was in danger of being eliminated, and also the temple of the great goddess Diana, since each city had its own proper gods. They thought to make their voice a barrier against the Holy Spirit. Their feeling was as if by their voice they could reinstate the worship of her, and undo what had taken place!

### **Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus**

Paul wrote to Timothy “The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day -- and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me* at Ephesus” (2 Timothy 1:16-18).

The time that Onesiphorus sought Paul out in Rome was during Paul’s second captivity there, just before Paul’s martyrdom. But the time that Onesiphorus served Paul in Ephesus was during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey when Paul spent 2 years in Ephesus. It had to have occurred at this time, because Paul wasn’t in Ephesus very long on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey.

At the time that Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, he said, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus” (2 Timothy 4:19). Thus, Onesiphorus was then in Ephesus helping Timothy. From traditional accounts<sup>345</sup>, Onesiphorus had a wife and some children, which is what Paul referred to as “the household of Onesiphorus” (2 Timothy 1:16, 4:19)

### **The Founding of the Church at Colossae**

Although Luke does not even mention in Acts that Paul visited Colossae, except for the hint about “all who dwelt in Asia” (Acts 19:10), Paul was very close to three people who were from Colossae: Epaphras, Archippus, and Philemon (with his wife Apphia). Most likely the Church in Colossae was raised up during this time. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians from house-arrest in Rome in c. 62 AD at the same time that he wrote his Epistle to Philemon, who was also in the Colossae neighborhood.

Epaphras was very active in teaching the Colossians as “a faithful deacon of Christ” (Colossians 1:7). Later in 62 AD, Epaphras was with Paul under house-arrest (Colossians 4:12, Philemon 1:23). Unger refers<sup>346</sup> to Epaphras as the first Bishop of Colossae according to tradition, which makes sense (Colossians 1:7).

Archippus is encouraged by Paul (Colossians 4:17) to fulfill the diaconate (or ministry) which he received in the Lord. Paul also refers to him as “our fellow soldier” (Philemon 1:2).

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<sup>345</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 24.

<sup>346</sup> Merrill F. Unger, Unger’s Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 315.

Archippus seems always very closely associated with Philemon and Apphia<sup>347</sup> that he could have been Philemon's deacon or a nearby Bishop.

Philemon is referred to in the New Testament only in the epistle addressed to him. The story behind the epistle is Philemon's slave, Onesimus, who ran away to Rome and took some of Philemon's valuables with him. Paul met Onesimus in Rome in 62 AD, and Onesimus repented and became Paul's deacon. Thus, Paul wrote the Epistle to Philemon; as a result of this epistle, Philemon forgave Onesimus and granted him his freedom. There are reports of a Bishop Onesimus in Ephesus<sup>348</sup>, but this was probably another man named Onesimus.

### **Paul Sends Aquila and Priscilla to Rome**

When Paul returned to Ephesus on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey in c. 54 AD, Aquila and Priscilla were still there where Paul left them a couple years earlier in 52 AD (Acts 18:18-21). When Paul wrote to the Romans in c. 55 AD, Aquila and Priscilla were in Rome and the Church was meeting in their house as the Church had done in Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:19). For this to have happened, Paul must have sent Aquila and Priscilla to Rome shortly after he arrived back in Ephesus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.

### **Paul Writes to the Church in Rome**

Also from Corinth on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul wrote a long Epistle to the Church in Rome<sup>349</sup>, even though he had not been there yet. This Epistle is different from Paul's other Epistles. In it Paul summarizes the entire Gospel; John Chrysostom calls<sup>350</sup> Romans a "spiritual trumpet". Paul deals extensively with both Jews and Gentiles – which represented his readers in Rome. In this letter Paul expressed what he taught at all his visits to other Churches in a very doctrinally oriented letter; he doesn't address many specific problems.

We note that Tertius, one of the original Seventy Apostles, wrote the Epistle to the Romans at Paul's dictation (Romans 16:22). John Chrysostom stated<sup>351</sup> that this was a really big deal!

“This is no small praise, to be Paul's secretary. Still it is not to pass praise on himself that Tertius says this, but that he might attach a warm love for Paul on their part, for this service.”

Paul's compared his relationship with the Church in Rome to the liturgy of the Old Testament sacrificial worship. “I have written more boldly to you. That I might be a liturgist of

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<sup>347</sup> Philemon, Apphia and Archippus were martyred together in Colossae. See:

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for February 19, November 22.

Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, February 19.

*The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 22.

<sup>348</sup> See the Section “Paul Meets Onesimus in Rome”.

<sup>349</sup> There is General consensus that Paul wrote the Epistle to Rome from Corinth on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle\\_to\\_the\\_Romans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Romans).

<sup>350</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans*, Argument.

<sup>351</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans*, XXXII, v. 22.

Jesus Christ to the Gentiles offering as a sacrifice the Gospel of God, that the offering consisting of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:15-16)

John Chrysostom stated<sup>352</sup> that Paul normally dictated his letters to someone else – such as the letter to the Romans, which was written down by Tertius. Even though Paul did not have good penmanship, he wrote out the letter to the Galatians himself out of necessity.

“Observe what grief possesses Paul’s blessed soul. As those who are oppressed with some sorrow, who have lost one of their own kin, and suffered an unexpected calamity, rest neither by night nor day, because their grief besieges their soul, so the blessed Paul. After a short moral discourse, he returns again to that former subject, which chiefly disturbed his mind, saying, ‘See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!’ (Galatians 6:11) By this he signifies that he had written the whole letter himself, which was a proof of great sincerity. In his other Epistles he himself only dictated, another wrote, as is plain from the Epistle to the Romans; at its close it is said, ‘I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord’ (Romans 16:22). But in this instance, he wrote the whole himself. This he did by necessity, not from affection merely, but in order to remove an injurious suspicion. He was charged with acts wherein he had no part, and was reported to preach circumcision yet to pretend not to preach it; he was compelled to write the Epistle with his own hand, thus laying up beforehand a written testimony. By the expression ‘what large letters’, he appears to me to signify, not the magnitude, but, the misshapen appearance of the letters. It was as if he had said, ‘Although not well skilled in penmanship, I have been compelled to write with my own hand to stop the mouth of these traducers’”.

Of note in the Epistle to the Romans is that Paul greeted a number of people in Rome that he knows are there even though he had not visited Rome yet. Even more noteworthy is that eighteen of the people Paul addressed were members<sup>353</sup> of the original Seventy Apostles. And the “Mary” that Paul greeted was<sup>354</sup> Mary Magdalene! Paul had to have known a great deal about what was going on in Rome! Since Paul had sent many of the Seventy Apostles who had previously worked with him to Rome (like Aquila and Priscilla), we might ask just what was going on in Rome in c. 55 AD.

Peter had been to Rome several times by then, but Peter was not there at this time, since Paul did not mention Peter in his greetings. One explanation<sup>355</sup> is that Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-24) had been in Rome and was now a favorite of Emperor Nero. Peter had just been to Rome, and had embarrassed Simon in front of Nero, debunking Simon’s claims to be “the great power of God” (Acts 8:10). Simon left town in embarrassment, and Peter left town to avoid the wrath of Nero. The eighteen members of the Seventy were there to fill in for Peter and to oppose

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<sup>352</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 6, vv. 11-12.

<sup>353</sup> That is: Aquila (and Priscilla), Epaphroditus, Andronicus (and Junia), Amplius, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Aristobulus, Herodion, Narcissus, Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobus, Hermes, Philologus (and Julia) and Olympas in that order.

<sup>354</sup> <http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> for July 22.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 22

<sup>355</sup> For a detailed account of this, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004. See <http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/e-books/>.

Simon when he returned. In order to coordinate all this, Paul had to have met with Peter a short time earlier to discuss the situation and to plan on whom to send.

Of note also is that Paul did not address Linus in Rome. Linus was the first Bishop of Rome and was ordained in c. 58 AD, a few years after Paul wrote to the Romans. At the time that Paul wrote to the Romans, Linus was still traveling with Paul.

### **Eighteen of the Seventy Apostles in Rome**

In Romans 16:1-16, (written on Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey in 55 AD), Paul greeted a number of saints living in Rome, eighteen of them being among the original Seventy Apostles. The order in which Paul addresses them generally seems to go from those he is most familiar with to those he may have encountered only briefly. Following in Table 6 is a brief summary of these eighteen who had just come to Rome, listed in the order that they were mentioned:

### **Others of the Seventy Who Were with Paul in c. 55 AD**

Table 7 is a brief summary of the eight of the Seventy who were with Paul in Corinth when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, listed in the order that they were mentioned:

### **Paul's Epistles to Corinth**

Paul founded the Church in Corinth about 51 AD toward the end of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey and stayed there a year and a half (Acts 18:11). Silas was traveling with Paul at the time along with Luke, Timothy and Andronicus, where all but Paul were of the original Seventy. Luke was left behind<sup>356</sup> to oversee the Macedonian Churches. Silas was left behind<sup>357</sup> in Corinth and was later Bishop of Corinth.

Before Paul arrived in Corinth for an extended stay again in late 55 AD, he wrote four letters to Corinth (two of which are lost) and paid the Church one brief visit. In the interval from 52 to 55 AD, the Apostles Apollos and Peter visited Corinth. Apollos was one of the original Seventy, but must have been back home in Alexandria at the time of Pentecost. He knew only the baptism of John in 53 AD when he came to Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28). Aquila and Priscilla, the overseers Paul left in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19), straightened Apollos out and also wrote to the Churches in Achaia (Athens and Corinth) to receive Apollos when he arrived (Acts 18:27). Apollos proceeded to help out by vigorously refuting the Jews publicly; showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:28). In his earlier letter, (1 Corinthians 3:8), Paul said that he and Apollos are one; that is, of one mind in the work of establishing the Churches.

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<sup>356</sup> Note the switch in tenses from "we" to "they" and back to "we" in Acts 16:16, 17:1, 20:6.

<sup>357</sup> Note that we never hear from Silas again traveling with Paul after he arrived in Corinth, Acts 18:5.

**Table 6**  
**Those of the Seventy Who Were in Rome in 55 AD**  
 For More Details, see Appendix B

| Member of Seventy  | Native To | Journey    | Later Bishop of        | Comments             |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Amplias            |           | 2, 3       | Lydda, Odessus         |                      |
| Andronicus & Junia | Tarsus    | 1, 2, 3    | Pannonia in Illyricum  | Prisoner with Paul   |
| Apelles            | Smyrna    | 2, 3       | Smyrna                 | Acquaintance of Paul |
| Aquila & Priscilla | Pontus    | 2, 3, 4, 5 | Ephesus before Timothy | Acts 18:19           |
| Aristobulus        | Cyprus    | 1, 2, 3    | Sent to Britain        | Barnabas' brother    |
| Asyncritus         |           | 3          | Hyrcania (Persia)      | Acquaintance of Paul |
| Epaenetus          | Achaia    | 2, 3       | Carthage, Spain        |                      |
| Hermas             |           | 2, 3       | Philippi               | Wrote "Shepherd"     |
| Hermes             |           | 3          | Dalmatia               |                      |
| Herodion           | Tarsus    | 1, 2, 3, 5 | Neoparthia, Patras     | Martyred with Paul   |
| Narcissus          |           | 2, 3       | Athens after Dionysius | Acquaintance of Paul |
| Olympas            |           | 5          | --                     | Beheaded with Paul   |
| Patrobus           |           | 3          | Naples, Puteoli        |                      |
| Philologus & Julia |           | 3          | Sinope                 |                      |
| Phlegon            |           | 2, 3       | Marathon (Thrace)      | Worked with Luke     |
| Rufus              | Cyrene    | 1, 3       | Thebes                 |                      |
| Stachys            |           | 2, 3       | Byzantium              | Met at Troas         |
| Urbanus            | Tarsus    | 2, 3       | Tarsus, Macedonia      |                      |

**Table 7**  
**Those of the Seventy Who Were in Corinth with Paul in 55 AD**  
 For More Details, see Appendix B

| Member of Seventy | Native To | Journey       | Later Bishop of             | Comments             |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Erastus           |           | 3, 5          |                             | Expert at finances   |
| Gaius             | Derbe     | 1, 2, 3       | Ephesus after Timothy       | Presbyter in Derbe   |
| Jason             | Tarsus    | 1, 2, 3       | Tarsus, Thessalonica, Corfu | Jason                |
| Linus             |           | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Rome                        |                      |
| Lucius            |           | 3, 5          | Laodicea in Syria           | Paul's kinsman       |
| Quartus           |           | 3             | Beirut                      |                      |
| Sosipater         | Berea     | 2, 3          | Iconium, Corfu              | Presbyter in Iconium |
| Tertius           |           | 2, 3          | Iconium after Sosipater     |                      |
| Timothy           | Lystra    | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Ephesus                     | Presbyter in Lystra  |

The same can be said for the relationship between Paul and Peter. Peter visited Corinth in the early 50's AD on his way to Rome. He obviously made a big impression in Corinth since there were factions that had developed by 55 AD (1 Corinthians 1:12) centered on Paul, Apollos, Peter and Christ!

To understand what happened in Corinth while Paul was in Ephesus, one needs to understand the sequence of Paul's four letters to Corinth. In addition to the four letters<sup>358</sup> Paul

<sup>358</sup> Only two of Paul's letters to Corinth are extant today; the other two have been lost. We know of the existence of the other two letters from Paul's reference to them in the two letters that we have.

wrote to Corinth, he made one brief visit that isn't mentioned in Acts. This information can be gleaned by carefully reading the two letters we have. The sequence went like this:

1. While in Ephesus, Paul wrote four letters to the Corinthians, two of which are lost. The first is referred to in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 and had to do with morality and discipline and is one of the lost letters. The Corinthians misinterpreted Paul, thinking they should not associate with anyone who is immoral -- meaning all of Corinth. Therefore, Paul sent a second letter which we know as 1 Corinthians via Timothy and Erastus (Acts 19:22, 1 Corinthians 4:17) who Paul refers to as his deacon (translate "minister" as deacon.)
2. Prior to Paul writing his second letter to Corinth, Fortunatus and Achaicus (two of the Seventy) along with Deacon Stephanas brought a letter from Corinth to Paul which is now lost (1 Corinthians 16:15-17). Paul then answered this letter in his second letter (i.e. the one we know as 1 Corinthians). These three men probably returned to Corinth after delivering the letter to Paul.
3. 1 Corinthians 1:1 begins with Paul and Sosthenes addressing the Corinthian Church. Sosthenes was the synagogue ruler that got beat up by the Jews because of Paul (Acts 18:17) on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Sosthenes had probably come to Ephesus at the direction of Silas to seek Paul out with a report on what was going on in Corinth. Following Paul's series of letters (i.e. after Paul's 4<sup>th</sup> letter to Corinth), Sosthenes probably traveled back to Corinth with Paul.
4. Following this second letter, Paul paid a visit, the "sorrowful visit" (2 Corinthians 2:1, 2 Corinthians 12:21-13:2), to Corinth and returned to Ephesus. He then wrote a third letter (the "sorrowful letter" 2 Corinthians 2:4-11, 7:8), which is also lost and had Titus deliver the letter. This 3<sup>rd</sup> letter was delivered by Titus and received by the Corinthians with fear and trembling (2 Corinthians 7:13-15). Paul was anxiously waiting Titus' return when he left Ephesus for Troas (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).
5. Learning of further immorality in Corinth, Paul traveled there (from Ephesus). Timothy had been sent ahead and may have carried the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter. This visit is referred to as the "sorrowful visit" (2 Corinthians 2:1). Later, Paul stated that his upcoming visit would be his 3<sup>rd</sup> visit (2 Corinthians 13:1). From a cursory reading of Acts, his upcoming visit would be only the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Corinth, thus demanding another brief visit.
6. Before Titus returned after delivering the 3<sup>rd</sup> letter, Paul had to leave Ephesus without much notice due to the uproar from the silversmiths over the idols of Diana. During that uproar, Gaius and Aristarchus were seized by the mob, but do not appear to have been hurt (Acts 19:22-41). In Macedonia, Paul met Titus who was returning from Corinth. Paul was greatly encouraged by Titus to hear that Corinth had obeyed his instructions. From Macedonia, Paul then wrote a 4<sup>th</sup> letter (which we know as 2 Corinthians) defending his apostleship and aiming for reconciliation of all the factions. The man who had his father's wife had by then repented and Paul urged them to forgive him and receive him back (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

We get a glimpse of how Paul first came to Corinth: "Not in persuasive words but in demonstration of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). These demonstrations of power are described as, "God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out from them" (Acts 19:11-12)

Paul's demonstrations of power were so prevalent that a cottage industry developed in Ephesus among some itinerant Jewish exorcists. They began exorcising evil spirits by "the Jesus whom Paul preaches". This worked for a while; eventually they ran into one demon that answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" The demon-possessed man then "leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded". When word of this got out, "fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (Acts 19:13-17).

The goings-on in Corinth at this time had a very beneficial effect on the Church, since Paul was forced to put in writing some of the wisdom he had gained, that is not found all together anywhere else. Paul's letters to Corinth have been quoted voluminously throughout the centuries ever since.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>359</sup> that when the Corinthians were divided into factions, some for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Peter (1 Corinthians 1:12), the whole Church had become corrupt. Paul was not making himself better than either Peter or Apollos; he was just making himself the focus of the attack. From this we can see that Paul is angry and indignant.

"They were not speaking about himself, or about Peter, or about Apollos. For if it were not right for them to call themselves by the name of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, much less was it right to call themselves by any others. If it's not right to call themselves by the Teacher (Paul), the first of the Apostles (Peter), and one that had instructed so many people (Apollos), it is certainly not right to enroll themselves under those who were nothing. Note that Paul did not mention by name the rude dividers of the Church, but concealed them, as behind a sort of mask, with the names of the Apostles. While Paul mentioned his name before Peter's, he did not consider himself before Peter even though he set Peter's name last; Paul preferred Peter to himself, and that greatly. He arranged his statement in the way of climax that he might not be supposed to do this for envy or from jealousy, to be detracting from the honor of others. He put his own name first so that he would be first to be rejected, not for love of honor, but for extreme contempt. He put himself as the focus of the whole attack, and then mentions Apollos, and Cephas. He didn't do this to magnify himself, but in speaking of wrong things he administers the requisite correction in his own person first."

"That those, who addicted themselves to this or that man, were in error, is evident. Rightly he rebukes them, saying, 'You do not do well in that you say, 'I am of Paul, Apollos and Cephas'. But why did he add, 'And I of Christ?'' Although these who addicted themselves to men were in error, surely not those who dedicated themselves to Christ were in error! This was not his charge, that they called themselves by the Name of Christ, but that they did not all call themselves by that Name alone. I think that he added this of himself, wishing to make the accusation more serious, and to point out that by this rule Christ must be considered as belonging to one party only, although they were not so using the Name themselves. This was what he hinted at when he declared in the sequel, 'Is Christ divided' (1 Corinthians 1:13). What he said comes to this, 'You have cut

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<sup>359</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, III, 4-5.

Christ in pieces, and distributed His body'. Here Paul is angry! Here he is chiding! Here are words full of indignation!"

Chrysostom pointed out<sup>360</sup> Paul's tactics in dealing with the Corinthians, who were acting somewhat childish. By transferring the argument to the persons of Paul and Apollos, they did not get angry at Paul, but received his correction.

"Paul made some harsh expressions to the Corinthians but he refrained from opening the curtain all the way, and went on arguing as if he were himself the person to whom they were addressed; in order that no room might be left for flying out in wrath at the charges. But when the time came for a gentler process, then he strips it off, and removes the mask, and shows the persons concealed by the names of Paul and Apollos. On this account he said, 'These things, brethren, I have transferred in a figure to myself and Apollos'" (1 Corinthians 4:6).

"As in the case of the sick, when the sick child kicks and turns away from the food offered by the physicians, the attendants call the father or the tutor, and ask them to take the food from the physician's hands and bring it, so that out of fear towards them he may take it and be quiet. Paul did this also, intending to censure them about certain other persons, of whom some, he thought, were injured, others honored above measure. Paul did not list the persons themselves, but conducted the argument in his own name and that of Apollos, in order that reverencing these they might receive his mode of cure. Once that was received, Paul makes known in whose behalf he was so expressing himself."

"Now this was not hypocrisy, but condescension and tact. If Paul had said openly, 'As for you, the men whom you are judging are saints, and worthy of all admiration'; they might not have taken it well and refused to listen. But now in saying, 'But to me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you' (1 Corinthians 4:3); and again, 'Who is Paul, and who is Apollos?' (1 Corinthians 3:5), he makes his words easy to receive. This, if you notice, is the reason why Paul says, 'These things have I transferred in a figure to myself for your sakes, that in us you may learn not to be wise above what is written' (1 Corinthians 4:6), signifying that if he had applied his argument in their persons, they would not have learned all that they needed to learn, nor would have accepted the correction, being angry at what was said. But as it was, revering Paul, they bore the rebuke well."

Chrysostom further noted<sup>361</sup> how Paul spared the feelings of the Corinthians and gave them an opportunity to repent by hiding the names of the offenders behind his name and Apollos' name.

"Paul stated, 'Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes' (1 Corinthians 4:6). Yet it wasn't Paul or Apollos who had rent the people in schism and divided the Church; but all the same he concealed the accusation. Just as by some masks, by hiding the faces of the defendants by his own and Apollos' names, he gave them power to amend that wickedness. Again, 'Lest when I come again, my God will humble me among

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<sup>360</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XII, v.6.

<sup>361</sup> John Chrysostom, Homily upon the Not Publishing the Errors of the Brethren, 4.



you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced' (2 Corinthians 12:21). Notice that he indefinitely mentions those who had sinned, in order that he might not, by openly bringing the accusation, render the soul of those who had sinned more shameless. Therefore, just as we have administered our reproofs by sparing your feelings, so you also have received the correction with all seriousness, and paid attention to what was said with carefulness."

### **The Church in Colossae**

At the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 53 to 55 AD), the Church in Colossae was getting started, probably at the hands of Archippus. We can only see this in the Scriptures by looking at what Paul wrote later. When Paul wrote, "Say to Archippus, 'Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it'" (Colossians 4:17), Paul was probably saying that because Archippus was so instrumental in starting the Church there.

Paul wrote to the Colossians during the time he was under house-arrest in Rome between 60 AD and 62 AD. But Luke's account in Acts doesn't mention specifically that Paul had been to Colossae. All Luke mentions is:

"But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, Paul departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that **all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus**, both Jews and Greeks. Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:9-12).

Another central figure in Colossae was the Apostle of the Seventy Philemon with his wife Apphia. Philemon was one of the original Seventy Apostles chosen<sup>362</sup> by the Lord Jesus (Luke 10:1-20).

Philemon was ordained<sup>363</sup> by the Apostle Paul as the first Bishop of Gaza. As the shepherd of this ancient city by the Mediterranean Sea in Palestine, he led the residents of Gaza from the darkness of ignorance and enlightened them to the knowledge of God. Both John Chrysostom and Theophylact comment that he was a remarkable and commendable man. He possessed good judgment, was merciful, and was a ready helper for the needs of the Christian community. In

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<sup>362</sup> The way we know Philemon was numbered with the original Seventy comes from the agreement of two early documents by Hippolytus and Dorotheus of Tyre. Both documents include Philemon; but both also include Demas, Nicholas of Antioch, Hermogenes and Phygellas, all of whom apostatized and are not numbered in any later lists of the Seventy. Thus Hippolytus' and Dorotheus' lists represent the original Seventy and later lists include those who replaced Demas, Nicholas of Antioch, Hermogenes and Phygellas, just as Matthias replaced Judas.

See Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

See Dorotheus, "The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles", in Lives of Orthodox Christian Saints, New Valaam Trading Company, 2008.

<sup>363</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 22.

about the year 54, Hierarch Philemon went to Colossae, where he also preached the word of truth, together with Archippus and Apphia.

This was during the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus. The Christians gathered in Philemon's home to celebrate church services in Colossae (Philemon 1:2). Being made a Bishop by Paul, Philemon went about<sup>364</sup> the cities of Phrygia, preaching the Gospel. Apphia, his wife, took<sup>365</sup> the sick and vagrants into her home, zealously attending to them. She was her husband's co-worker in proclaiming the Word of God. Archippus was ordained as the bishop for Colossae. Onesimus was Philemon's slave at this time, but he later stole something and ran away to Rome (Philemon 1:16-18), where he crossed paths with the Apostle Paul. Paul's Epistle to Philemon covers the result of Onesimus' encounter with Paul in c. 62 AD, where Paul not only converted Onesimus, but also made him an Apostle. As a slave-owner, we can infer that Philemon was rather wealthy.

### **Paul Leaves for Macedonia**

After the uproar had ceased (in Ephesus), Paul called the disciples to *himself*, embraced *them*, and departed to go to Macedonia. Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece and stayed three months. When the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. Sosipater of Berea accompanied him to Asia -- also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight" (Acts 20:1-7).

From this account, we notice that Sosipater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy and Tychicus & Trophimus of Asia went on ahead to Troas while Paul and Luke stayed in Philippi for five days longer. Since Luke had been in this area for about five years, Luke may have had time to take Paul on a tour of the area, or at least introduce him to some of the saints that Luke had worked with over this time period.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>366</sup> that Aristarchus – dressed like John the Baptist – was one of the Apostles who went ahead of Paul to Troas to prepare the way for Paul as he was coming from Philippi.

“There was need of much comforting after that uproar. Accordingly, having done this, Paul went into Macedonia, and then into Greece. ‘When Paul had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece and stayed three months. When the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia’ (Acts 20:2-3). Again he is persecuted by the Jews, and goes into Macedonia.”

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<sup>364</sup> Thus Philemon was a traveling Bishop in the area of Colossae rather than being resident in one place

<sup>365</sup> <http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> for February 19.

<sup>366</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 2-6.

One purpose of Paul's swing through Macedonia and Achaia was to take up a collection for the now-poverty-stricken Churches of Judea. As persecution developed in Judea, first at the hand of Saul (Acts 8:3), later at the hands of the Jewish leaders, they would raid houses occupied by Christians, drag people off to prison, and plunder the house of food and clothing. Then they would sell the house and pocket the proceeds. In Jerusalem and vicinity the long-term effect of the persecutions was the impoverishment of the Jerusalem church. By 57 AD, it was so bad that the Apostle Paul took up a major collection among the Gentile churches in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea), Achaia (Corinth, Athens) and Galatia (Iconium, Lystra, Derbe), to bring relief to the Jerusalem church (Romans 15:25-27, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, Acts 24:17).

Paul may have traveled more widely in Macedonia than on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, going all the way to Illyricum in Dalmatia (Romans 15:19). This may also be a reference to Luke the Evangelist taking Paul on a tour of what he had done in the four years since Paul had been there. (Luke traveled extensively as an evangelist after Paul's death).

### **Parallel Developments at Mt. Athos**

A parallel development occurred in the early 50's AD on the peninsula that juts out into the Aegean Sea from Thessalonica, where Athos is the easternmost peninsula. While Paul was passing through Thessalonica, and while Luke was traveling all over Macedonia with a few others of the Seventy Apostles, the Apostle John with the Virgin Mary came to the other end of the 40-mile long Athos peninsula, about 60 miles Southeast of Thessalonica.

At this time, the Virgin Mary still lived in Jerusalem at the house of the Apostle John. She heard that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha desired to see her very much. Lazarus had been ordained Bishop of Cyprus by the Apostle Barnabas, but did not dare enter Jerusalem for fear of the Jews. It had been over 20 years since the Jewish leaders had tried to kill him (John 12:10); but they still sought to do so.

To solve this dilemma, Mary wrote to Bishop Lazarus asking him to send a ship for her so that she might visit him on Cyprus. This he did and the Virgin Mary, the Apostle John and some others set sail for Cyprus. Out at sea, however, they encountered a violent storm that took them far off course and up to the northern part of the Aegean Sea near Macedonia. There, they put in to the port of Clemes on Athos at the tip of the 50-mile long peninsula. At this location today, there are a number of famous monasteries that trace their origin to the visit of the Virgin Mary in the early 50's AD, and most of the information we have concerning the Virgin Mary's voyage comes from these monasteries<sup>367</sup>. Monastic life on Mt Athos has gone through many ups and downs, and didn't reach its present form until the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

At that time, the population of Athos consisted of young virgins dedicated to the goddess Diana who were expected to become priestesses to serve in the Greek temples. Also, on Athos was a large gold and ivory statue of Jupiter on top of the 6,600-foot peak of Mt. Athos. This statue was mentioned in ancient history accounts of Plutarch and Anaximander as having large

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<sup>367</sup> Holy Apostles Convent, The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, Buena Vista, Colo. 81211, pp 432-438.

gems for eyes; it was used for navigation by seamen. Also present on the peninsula was a huge temple of Apollo where fortune telling, divining and witchcraft took place.

When Mary and John arrived at the port of Clemes, the huge statue of Jupiter fell and shattered to pieces with a thunderous noise. At the same time, the ground shook and idols and pagan statues in the temple and in all the shrines fell prostrate and broke in pieces. During the chaos of this collapse, a voice was heard saying, “Men of Apollo, all of you, go to Clemes Harbor and welcome Mary, the mother of the Great God Jesus.” Thus, the demons inhabiting the idols were forced against their will to proclaim the truth.

Seeing the destruction around them, all the inhabitants of Athos hurried to Clemes Harbor to meet the Virgin Mary. They received her, the Apostle John and the others with great honor and brought them to a large meeting hall. There they asked her to explain who the God that she bore was and they inquired diligently into the mystery of the Incarnation. They also wondered at how Mary, a Hebrew woman, could explain everything to them in Greek. (This was due to the gift of languages that Mary received along with the 120 at Pentecost.)

All this resulted in the entire group of the residents of Athos accepting the Christian Faith. They were all then catechized and baptized into the Faith. During their stay on Athos, Mary and the Apostle John performed many miracles among the new converts. Before leaving, they appointed a leader and teacher for the newly illumined residents of Athos from among their traveling party. In addition, Mary prayed for the blessing of Athos, that the Lord would have mercy on it and keep it free from harm until the end of the world along with its inhabitants.

Having blessed Athos, Mary, John and the others set sail for Cyprus. Meanwhile, Lazarus had grown very concerned about Mary’s delay, assuming it was because of a storm, and not knowing that all was well. When the ship finally arrived at Cyprus, there was great rejoicing and thanksgiving. Mary presented Bishop Lazarus with an ornophorion and spimanikia (part of a bishop’s vestments) that she had made. And Mary and John shared the good news of all that happened on Athos.

After staying on Cyprus for a short time, Mary blessed the Christians there and returned to Jerusalem with John and the others.

This parallel development is relevant to the life of the Apostle Paul since Mary and John left Athos sometime between Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journeys, while Luke was in that area for about five years.

### **Paul Picks Up Luke in Macedonia**

We notice also that as Paul traveled through Macedonia, he picked up Luke, who had been there for about 5 years. We can see this in Luke’s text of Acts. Before Paul reached Macedonia, Luke says, “When he had gone over that region” and, “As he was about to sail” (Acts 20:2-3). But when Paul reached Macedonia, Luke says, “These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas” (Acts 20:5); and “We sailed away from Philippi” (Acts 20:6).

According to tradition, about this time, the Apostle Andrew ordained Urbanus<sup>368</sup> of the original Seventy as Bishop of all Macedonia. We don't hear much from Urbanus after this, except that he was later tortured and killed by the Jews and pagans. Thus, we can conclude with a fair degree of certainty, that it was Urbanus who replaced Luke at this time. Most likely, Urbanus joined Luke in Macedonia a little before Luke left.

### **Epaphroditus Also Joins Paul in Philippi**

Epaphroditus was<sup>369</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles. He was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). We first see him in Paul's letters in c. 62 AD when Paul sent him to Philippi from Rome. Epaphroditus had been longing for the Philippians and was distressed because they were worried about him when he was sick (Philippians 2:26-30). This implies that he had been working with Paul for quite a while already. Earlier in c. 49-50 AD, when Paul passed through Philippi on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Epaphroditus was probably there. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul left Luke behind in Macedonia<sup>370</sup> and Luke worked with several others of the Seventy in Macedonia. On Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, as he passed through Philippi again, Luke started traveling with Paul again. Probably Epaphroditus did so also and Hermas of the original Seventy was left behind in Philippi. Hermas thus became known<sup>371</sup> as the first Bishop of Philippi. There are conflicting accounts of where Epaphroditus finished his life; some say he was Bishop of Colophon in Pamphylia; others say he was Bishop of Andriace in Lycia, near Myra.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>372</sup> that Paul continued to celebrate the Jewish Feast Days to help the preaching even though he was not required to do so.

“It seems to me that Paul made a point of keeping the feasts in the large cities. ‘He sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread’, where Philippi was the place Paul had been imprisoned. This was Paul's third coming into Macedonia, and it is a high testimony that Luke points out the day of the week. When the disciples came together to eat dinner, Paul preached to them,

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<sup>368</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2031).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>369</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 8, March 30, January 4](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%208,%20March%2030,%20January%204).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>370</sup> See the section of “Paul” on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey titled “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

<sup>371</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 31.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for March 8, May 31](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20March%208,%20May%2031).

Note: The Prologue and the OCA web site refer to Hermas as Bishop of Philippopolis, a city near Philippi.

<sup>372</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 1-8.

ready to depart the next day. This was the season between Pascha and Pentecost. See how everything was subordinate to the preaching. Paul also did this because of stillness of the night.”

Chrysostom also noted<sup>373</sup> how everywhere Paul accomplished things by preaching and not by miracles. He was hastening to get to Antioch and Jerusalem, but he restrained himself to set things right in these parts also.

“Paul refreshed the disciples by embracing them before leaving for Macedonia, giving them much consolation. He encouraged the Macedonians with many words; then he came to Greece and stayed three months (Acts 20:2). Notice how we find him accomplishing everything by means of preaching, not by miracles. Luke constantly shows Paul to us as hastening to get to Syria; the reason for it was the Church, and Jerusalem. But still he restrained his desire, so as to set everything right in those parts also. Troas is not a large place; why then do they spend seven days there? Perhaps it was large because of the number of believers. And after he had passed seven days there, on the following day he spent the night in teaching; so hard did he find it to tear himself away from them, and they from him.”

Thus, on the return trip to Troas on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 20:4-5) and the brief stop in Ephesus at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 20:16-38), Luke was added to the group. However, Erastus and Sosthenes, who had accompanied Paul earlier, are missing (Acts 20:4). Erastus was at Ephesus at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey when Paul wrote to the Romans from Ephesus (Romans 16:21-24), and was also there when Paul sent him from Ephesus to Macedonia with Timothy (Acts 19:22). This was before Paul went to Macedonia to get Luke, so Erastus may have stayed in Macedonia for a while. Erastus was in Rome just before Paul’s death and Paul had just sent him to Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20).

Sosthenes was the synagogue ruler who got beaten up on Paul’s behalf in Corinth on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 18:17). He was also with Paul when Paul wrote to Corinth from Ephesus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (1 Corinthians 1:1). Sosthenes had probably come to Ephesus at the direction of Silas to seek Paul out with a report on what was going on in Corinth. Following Paul’s letter-writing (i.e. after Paul’s 4<sup>th</sup> letter to Corinth), Sosthenes probably traveled back to Corinth with Paul. Sosthenes went on to become Bishop of Colophon in Asia Minor, between Ephesus and Smyrna, perhaps after Onesiphorus was martyred there.

### **The All-Night Teaching at Troas**

The site of Troas<sup>374</sup> was first called Sigeia. In 306 BC Antigonus re-founded the city and called it Antigonias Troas by settling the people of five other towns there. The name of the city was changed by Lysimachus, after his defeat of Antigonus, to Alexandria Troas in memory of Alexander III of Macedon. Troas was the chief port of Northwest Asia Minor and prospered in Roman times as early as 188 BC. The city at one time had a population of about 100,000 people.

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<sup>373</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, XLIII, Recapitulation.

<sup>374</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria\\_Troas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria_Troas).

“Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. In a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him”. Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted” (Acts 20:7-12).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>375</sup> how crowded the third story room was and how eager they were to hear, even listening all night long. Even the young man who died was not listless and indifferent. Yet Paul was very unassuming in how he comforted them.

“Note how Paul spoke a long time beyond the time of supper. But the Devil disturbed the supper -- not that he prevailed -- by plunging the hearer in sleep, and causing him to fall down. They brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted’ (Acts 20:12). Notice how crowded the theater was; and the miracle, what it was. Such was their eagerness to hear Paul! Let us take shame to ourselves! ‘But Paul was speaking then!’ Now we have no one sitting in the window, no hunger, no lack of sleep, and yet we do not care to hear; there is no crowding in a narrow space, or any other such comfort. The wonderful circumstance is that though he was a youth, he was not listless and indifferent. It was not from listlessness that he slumbered, but from necessity of nature. Notice that so fervent was their zeal that they even assembled in a third loft<sup>376</sup>; for they had no Church yet. Paul said, ‘Do not be troubled. He shall come to life again, for I will raise him up’. Notice the unassuming way in which Paul comforted them: ‘Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him’. This cut short Paul’s speaking; it did no harm, however. Notice the frugality of the supper! Notice how they spent the whole night! Such were their meals that the hearers came away sober, and able to listen. ‘They were comforted’ both because they received him back alive and because a miracle had been done.”

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>377</sup> they were hungry and the breaking bread brought them together; and it prolonged Paul’s teaching. Paul never returned to Troas, and he knew he wouldn’t be back; so he continued all night long. The miracle helped them remember that evening the rest of their lives.

“The principal object that brought them together was not teaching, but they came together to break bread, meaning that they were hungry. This had the effect of prolonging Paul’s teaching. Notice how everyone ate at Paul’s table. It seems to me, that Paul spoke while even sitting at table, teaching us to consider all other things as subordinate to this. Picture to yourselves that house with its lights, with its crowd, with Paul in the midst, speaking, with even the windows

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<sup>375</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 8-12.

<sup>376</sup> A third story on a house was unusual. 2<sup>nd</sup> stories were just a room on the flat roof of the house. For the young man to fall indicates that the 3<sup>rd</sup> story had to have been built adjacent to either the outside wall of the house or next to an inner courtyard.

<sup>377</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, Recapitulation.

occupied by many. What a thing it was to see, and to hear that trumpet, and behold that gracious countenance! But why did he speak at night? Since ‘he was about to depart’, and he was to see them no more. Paul does not tell them this, since they were too weak to bear it, but he did tell it to the others. At the same time the miracle which took place would make them forever remember that evening; so that the fall turned out to the advantage of the teacher. Great was the delight of the hearers, and even when interrupted it was the more increased. That young man rebukes all that are careless of the word. His death was caused by nothing else than this, that he wished to hear Paul.”

### **Paul Heads for Antioch**

“Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. And when he met us at Assos<sup>378</sup>, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost” (Acts 20:13-16).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>379</sup> that a number of the original members of the Seventy Apostles accompanied Paul and went ahead to cities on their route to prepare the way for Paul. This appeared to allow Paul to keep the Jewish Feast Days in the large cities, which also allowed Paul a teaching opportunity to instruct everyone on the true meaning of the Feast Days.

“When the Jews laid wait for Paul, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia’ (Acts 20:2-3). Again, he is persecuted by the Jews, and goes into Macedonia. ‘Sosipater of Berea accompanied him to Asia -- also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas’ (Acts 20:4-5). These, he says, went before him to Troas, preparing the way for him. ‘We sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days’ (Acts 20:6). For it seems to me that Paul made a point of keeping the feasts in the large cities.”

The ship Paul traveled on stopped on successive days at Mitylene on the Island of Lesbos (20 miles away), the Island of Chios (20 miles away), the Island of Samos (50 miles away), but stayed at Trogyllium (in a sheltered inlet on a rocky peninsula just onshore from Samos) and Miletus (15 miles away). We note that the ship during this time is hugging the coast, passing between islands and the mainland, which may mean that it was still the winter season, when sailing on the Mediterranean was treacherous. The sailing season usually begins in April; if Paul was hurrying to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16), it is quite reasonable that he started heading for Antioch before April, and that he was inching his way down the coast to get closer.

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<sup>378</sup> It was about a 20-mile walk from Troas to Assos.

<sup>379</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 2-6.



John Chrysostom noted<sup>380</sup> that Paul was training his followers to do without him, since he may not ever be back to this region again.

“We often find Paul parting from the disciples. He went on foot, both that he might arrange many matters, and by way of training them to bear with parting from him. He gave them the easier way, going about 20 miles by ship.

Chrysostom also noted<sup>381</sup> that Luke described Paul’s travel differently here than in other places. Here Luke gives a lot of details that he omits elsewhere. This indicates that Paul was traveling more leisurely at this time, trying hard not to offend anyone who really desired his attention.

“Why does Luke say where they came, and where they went to? To show in the first place that Paul was making the voyage more leisurely, sailing past some and making a stay at others, ‘that he might not have to spend the time in Asia’ (Acts 20:16). Since had he come there, he did not want to sail by; he did not like to pain those who would have begged him to remain. ‘He hastened, if it were possible for him to keep the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem’; this was not possible if he stayed. Notice how Paul is also moved like other men. Therefore, he does all this, that we may not think that he was above human nature. We see him desiring something, hastening, and in many instances not obtaining his object; for those great and holy men were partakers of the same nature with us. It was in the will and purpose that they differed; as a result, they attracted upon themselves the great grace they did. Notice how many things they order by an economy of their own. ‘That we give not offense’ to those who wish to take offense, and, ‘That our ministry be not blamed’ (2 Corinthians 6:3). Notice both an irreproachable life and on the other hand condescension. Paul went beyond the commandments of Christ, and was on the other hand humbler than all. ‘I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some’” (1 Corinthians 9:22).

### **The Emotional Meeting with the Presbyters of Ephesus**

“Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church” (Acts 20:16-17.)

On the return leg of his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul was hurrying to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost. Therefore, he had a brief, but emotional meeting with the presbyters from Ephesus (Acts 20:16-38). Notably missing of the presbyters from Ephesus was Aquila and his wife Priscilla who were in Rome (Rom 16:3-5) with the church that was now meeting in their house. The Apostle John, who referred to himself as “the elder” or presbyter (3 John 1) was not there yet. Included among the presbyters from Ephesus were bishops (i.e. Greek *episcopous* Acts 20:28) and perhaps representatives from all the churches nearby such as Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Thyatira, etc.

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<sup>380</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 13-16.

<sup>381</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, Recapitulation.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>382</sup> that Paul's hurry to be in Jerusalem at Pentecost was threefold: (1) because of the multitude that would be there. (2) As an example, to the Jews; and (3) as an opportunity to deliver the Word.

“Why was Paul in a hurry about Pentecost? Not for the sake of the feast, but of the multitude. At the same time, by this he conciliated the Jews, as being one that honored the feasts, wishing to gain even his adversaries. At the same time, he delivers the Word. Accordingly, notice what great gain accrued, from all being present. But that the interests of the people of Ephesus might not be neglected on that account, he managed for this in a different way. But let us look over again what has been said.”

Chrysostom also looked closely<sup>383</sup> at what Paul did as he passed by Ephesus. Just like Samuel, David and Moses, Paul was very humble about everything and solicited the opinions of those he was speaking to as a testimony to what he was saying.

“Notice Paul, hastening to sail by Ephesus, and yet not overlooking them. He sent for the rulers, and through those he speaks to the Ephesians. It is worthy of admiration, how finding himself under a necessity of saying certain great things about himself, he tries to make the least he can of it. ‘You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you’ (Acts 20:18). Just as Samuel, when about to deliver up the government to Saul says in their presence, ‘Have I taken aught of your hands? You are witnesses, and God also’ (1 Samuel 12:3-5); so, Paul here. David also, when disbelieved, says, ‘Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it’ (1 Samuel 17:33-36). Paul himself also says to the Corinthians, ‘I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me’ (2 Corinthians 12:11). God Himself also does the same, not speaking of himself upon any and every occasion; only when He is disbelieved, then He brings up His benefits. Accordingly, notice what Paul does here: first he offers as an example their own testimony; that you may not imagine his words to be mere boasting, he calls the hearers themselves as witnesses of the things he says, since he was not likely to speak lies in their presence. This is the excellence of a teacher, to have for witnesses of his merits those who are his disciples. What is wonderful is that Paul continued doing this not for one day or for two. He wishes to cheer them for the future, that they may bravely bear all things, both the parting from him, and the trials about to take place — just as it was in the case of Moses and Joshua. Moses had been with the Lord the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility of mind. Notice what makes the best rulers: ‘hating pride’. This is especially a problem for rulers, because to them there is almost a necessity of becoming arrogant. Humility is the groundwork of all that is good, as in fact Christ said, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit’” (Matthew 5:3).

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<sup>382</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 13-16.

<sup>383</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIV, vv. 17-21.

## Paul's Message to the Presbyters at Ephesus

From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: 'You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship" (Acts 20:17-38)

John Chrysostom noted<sup>384</sup> the character of Paul that was apparent as he addressed the elders from Ephesus. Showing the true merit of a teacher, he treated them as his equals and even willingly suffered for the Jews who were heading for hell.

"In order that Paul may not seem to be arrogant, he laid a foundation beforehand, removing that suspicion. If he had acted 'with all humility of mind,' it was not from arrogance that he said the things he said. Out of his gentleness, ever with much condescension, he made the elders from Ephesus his fellow workers. Paul made the good works common to them with himself. He did not carry himself arrogantly against God. Yet there are many who do bear themselves arrogantly against God; but Paul did not even do so against his own disciples. This is the true merit of a teacher, by his own achievements of virtue to form the character of his disciples. Note also his fortitude, where also he is very concise. 'With many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews'

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<sup>384</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIV, vv. 17-21.

(Acts 20:19). Notice that he grieves at the doings of the Jews! Here too he seems to show how sympathizing he was; he suffered for those who were going to perdition, for the doers themselves. What was done to him, he even rejoiced at it; for Paul belonged to that band which ‘rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name’” (Acts 5:41).

Chrysostom also stated<sup>385</sup> that Paul’s words to the elders of Ephesus were to imitate him. But what Paul did was hard to do and was way beyond voluntary poverty. He not only accepted poverty for himself, but also worked to support others.

“Paul said, ‘From no man have I coveted the necessities of life’ (Acts 20:33), that it might not look like accusing them; but he covertly hints as much, seeing that he provided subsistence for others as well as himself. Notice how Paul worked with earnestness, ‘night and day’, ‘warning everyone night and day with tears’ (Acts 20:31). Paul again puts them in fear. ‘I have shown you all things’; you cannot take refuge in the plea of ignorance. Paul had shown them by works, ‘how that so laboring you ought to work’. Paul does not say that to receive is bad, but that not to receive is better. Remember, he says, the words of the Lord, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ (Acts 20:35). Where did Jesus say this? Perhaps the Apostles delivered it by unwritten tradition; or else it is plain from recorded sayings, from which one could infer it. Paul has demonstrated both boldness in meeting dangers, sympathy with those over whom he ruled, teaching with unshrinking boldness, humility and voluntary poverty; but what we have here is even more than voluntary poverty. Jesus said there, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor’ (Matthew 19:21); if, besides receiving nothing himself, he provided sustenance for others also, what could equal this? It is one degree to fling away one’s possessions; a second, to be sufficient for the supply of one’s own necessities; a third, to provide for others also; a fourth, for all this to be done by one who preaches and has a right to receive support. So here is a man far better than those who merely sell everything and give to the poor. Thus, it is right to support the weak; this is indeed sympathy with the weak. To just give from the labors of others is easy; this is much harder.”

Chrysostom further noted<sup>386</sup> that Paul really alarmed the elders in Ephesus by saying that wolves would enter in among them. But yet Paul toned it down so as not to overpower them. Instead Paul focused on the grace of God, which is what they really needed to concentrate on.

“What Paul does when writing in an Epistle, he also does when speaking in council; and he ends with prayer. He had really alarmed them by saying, ‘Savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock’ (Acts 20:29), therefore, not to overpower them, and make them lose all self-confidence, notice the consolation he gives. ‘So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace’ (Acts 20:32); it is grace that saves. He constantly reminds them of grace, to make them more earnest as being debtors, and to persuade them to have confidence, ‘Which is able to build you up’. He does not say, to build but

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<sup>385</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLV, Recapitulation.

<sup>386</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLV, vv. 29-32.

‘to build up’, showing that they had already been built. Then he reminds them of the hope to come; ‘to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified’”.

Chrysostom also noted<sup>387</sup> that Paul knew that chains awaited him<sup>388</sup>, but he was obeying the Holy Spirit in all things. He was teaching the elders something about fortitude. Paul was also handing over the Churches to these elders; they would not see him anymore, and they won’t need to. If they do, the Apostle John will be there soon. Paul had taught them the whole counsel of God and they need to convey this to their flocks also.

“Why does Paul say these things? Having first alarmed their feeling, he adds, ‘And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God’ (Acts 20:22-24). Paul says this to prepare them to be always ready to meet dangers, whether seen or unseen, and in all things to obey the Spirit. He departs willingly; that you may not imagine it any necessity. Note how clearly these were the words not of one lamenting, but of one who intended to make the most of his troubles; he is instructing those whom he addressed, and sympathizing with them in the things which were happening. He doesn’t say, ‘I grieve, but one has to bear it’; but he says, ‘none of those things are a big deal, neither do I count my life dear to me’. Paul stated this not to praise himself, but to teach them fortitude and boldness and to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God.”

“He is about to say something more uncomfortable, ‘I am pure from the blood of all men’. He is about to lay upon them the whole weight and burden; so he first softens their feelings by saying, ‘And now I know that you shall see my face no more’ (Acts 20:25). In heart I am with you, however. Note how he terrifies them, and how hard he rubs them? But it was necessary. ‘For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27). He, who does not speak the whole counsel of God, has blood to answer for; that is, murder! Nothing could be more terrifying than this. He shows that if they don’t do the same with their flocks, they have blood to answer for. While Paul might seem to be justifying himself, in fact he is terrifying them. ‘Pay attention therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (or, bishops) to feed the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood’” (Acts 20:28).

Chrysostom further stated<sup>389</sup> that the most distressful thing would be that this war would be internal to the Church. It’s not the Jews or the Gentiles attacking from the outside anymore. The answer is to become watchful, and Paul warned the Ephesians night and day about this for three years.

“Paul engaged the elders from Ephesus from another aspect, from the things which should come after: as when he says, ‘We wrestle not against flesh

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<sup>387</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIV, vv. 22-28.

<sup>388</sup> This becomes much more apparent in later chapters, when Agabus and the saints at Tyre say the same thing.

<sup>389</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIV, vv. 29-31.

and blood' (Ephesians 6:12). When the savage wolves come, there will be two evils: that Paul himself would not be present, and that others would attack them. Why would Paul depart, if he knew this beforehand? 'The Spirit draws me', he says. Not only will there be wolves who don't spare the flock; but what is worse, even 'from among your own selves' (Acts 20:30). The distressful thing is that this is a war internal to the Church. This is exceedingly serious, for it is 'the Church of the Lord', and with blood He redeemed it. What comfort shall there be if men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:30)? Paul's advice: 'Therefore watch, and remember, that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears' (Acts 20:31). Notice how many strong expressions are here: 'with tears', 'night and day', and 'everyone'. This was how Paul knit them together as firmly as he did. Paul had done enough on his part by remaining three years. They had enough establishing, enough roofing. The tears were on this account! The bad man doesn't distress; if you express distress, perhaps the bad man will do so also. When the sick man sees his physician partaking of food, he also is incited to do the same; so likewise here, when the bad man sees you weeping, he is softened; he will be a good man.

Chrysostom also stated<sup>390</sup> that the cause of the problems to come upon Ephesus was the presence of heresies. But if Christ purchased the Church with His own blood, He will certainly defend the Church. Those who don't wish to obey may be annoyed at Paul's words, and think that he is endlessly repeating the same things.

"Someone might say that Paul thought himself so great that his followers would die if he left. But Paul is not saying that his absence causes the problem. Certain of another sort will rise up against them not 'because of my departing', but 'after my departing'; that is, after his going on his journey. This thing had already happened; much more will it happen afterward. The cause is 'to draw away the disciples after themselves' (Acts 20:30). There are heresies; this is the cause, and no other than this. The consolation is that if He 'purchased it with His own blood', He will assuredly stand forward in its defense. 'Night and day', Paul said, 'I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears' (Acts 20:31). What happens if the teachers speak, exhort and weep night and day, while the disciples don't obey? Therefore, Paul said, 'I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God'" (Acts 20:26-27).

"Many I know sneer at us, that we are forever speaking about the same things; so wearisome we have become to you by repetition. For this we are not to blame, but the hearers may thank themselves. He, who is making good progress, rejoices to hear the same things always; it seems to be his praises that he hears what is spoken. But he who does not wish to progress, seems to be annoyed; and though he hears the same thing just twice, it seems to him that he is hearing it often."

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<sup>390</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIV, Recapitulation.

Chrysostom further stated<sup>391</sup> that Paul's farewell with the elders at Ephesus was particularly emotional and the elders grieved the most that they would see him no more. Paul warned them that they had a huge fight ahead of them against wolves within the Church, and they would have to fight these battles without his help.

“You yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak’ (Acts 20:34-35). Notice Paul employed himself in work and laboring so as to put them to shame. Paul doesn't say, ‘You ought to show yourselves superior to money’, but what? ‘to support the weak’ — not all indiscriminately — ‘and to hear the word of the Lord which He spoke: It is more blessed to give than to receive’. For lest anyone should think that it was spoken with reference to them, and that Paul gave himself as an example (Philippians 3:17), he added the declaration of Christ, Who said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’<sup>392</sup>. Paul prayed over them while exhorting them: he shows it both by action and by his saying, ‘I commend you to the Lord’. ‘Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more’ (Acts 20:37-38). Paul had said, that ‘grievous wolves should enter in’; he had said, ‘I am pure from the blood of all men’; yet the thing that grieved them most of all was this, ‘that they should see him no more’. It was this that made the war grievous, since they would be fighting it without Paul's help. ‘And they accompanied them unto the ship. And it came to pass, that after we had torn ourselves from them’ — so much did they love him, such was their affection towards him.

## Paul Arrives in Judea

“Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following *day* to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo. And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home. And when we had finished *our* voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day” (Acts 21:1-7).

We note that everyone really likes Paul! The whole town went out to the shore where Paul was to sail from Tyre to Ptolemais to see him off, even the women and children. They had a very emotional farewell just like Paul had at Ephesus.

We also note that the disciples at Tyre prophesied just like Agabus did a few days later about chains awaiting Paul in Jerusalem.

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<sup>391</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLV, vv. 34-38.

<sup>392</sup> This quote from Christ is not recorded in the Gospels; it is only recorded in Acts 20:35.

## Paul and His Companions Stay with Deacon Philip

“On the next *day* we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was *one* of the seven, and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied” (Acts 21:8-9)

We note here that it was not the four virgin daughters of Philip who prophesied of Paul's coming difficulties in Jerusalem, but Agabus. Agabus had previously prophesied of the famine that was to come in the days of Claudius (Acts 11:28).

## Agabus Prophecies of Paul's Imprisonment

“And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his *own* hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles’. Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus’. So, when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, ‘The will of the Lord be done’” (Acts 21:10-14).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>393</sup> that Agabus prophesied just like the prophets of old used to do, by representing future events in physical pictures. Everyone grasped that the Jews would attempt to do to Paul what they had done to Christ. Paul grieved, not at his own future, but at the distress it was causing the people there.

“Agabus, who formerly had declared about the famine, says, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt’. This is what the prophets used to do, representing events to the sight, when they spoke about the captivity — as did Ezekiel. The grievous part of the business, is that the Jews would ‘deliver Paul into the hands of the Gentiles’ (Acts 21:11), which is what they had done with Christ (Matthew 20:18-19). Everyone recognized these words and they begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem’. Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart?’” (Acts 21:13) We should note that Paul said, ‘I go bound in the Spirit’ (Acts 21:22 ); this was a matter of necessity for him. Paul did not fall into these things ignorantly; therefore, these things are foretold. But they wept, and he comforted them, grieving at their tears. Nothing could be more affectionate; because he saw them weeping, he grieved, he that felt no pain at his own trials.”

John Chrysostom also noted<sup>394</sup> that at other times, Paul obeyed the words of his disciples, such as at Ephesus and at Damascus, and escaped from dangers. But here, even though warned by the Spirit, he goes to face the dangers head on. He knew the Spirit was leading him to do that.

“The disciples at Tyre ‘said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem’ (Acts 21:4). Notice: when the Spirit does not forbid, Paul

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<sup>393</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLV, vv. 11-13.

<sup>394</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLV, Recapitulation.



complies. They said, ‘Do not venture into the theater’ (Acts 19:31) and Paul complied. Often, they bore him off from dangers, and he complied. At Damascus he escaped by a window (Acts 9:25). Now, though numberless persons beg him, both those at Tyre and those at Caesarea, weeping and predicting numberless dangers, he refuses to comply. It is not merely that they predicted the dangers, but ‘by the Spirit’. If then the Spirit spoke, why did Paul contradict? They knew ‘by the Spirit’ what would be the consequences, and they spoke to Paul; of course, this does not mean that the command they made was by the Spirit. They did not simply foretell to him the dangers through the Spirit, but added of themselves that he ought not to go up to Jerusalem — thus sparing him. Their entreaty was great! When Paul had heard that he will have to suffer numberless perils, then he is in haste, not flinging himself upon the dangers but accounting it to be the command of the Spirit. But when they could not persuade him — this was why they wept — then they kept silent. Notice the resignation! Notice the affection! The Lord, they say, Himself will do that which is pleasing in his sight. They perceived that it was the will of God. Otherwise Paul would not be so bent upon going to Jerusalem — he that on all other occasions delivers himself out of dangers.”

### **Paul Arrives in Jerusalem**

“And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. Also, some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge” (Acts 21:15-16).

With everyone prophesying what Paul is headed toward why would Paul head right into trouble? It seems that Paul was on a mission! There were things coming out of Jerusalem, but not from James, regarding what needed to be done in keeping the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:20-22). Paul felt he needed to address this even if it meant risking his life.

But there were larger issues involved also. Paul arrived in Jerusalem in c. 58 AD. Eight years later in 66 AD, Vespasian and the Roman armies began the siege of Jerusalem. We might ask what happened in those eight years to bring down the wrath of God so strongly at this time. Certainly, we can say that part of this is a result of the Crucifixion of Christ in c. 30 AD. But why did the Lord wait this long? Usually His delay of punishment is to give people an opportunity for repentance. Two major events that seemed to have sealed the fate of Jerusalem and demonstrated that no further repentance would be forthcoming are the persecution of Paul from 58 to 60 AD and the murder of Bishop James in c. 62 AD. Both of these events came out of a rage against obvious godliness such as was demonstrated at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60). However, many people repented after the stoning of Stephen, especially due to the work of Bishop James. With the arrival of Paul in Jerusalem, there is another attitude that came forward: the political fervor of the Jewish Zealots.

Two to three years earlier Paul had written the following to the Romans, which indicates his feelings on the subject of his countrymen.

“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren,

my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of *God*, and the promises; of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen” (Romans 9:1-5)

### **History of the Jewish Zealot Party**

The Party of the Zealots was very prominent during the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans and Josephus goes into great detail in describing their actions. It seems that their attitude was “better dead than Roman”, and it was an extreme form of Jewish nationalism. To them, circumcision was Jewish national identity, since it represented God’s covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:1-13). Gentiles were not part of their world at all. Some milestones from the Scriptures are:

1. Paul returned from the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey in c. 48 AD to a furor about circumcision (Acts 15:1-2).
2. Bishop James and the Apostles in Jerusalem decreed that the Gentiles didn’t need to be circumcised (Acts 15:24-29).
3. Yet Jews from Jerusalem still insisted that the Gentiles needed to be circumcised (Galatians 6:12-14).
4. Jews from Asia Minor hounded Paul from city to city during his 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journeys. Their big burning issue was circumcision. (Acts 14:19, 17:13-14, 18:12-15, 20:3)
5. When Paul arrived in Jerusalem after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey in c. 58 AD, the Jews from Asia Minor accused him of bringing Trophimus the Ephesian (a Gentile member of the Seventy Apostles) into the Temple, thus defiling the Temple (Acts 21:29).
6. A mob scene resulted and the Zealots tried to kill Paul several times (Acts 21:31, 22:21-23, 23:12-14, 25:2-3).
7. If the chief priests had not been involved with the Zealots earlier, they became involved out of a common desire to kill Paul (Acts 23:14-15).
8. After Paul was sent to Rome, comfortably out of their reach, they took out their anger and frustration on Bishop James and murdered him right in front of the Temple.

According to Josephus’ account<sup>395</sup> of the Jewish rebellion that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in c. 70 AD, the Party of the Zealots used murder as a technique for accomplishing their goals. Political opponents were quietly and systematically assassinated when they least expected it. This created a reign of terror, since no one knew who the Zealots were or who they would strike next. Thus, we can see a buildup of power by the Zealots. Before and during the time of Christ’s public ministry, there were scattered outbreaks by the Zealots, such as Judas and Theudas (Acts 5:36-37) and probably also Barabbas (Mark 15:7). As the Zealots got more control, there were more frequent incidents that clashed with Jewish nationalism. Finally, during the siege of Jerusalem, the Zealots obtained control of Jerusalem and drove the holy city into the ground.

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<sup>395</sup> Josephus, Wars of the Jews, IV, vi, 1.

## Paul Meets with Bishop James

“When we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following *day* Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore, do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave *their* heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but *that* you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Law. But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written *and* decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality’. Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them” (Acts 21:17-26).

After his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul arrived in Jerusalem and was purified according to the Law involving a Nazirite<sup>396</sup> (Acts 21:15-26). Later Paul testified before Governor Felix (Acts 24:17), that he came to Jerusalem bringing alms and offerings. The alms were an offering from the Churches in Achaia, Macedonia and Galatia for the Church in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-27; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Paul explained to the Romans (Romans 15:27) that this was part of the liturgical work of the Church to do so. After all, the Lord had said, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice. The Lord was not saying that He didn’t desire sacrifice, but that mercy is the most important ingredient for sacrifice. Paul said this very well, “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:15-16).

## What Was Bishop James’ Methodology in Jerusalem?

We need to get an understanding of why Bishop James asked Paul to keep the Mosaic Nazirite Laws publicly – which Paul had already been doing for several months! Bishop James asked Paul to join four men who had been doing the same thing that Paul was in the process of doing, and he asked Paul to pay their expenses (Acts 21:24). Why would Bishop James say that?

It seems that Bishop James was trying to prove to the Jews in Jerusalem that their concept of Paul was not accurate. James and the Jerusalem presbyters instructed Paul to follow the Nazirite Laws (which Paul had been doing) together with four other men in the Jerusalem

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<sup>396</sup> Two well-known Nazirites were Samson (Judges 16:17) and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15). Both Samson and John lived under the Nazirite Law their entire life. This was not required in the Mosaic Law; a Nazirite Vow could be undertaken for a few months like Paul did. The Nazirite Vow included abstinence from any form of grapes and any kind of haircut. During the days of the vow, the Nazirite was to be holy to the Lord. If he somehow got defiled he was required to shave his head and be purified (Numbers 6:2-21).

Church (Acts 21:22-25, Numbers 6:1-21). That way everyone would see that Paul, himself, kept the Mosaic Law and that the rumors were not true. We might note that Christians were still considered a branch of Judaism<sup>397</sup> at that time.

In the Council of Jerusalem not quite 10 years earlier, Bishop James and the Jerusalem presbyters had reached an agreement that would seem to make this unnecessary. Peter's vision and the Gentile Pentecost occurred in the late 30's AD. In c. 48 AD following the Council of Jerusalem, Bishop James, the Apostles and presbyters in Jerusalem drafted a letter (Acts 15:13-29) to be circulated among the Gentile Churches informing them officially that they did not have to follow the Mosaic Law in all its details. Just abstain from:

- Things polluted by idols
- Sexual immortality
- Things containing blood, such as things strangled.

This was for their own benefit since:

- Someone eating meat offered to idols is a partaker of the altar of the idols (1 Corinthians 10:18ff)
- Sexual immorality joins Christ to the harlot (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)
- One needs to discern the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:26-30).

While this applied to Gentiles, no such relaxation is recorded as applying to Jewish believers in Jerusalem. In 57 AD when Paul returned from his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (shortly after writing the Epistle to the Romans in 55 AD), he first went to meet with Bishop James in Jerusalem (Acts 21:18). There were a great number of Jewish believers in Jerusalem who were all zealous to keep the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:20) and they had been informed (perhaps by the Zealots, definitely not by James), that Paul taught Jews abroad that they didn't have to follow the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:21, 28-31). Paul had written to the Corinthians in 55 AD, "Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised" (1 Corinthians 7:18). To someone who was zealous to follow the Mosaic Law to the letter, Paul's statements may have seemed like heresy, even though he was following the direction of Bishop James exactly.

Even though Paul worked with a mixed population of Jews and Gentiles, he had left Aquila and Priscilla, Jews from Rome who Paul stayed with at Corinth (Acts 18:1-3), in Ephesus after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey to teach the new believers the Law as interpreted by Christ (Acts 18:18-19). Paul kept a Nazirite vow at that time (Acts 18:18). Aquila and Priscilla had done such a good job that the Church in Ephesus opened up all of Asia Minor to Paul when he returned on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 19:10). Ephesus had such a Jewish characteristic that even the Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:13-14) felt at home. As Paul was completing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Bishop James asked Paul to keep another Nazirite vow in Jerusalem (Acts 21:23-24).

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<sup>397</sup> According to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Split\\_of\\_early\\_Christianity\\_and\\_Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Split_of_early_Christianity_and_Judaism), Christians were finally recognized throughout the Roman world as separate from Judaism after the Bar Kochba revolt in Jerusalem in 135 AD. Prior to that Christians and Jews were largely considered as "twins from the same womb".

Christ had said to Photini, the Samaritan woman, that the day was coming when people will worship the Father neither on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria nor on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (John 4:21). Salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22), and this is what Bishop James was teaching in Jerusalem using the illustrations of the Mosaic Law rituals. But the Father was also seeking true worshippers who would worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem were resisting James on this count – which led to his martyrdom in about 62 AD. Paul said “the way into the Holy of Holies was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle in Jerusalem was still standing” (Hebrews 9:8). With the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD, people had no alternative but to worship the Father in spirit and truth at some location outside Jerusalem (John 4:24). Thus, Jewish Christians worldwide were forced into a significant re-appraisal of the situation in the late first century. At the time Paul wrote Romans, however, Jewish Christians abroad trying to hold onto the Mosaic Law practices could be easily weakened in the Faith by the “liberty” of their Gentile brothers (1 Corinthians 8:9).

### **Other Issues in Jerusalem**

What were the real issues in Jerusalem that led to the confrontation between Paul and those who wanted to keep the Mosaic Law? In Jerusalem at that time was a small, but very vocal, group of zealots bent on expelling Roman rule. One of the Twelve Apostles, Simon the Zealot, was part of this group at one time, and Judas Iscariot may have been involved also. According to Josephus, the political party of the Zealots was ultimately responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem<sup>398</sup> as a result of their scheming and conspiring to achieve their goals. To them, circumcision represented Jewish national identity. They didn’t necessarily keep all the requirements of the Law, but they were very vocal about those aspects of the Law that spoke to their political agenda<sup>399</sup>.

This ideology spilled over to the Christians. The conflict among the Christians<sup>400</sup> was between a small minority of Jewish Christian Zealots, who were zealous about keeping the Law (Acts 21:20) and a large majority of Jewish Christians with a weak faith, who also kept the Law, but were not involved with the political agenda of the Zealots. They knew Christ after the flesh, as the Jewish Messiah, and were very sincere about that. If Paul (and James) handled this situation wrong and offended either group, many people might revert back to Judaism and be lost in the destruction coming to Jerusalem in a few years.

Tertullian stated<sup>401</sup> that circumcision was the only issue involved when Paul wrote to the Galatians. To the Jews, “circumcision” had their national identity associated with it, since this was part of the Covenant God made with Abraham, and the Law required anyone who rejected circumcision to be cut off from Israel (Genesis 17:9-14). Paul’s opponents still believed in God, but they perverted the Gospel by retaining an emphasis on the Law.

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<sup>398</sup> See Josephus, Wars of the Jews, IV, vi, 3. The motto of the Zealots seems to have been, “Better to be dead than Roman”.

<sup>399</sup> In a way, this is similar to the US today, where there are Christian zealots who have a very strong political agenda involving US national identity. Those aspects of Christianity that speak to their political agenda are very important to them. Yet out of kindness and mercy, we don’t want to offend them and cause them to abandon the Faith.

<sup>400</sup> See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995, Footnote 22, p. 433.

<sup>401</sup> Tertullian, The Five Books Against Marcion, II, ii, 5, 3.

John Cassian stated<sup>402</sup> that Paul identified with those he wished to reach. “To the Jews, I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews; to those who were under the Law as being under the Law, though not myself under the Law, that I might gain those who were under the Law; to those who were without law, I became as without law, though I was not without the Law of God but under the Law of Christ, that I might gain those who were without law; to the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I became all things to all men, that I might save all” (1 Corinthians 9:19-22). The Apostles in Jerusalem recognized that there would be a change in the Law as a result of the Coming of Christ (Hebrews 7:12), and they worked with the Apostle Paul in this regard.

We note that Paul and James were 100% in agreement, and when Paul presented the results of his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey to the Apostles in Jerusalem, they glorified the Lord. There was quite a different reaction from the Zealots!

“On the following *day* Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord” (Acts 21:18-20).

James warned Paul that the situation in Jerusalem is explosive since:

“The Zealots for the Law have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore, do what we tell you” (Acts 21:21-23)

### **The Jewish Zealots from Asia Start a Riot**

“Now when the seven days of Paul’s purification were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the Law, and this place; and furthermore, he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place. (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So, when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. When he reached the stairs, Paul had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, ‘Away with him!’ Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, ‘May I speak to you?’ The commander replied, ‘Can you speak Greek? Are you not

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<sup>402</sup> John Cassian, The Second Conference of Abbot Joseph, II, xvii, 20.

the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?” (Acts 21:27-38)

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>403</sup> the characteristics of the Jews from Asia, who may have been the same people who hounded Paul from city to city in Asia Minor. We note that when the Roman Commander showed up, the Jewish Zealots immediately backed off beating Paul. If they hadn't, this riot that they started could have gotten ugly very quickly. The “Egyptian” referred to points to a contrast between the ways of God's people and the ways of the world.

“Notice their habitual conduct, how turbulent we everywhere find it, how men who with or without reason make a clamor in the midst. They focus on the things which most trouble them, the Temple and the Law. Paul does not bother the Apostles with being the cause of these things to him. They wished to kill Paul; and therefore, they were dragging him out, to do this with greater security.”

“When the commander<sup>404</sup> delivered Paul, and ‘commanded him to be bound with two chains’ (Acts 21:33), this appeased the anger of the people. ‘When the Chiliarch could not know the certainty for the tumult, he ‘commanded him to be taken into the barracks. When he reached the stairs, Paul had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, “Away with him!”’ (Acts 21:34-36) What does it mean, ‘Away<sup>405</sup> with him?’ That is what they say to us according to the Roman custom, ‘To the cross with him!’ ‘As Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I speak to you?” (Acts 21:37). In the act of being carried along up the stairs, Paul requested to say something to the Chiliarch; notice how quietly he does it. ‘May I speak to you?’ The Chiliarch then said, ‘Can you speak Greek? Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?’ (Acts 21:38) This Egyptian was a revolutionary and seditious person.”

“The Egyptian referred to was a cheat and impostor, and the devil expected to cast a cloud over the Gospel through him, and implicate both Christ and His Apostles in the charges pertaining to those impostors. But he accomplished nothing; the truth became even more brilliant. It wasn't defeated by the machinations of the devil; rather it shone forth all the more. If there had not been impostors, and then Christ and His Apostles had prevailed, perhaps someone might have laid hold upon this; but when those impostors did actually appear, this is the wonder. As Paul said, ‘For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you’ (1 Corinthians 11:19). Gamaliel said, ‘Some time ago Theudas rose up’ (Acts 5:36-39). Then let us not grieve that heresies exist, seeing that false Christs wished to attack even Christ both before this and after; with a view to throw Him into the shade; but on every occasion we find the truth shining out transparent. So, it was with the

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<sup>403</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLVI, vv. 29-38, Recapitulation.

<sup>404</sup> This “commander” is a Chiliarch, a commander 10 centurions (or 1000 soldiers). The Chiliarch is the Greek equivalent to a Roman Military Tribune. We notice that when the Chiliarch showed up, the Jewish Zealots immediately ceased beating Paul. For more details, see <http://www.studydrive.org/dic/hdn/view.cgi?n=480>, and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military\\_tribune](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_tribune).

<sup>405</sup> “Away with Him!” is what the Scribes and Pharisees said to Pilate about Jesus at His trial before Pilate (John 19:15), which led to the Crucifixion of Christ. Now the same people are doing that with Paul.

Prophets; there were false prophets, and by contrast with these the true prophets shone the more; just as disease enhances health, and darkness light, and tempest calm. There is no room left for the Greeks to say that our teachers were impostors and charlatans; those that were such were exposed. It was the same in the case of Moses.”

Chrysostom also stated<sup>406</sup> that God allows magicians and imposters to rise up in order to show their limits compared to those of God. In this way, imposters do us good. In any encounters, we should concentrate on our relationship with God and not concern ourselves with what people might think.

“God allowed the magicians, who opposed Moses, on purpose in order that Moses might not be suspected of being a magician. He let these magicians teach all men to what length magic can go in making a fantastic show; beyond this point they could not deceive, but themselves confessed their defeat. Impostors do us no harm, rather they do us good, if we will apply our mind to the matter. If we are partners with them in the eyes of the people, let us remember that the people don’t have good judgment, and we should not care what they think. To God we live, not to men; in heaven we have our conversation, not on earth. In heaven are the awards and the prizes of our labors; there we look for our praises, there for our crowns. Let us not trouble ourselves about men, that we do not give them an opportunity against us. If they choose to accuse us thoughtlessly and without discrimination, let us laugh, not weep. ‘Provide honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men’ (2 Corinthians 8:21); if you provide honorable things, yet that man derides you for it, give yourself no more concern for that. You have your patterns in the Scriptures. Paul said, ‘do I now persuade men or God?’ (Galatians 1:10), and again, ‘We persuade men, but we are well known to God’ (2 Corinthians 5:11). Christ spoke of those that take offense, ‘Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind (Matthew 15:14); and again, ‘Woe to you, when all men speak well of you’ (Luke 6:26); and again, ‘Let your works shine, that men may see, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven’ (Matthew 5:16). Also, ‘Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea’ (Matthew 18:6). These sayings are not contrary; they are very much in agreement. When we offend God, woe to that man who blasphemes the Name of God! (Romans 2:24). What then if I do what is right in anything, but another blasphemes? That is nothing to me, but only to him; for through him God was blasphemed. How is it possible to do what is right in anything, and, yet give an opportunity for blasphemy? I’ll give examples. Paul supported Judaism in Jerusalem, but not so in Antioch; he supported Judaism, and they were offended<sup>407</sup>, but they had no right to be offended. Paul is said to have greeted both Nero’s cupbearer and his concubine; what do you think they must have said against him because of this? But they had no right to do so. If he drew them to himself for the purpose of loose living or any wicked acts, one might well be offended; but if he drew them to right living, what is there to be offended at?”

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<sup>406</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, XLVI, v. 38.

<sup>407</sup> That is, any that were offended at Paul for supporting James and the elders in Jerusalem had no right to be offended.



## Paul Addresses the Rioters

Once the Chiliarch realized that Paul was not the Egyptian assassin he was hunting for, Paul asked for permission to speak to the rioters. The Chiliarch said, “OK!” and Paul spoke to them in Hebrew. As soon as Paul began speaking Hebrew, there was great quiet.

“Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now. And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Then Paul said, ‘I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ Law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished. Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ So, I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting’. And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. So, I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do’. And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus. Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the Law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, came to me; and he stood and said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight’. And at that same hour I looked up at him. Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord’. Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance and saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me’. So, I said, ‘Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him’. Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles’” (Acts 22:1-21).

All of the rioters listened quietly until Paul got to the word “Gentiles”. Then the riot started all over again. They shouted, “Away with such a *fellow* from the earth, for he is not fit to live!” (Acts 22:22) They listened quietly to Paul’s account of his conversion on the Road to Damascus. They listened quietly to Paul’s account of his vision of Christ in glory. They listened quietly to Paul’s account of his vision in the Temple. But they flew into a rage when Paul said he was being directed to take the Word to the Gentiles. Paul’s words exposed their agenda and showed that it was entirely political, and it was also somewhat irrational.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>408</sup> what a spectacle Paul's address to the people was. A man bound with two chains lecturing an assembly of men very hostile to him and who had just tried to kill him. Paul claims to be a Jew, like them, but he takes advantage of the laws of the state to allow him to make his points clear.

“Notice how, when Paul speaks to those that are outside the Church, he does not decline to use the help offered by the laws of the state. Paul starts his address with ‘I am a Jew’. He did not deny that he was a Christian, God forbid; for he was both a Jew and a Christian, observing the things he ought, since he, most of all men, did obey the Law. Elsewhere Paul calls himself, ‘Under the Law toward Christ’ (1 Corinthians 9:21). This means the man that believes in Christ. When speaking with Peter, Paul said, ‘We are Jews by nature’ (Galatians 2:15). This is a proof, that he does not speak lies, seeing he takes everyone as his witnesses. Notice also how mildly he speaks. This again is a very strong argument that he is chargeable with no crime, his being so ready to make his defense, and his wishing to come to speak to the people of the Jews. Notice a man well-prepared! Notice the providential ordering of the thing; if the Chiliarch hadn't come and bound him, Paul would not have desired to speak for his defense, and he would not have obtained the silence he did from all the people. As Paul ‘stood on the stairs’ (Acts 21:40), there was the additional facility offered by the locality, that he should have a high place to lecture them from — in chains too! What spectacle could be equal to this, to see Paul, bound with two chains, and lecturing the people! He was not a bit perturbed, not a bit confused, to have so great a multitude all hostile toward him, the Chiliarch standing by.”

Chrysostom stated<sup>409</sup> that Paul made it a point to connect directly to what the Zealots considered most important: Jerusalem and the Mosaic Law. As Paul continued, he showed that it was not by human intent, but by Divine Power that he took a different course.

“Notice also how Paul prepared the way for his discourse, ‘I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day’ (Acts 22:3). They liked most of all to hear that Paul was a Jew<sup>410</sup>. That they may not think him to be of another nation, Paul adds his religious Faith: ‘brought up in this city’. Paul showed how great his zeal was for the worship, inasmuch as having left his native city, which was a great city and so remote too, he chose to be brought up here for the sake of the Law. Notice how from the beginning he attached himself to the Law. This Paul said, not only to defend himself to them, but to show that not by human intent was he led to the preaching of the Gospel, but by a Divine power: otherwise, having been so educated, he would not have suddenly changed.”

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<sup>408</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLVII, vv. 39-40.

<sup>409</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLVII, v. 3.

<sup>410</sup> This shows the Jewish nationalism that was present among the Zealots. They may not have known much about Paul, but this part excited them.

Chrysostom further points out<sup>411</sup> how Paul connected to the Zealots by showing that he is a zealot also. Yet Paul as a zealot went way beyond what they did. They would have seen what he was saying if they had not been as hard as stones.

“‘Being myself a zealot toward God as you all are today’ (Acts 22:3). Paul shows that they don’t act from any human object, but from zeal for God; in this way he gratifies them, and preoccupies their minds, and gets a hold on them in a way that did no harm. Then he brings forward proof also, ‘I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders’ (Acts 22:4-5). As witnesses Paul brings forward the high priest himself and the elders. Paul said that he was a zealot, but he shows by his actions, that he went beyond them. ‘I did not wait for an opportunity to seizing them; I both stirred up the priests, and undertook journeys. I did not confine my attacks, as you did, to men; I extended them to women also. This testimony is incontrovertible; the unbelief of the Jews is left without excuse. Notice how many witnesses he brings forward, the elders, the high-priest, and those in the city. Notice his defense; it is not of cowardly fear for himself, that he pleads, but for teaching and indoctrination. Had not the listeners been as hard as stones, they would have felt the force of what he was saying.’”

Chrysostom additionally pointed out<sup>412</sup> Christ’s prophecy to Paul during his vision in the Temple. This prophecy was contrary to reasonable expectation, yet the Jewish leaders confirmed its truth by their own actions, and involuntarily witnessed to the truth of Christ.

“Paul had portrayed himself as a zealot just like the Jews, and the Jews silently witness that this was true. When Paul had his vision in the Temple in Jerusalem, the Lord said, ‘They will not receive your testimony concerning Me’ (Acts 22:18), and they did not receive it. Yet from calculations of reason one would have thought that they would assuredly receive him. He was the man that made war on the Christians; so that they ought to have received him. Here Paul establishes two things: (1) that they are without excuse, since they persecuted him contrary to all likelihood or calculation of reason; and (2) that Christ was God, as prophesying things contrary to expectation, and as not looking to past things, but fore-knowing the things to come. How then does Christ say, ‘He shall bear My name before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel?’ (Acts 9:15) On other occasions we find the Jews were persuaded, but here they were not. Where most of all they ought to have been persuaded, as knowing his former zeal in their cause, here they were not persuaded. Notice again where Paul’s lecture terminates, namely, in the forcible main point: that it was he that persecuted, and not only persecuted but killed; had he ten thousand hands would have used them all to kill Stephen. Paul reminded them of the murderous spirit heinously indulged by him and them. At this point above all they would not endure him, since this convicted them. Truly the prophecy was having its fulfillment: great the zeal, vehement the accusation, and the Jews themselves witness to the truth of Christ!”

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<sup>411</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLVII, vv. 3-5.

<sup>412</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLVIII, vv. 17-20.

Chrysostom also said<sup>413</sup> that it was the Jewish insurrectionists and murderers who were not fit to live, not Paul, who in everything obeyed God. They did what they did to try to frighten the Chiliarch, and the Chiliarch should have learned immediately from their actions.

“They lifted up their voices and said, ‘Away with such a *fellow* from the earth, for he is not fit to live!’ (Acts 22:22) No, you are the persons not fit to live; not he, who in everything obeys God. Villains and murderers! ‘They cried out and tore off *their* clothes and threw dust into the air’ (Acts 22:23), to make insurrection fiercer, because they wished to frighten the Chiliarch. Notice that they do not say what the charge was, as in fact they had nothing to allege, but only think to strike terror by their shouting. The Chiliarch ought to have learned from the accusers, why they cried so against Paul.

The Chiliarch was stunned that the people listened to Paul so intently until Paul pushed their button about something. Since the Chiliarch probably didn’t speak Hebrew, he probably didn’t know what had been said. So, he ordered Paul to be brought back into the barracks to be examined under scourging. That is, they would beat Paul until he confessed what had taken place. As they were binding Paul with leather thongs – which would be used to hold Paul to the rack where he was to be scourged – Paul reminded the centurion that he was a Roman citizen. The centurion reported this to the Chiliarch, who was then afraid when he found this out, since it was illegal under Roman law for him to even have bound Paul, and severe penalties were in place for anyone who abused the rights of Roman citizens. So, the Chiliarch ordered the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin to be present the next day and for Paul to address them.

### **Paul Speaks to the Sanhedrin in Front of the Barracks**

The setting here is probably outdoors, but close to the barracks where Paul was being held. This did not occur on an elevated position like Paul’s previous address, but on ground level, where there were a number of people around Paul. Paul began his address with one sentence before he was interrupted. “Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1). At this, the high priest Ananias publicly commanded (probably) one of the Zealots to strike Paul on the mouth. Everything now is probably being spoken in Greek, since the Chiliarch understands what is happening. Paul replied to the high priest (without knowing who he was), “God will strike you, *you* whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the Law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the Law?” (Acts 23:3). From this it was obvious to Paul that nothing would happen here to correspond to the Mosaic Law. This was an assembly that was completely lawless and apostate.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>414</sup> that Paul maintained a position where he kept the Mosaic Law exactly, whereas the Jewish leaders did not keep it at all.

“Paul wished to show that he spoke, not from fear, nor because Ananias did not deserve to be called a whitewashed wall, but from obedience to the Law in this point also. I am fully persuaded that Paul did not know that it was the high priest, since he had returned now after a long interval, and was not in the habit of

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<sup>413</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLVIII, Recapitulation.

<sup>414</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLVIII, vv. 17-20.

constant discussion with the Jews. Seeing him too in the midst among many others, the high priest was no longer easy to be seen at a glance, there being many of them and diverse. So, in this also Paul spoke with a view to his plea against them, by way of showing that he does obey the Law; therefore, he thus clears himself from any guilt.”

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>415</sup> that it was Paul’s boldness that saved him. If he hadn’t been so bold in facing up to the Zealots, the Chiliarch could easily have thrown him under the bus.

“Paul set down the high priest with a rebuke, ‘God will strike you, *you* whitewashed wall!’ (Acts 23:3) Ananias the high priest himself is cornered, and dares not say a word; only those about him could not bear Paul’s boldness. They saw a man ready to die for this; if Paul had not been so bold, the Chiliarch would have taken him, and gone his way; he would have sacrificed him to them. Paul both shows that he suffers willingly what he suffers, and thus exonerates himself before them, and he even strongly condemns them for the sake of the people. For the high priest to command Paul to be beaten was a violating of the Law. It was a serious violation of the Law to kill a man who had done them no injury, and that an innocent person.”

To further illustrate how lawless the Jewish leaders were, Paul had noticed that some present were Pharisees and others were Sadducees, where the Pharisees believe in the resurrection of the dead and the Sadducees don’t. So, Paul cried out in the council, “Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!” (Acts 23:6) The Pharisees immediately spoke up, “We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God” (Acts 23:9). This created a great dissension; the Chiliarch, “fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring *him* into the barracks” (Acts 23:10).

Chrysostom pointed out<sup>416</sup> that the Pharisees and Sadducees were both united in evil against Paul, and he sought to divide their intent by pushing the Pharisees’ button. This worked! The Pharisees exonerated Paul and this started a riot between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

“Paul did not on all occasions alike enjoy the benefit of supernatural aid. When Paul said, ‘I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee’ (Acts 23:6), he wished to divide the multitude, which had an evil unanimity against him. Paul does not speak a falsehood here either; for he was a Pharisee by descent from his ancestors. He simply said, ‘concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!’. For since they would not say for what reason they arraigned him, he is compelled therefore to declare it himself. When Paul spoke for their side, then the Pharisees pleaded for him. ‘Then there arose a loud outcry. The scribes of the Pharisees’ party arose and protested, saying, “We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God”’ (Acts 23:9). Why did they not plead for him before this? Notice how, when the passions give

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<sup>415</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLVIII, Recapitulation.

<sup>416</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIX, vv. 6-9.

way, the truth is discovered? The Chiliarch was afraid of Paul being pulled in pieces, and now that he has said that he is a Roman, it is the Chiliarch's duty to protect him. Notice that Paul had a right to profess himself a Roman? The soldiers needed to carry Paul off by force. When the wretches saw that their plot was collapsing, they took the whole matter into their own hands, as they would have done before, but were prevented, and their wickedness stops nowhere."

Chrysostom stated<sup>417</sup> that the Chiliarch noticed that the Pharisees had acquitted Paul. He also noticed that Paul's testimony was very respectful, whereas that of the Zealots were words typical of insurrectionists. This gave the Chiliarch all the more confidence to act in Paul's favor.

"The Sadducees have no knowledge of anything incorporeal, perhaps not even God; so dense are they; this is why they do not choose to believe that there is a Resurrection. We notice that the Chiliarch heard that the Pharisees had acquitted Paul of any charges, and have given sentence in his favor; with greater confidence he then carries Paul off by force to Caesarea. Moreover, all that was spoken by Paul was full of right-mindedness. That night the Lord stood by Paul. Notice what strong consolation! First the Lord praises Paul that night, 'As you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome' (Acts 23:11). He does not leave Paul to be afraid for the uncertain issue of his journey to Rome: for there also, Paul shall have all this boldness of speech. The Lord made it clear to Paul not only that he should be saved, but that he should be saved in order to obtain great crowns in the great city. But why did Christ not appear to him before he fell into the danger? Because it is in the afflictions that God comforts us, for He appears more wished-for; while in the dangers He exercises and trains us."

### **The Murder Plot against Paul**

"When it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, 'We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near'" (Acts 23:12-15).

Paul's sister lived in Jerusalem, and her young son (probably a teenager) heard the forty men talking about their plot: who was going to do what and where. They probably had several backup plans in case the first one didn't unfold right. The young man went to the barracks and told Paul; Paul in turn asked one of the centurions to take the young man to the Chiliarch "for he has something to tell him" (Acts 23:17). Paul didn't want any of the Roman soldiers to know the details in case the conspiracy went beyond just the Jewish Zealots. The young man told the Chiliarch privately what he had heard, and the Chiliarch told him to "tell no one that you have revealed these things to me" (Acts 23:22).

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<sup>417</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIX, Recapitulation.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>418</sup> some details of the murder plot. The 40 men in the plot did much like Herod in murdering John the Baptist. The chief priests get involved as if they were captains of bandits. When the chief priests came to the Chiliarch after Paul was gone to make their request, they were put to shame and exposed for their true intent. It was those outside the people of God that held Paul innocent, just like Pilate did with Christ.

“It was a kind of necessity that those men fastened on themselves by the curse making fasting the mother of murder! Just as Herod imposed on himself that necessity by his oath, so also do these. For such are the devil’s ways: under the pretext of piety he sets his traps. Instead of coming to the chief priests, they ought to have come to the Chiliarch; they ought to have laid a charge, and assembled a court of justice. These are not the doings for priests, but for captains of bandits; these are not the doings for rulers, but for hit men. They try to corrupt the ruler; but it was providentially ordered, to the intent that he also should learn of their plot. Not only by their having nothing to say regarding charges, but also by their secret attempt, they convicted themselves that the charges were nothing. It is also likely that after Paul was gone the chief priests came to the Chiliarch making their request, and were put to shame. How did he come to believe the young man’s story? He did so in consequence of what had already taken place; because it was likely they would do this also. Notice their wickedness; they as good as laid a necessity on the chief priests also. If they undertook so great a thing themselves, and engaged themselves in the whole risk, much more ought the chief priests to do thus much. Notice how Paul is held innocent by those that are outside the Church, as was also Christ by Pilate? Notice their malice brought to nothing: they delivered Paul up to kill and condemn him; but the result is just the contrary; he is both saved, and held innocent.”

We see the intense plotting of the Zealots against Paul, and how they drew the chief priests along with their plots. This was not an isolated event, but a continuous mode of thinking. Three years later in c. 62 AD, they did the same thing to Bishop James and murdered him in front of the Temple. Eusebius the Church Historian stated<sup>419</sup> that the murder of Bishop James was the last straw! Right after that the Romans came and laid siege to Jerusalem. The persons who were really on trial here before the Chiliarch were the chief priests and the Zealots. It was the Lord Himself who was about to pass sentence<sup>420</sup> on them!

Chrysostom noted<sup>421</sup> how reckless the Zealots were in dealing with Paul, who they saw as a threat to their way of life. The problem the Zealots faced is that they were dealing with God and not just men.

“Notice all this zeal: ‘That he may bring him down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him’ (Acts 23:15). Has Paul not twice made a speech to them? Has he not said that he is a Pharisee? What would they have over and above this? So reckless were they and afraid of nothing, not tribunals, not laws; such was their audacity and insolence which

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<sup>418</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIX, vv. 12-21.

<sup>419</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, II, xxiii, 19.

<sup>420</sup> For an insight into what the Zealots were like during the siege of Jerusalem, see Josephus, Wars of the Jews, IV, vi, 3.

<sup>421</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIX, Recapitulation.

shrunk from nothing. They both declare their purpose, and announce the way of carrying it into effect. When Paul's sister's son heard of it (Acts 23:16), this was of God's providence; they did not perceive that their plot would be heard. What then did Paul do? He was not alarmed, but perceived that this was God's doing; he put all his trust in Him, and acquits himself from further concern about it. He told of the plot; he was believed; he was saved. If he was acquitted of the charge, why did the Chiliarch send the accusers to Caesarea? That the inquiry might be stricter; that the man might be the more entirely cleared. Such are God's ways of ordering; the very things by which we are hurt, by these same are we benefited. Thus, it was with Joseph in Egypt: his mistress sought to ruin him, and she seemed indeed to be contriving his ruin; but by her contriving she placed him in a place of safety. The house where that wild beast of a woman was kept was a den of animals in comparison with which the prison was gentle" (Genesis 39:1-20).

Paul refers to this time period in his Epistle to the Hebrews:

"But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings, partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated. For you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. 'For yet a little while, *and* He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; But if *anyone* draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him' (Habakkuk 2:3-4 LXX). But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:32-39).

What Paul is saying is that the other Christians in Judea were persecuted horribly because they sided with Paul and had compassion on him in his chains. James the Lord's brother certainly fell to their wrath; but there were many others also.

### **Paul was Taken by Night to Felix the Governor in Caesarea**

As soon as the Chiliarch heard the testimony of Paul's young nephew, he called two centurions to prepare:

- 200 soldiers
- 70 horsemen
- 200 spearmen
- Prepare to go to Caesarea at the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour of the night<sup>422</sup> (about 9 PM)
- Prepare a horse for Paul to ride on (since Paul was a Roman citizen)
- Bring Paul to Felix the Governor
- The Chiliarch wrote a letter to Felix explaining the urgency of the situation.
- In the letter, the Chiliarch mentioned that he commanded Paul's accusers to bring their charges against Paul to Felix. His letter reads as follows:

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<sup>422</sup> See for example <http://www.torahcalendar.com/HOUR.asp>.



Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. I found out that he was accused concerning questions of their Law, but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. And when it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him. Farewell” (Acts 23:25-30).

It may be surprising that the Chiliarch, Claudius Lysias, reacted so quickly. But the Roman authorities were accustomed to dealing with treachery from the Jewish Zealots. The emperors in Rome counted on the governors in frontier states to guard against insurrection and to deal with it quickly and harshly. From everything that the Chiliarch heard and saw, the Zealots were plotting their usual insurrection again.

## **Paul’s Testimony before Felix**

### **The Accusation of the Jewish Zealots against Paul**

“Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul. And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: ‘Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, we accept *it* always and, in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our Law. But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him’. And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so” (Acts 24:1-9).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>423</sup> how the Jewish Zealots had five days to get their story together. They couldn’t just rush Paul and kill him, so they tried to portray him as an insurrectionist – which would draw the harshest sentence. Chrysostom outlined the accusations as:

1. They “found” Paul, as if he had been hiding from them and giving them the slip.
2. Paul was a “creator of dissention” throughout the world. Had Paul really been such, they would have hailed him as a savior of the nation.
3. Paul was the ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes<sup>424</sup>. “Ringleader” implies fighting and insurrection, which Paul had no part of. Nazareth was a poor neighborhood; a Nazarene implied something like a slum dweller.

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<sup>423</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, L, vv. 2-9.

<sup>424</sup> In Israel today, Christians are known as “*Notsrim*” or Nazarenes.

4. Paul tried to profane the Temple. An outright lie! He was purifying himself according to the Law.
5. We wished to judge Paul according to our Law. This implies that the Law allowed them to beat, to kill and to ambush.
6. The Chiliarch Lysias took Paul out of our hands with great violence, implying that they were doing a noble act of punishing an enemy of the state. They implied that Lysias had no right to interfere.
7. All the Jewish Zealots present acclaimed their assent and agreement.

### **Paul's Response to the Accusations**

“Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered, ‘Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust. This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. Or else let those who are *here* themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, unless *it is* for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, ‘Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day’” (Acts 24:10-21).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>425</sup> that Paul painted a much different picture, starting off with why he came to Jerusalem: to worship, bringing alms with him. This is hardly the method of an insurrectionist! He had only been there 12 days, which is hardly adequate time to start an insurrection. They “found” him in the Temple, not disputing with anyone or raising people up for an insurrection. Tertullus tried to paint Paul as an insurrectionist, but Paul directs things back to his strict keeping of the Law of Moses. On the other hand, Paul stated that those who started the riot were Jews from Asia Minor, who were not even present for this arraignment! Paul came back to the real reason for this dispute: “Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day”. Tertullus made a long harangue, but Paul kept his defense short and to the point.

Chrysostom noted<sup>426</sup> that Paul did not lash back at his enemies and revile them. When the chief priest told someone to slap Paul’s mouth, Paul did not revile him but was quick to point out that the individual was violating the Mosaic Law that he was supposed to be upholding. We sometimes revile those around us in reaction to their abuse also.

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<sup>425</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, L, vv. 10-21.

<sup>426</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, L, Recapitulation.

“If Paul said nothing offensive to his enemies, who went even to the length of murder and slaughter, what pardon shall we deserve, who call our enemies many names when they revile and abuse us? What pardon shall we deserve, for having enemies at all? Don’t we hear, that to honor another is to honor one’s self? But we disgrace ourselves. We accuse someone that he has abused us; but then we bring ourselves under the same accusation? Why inflict a blow on ourselves? If we keep free from passion, we stay unwounded; if we wish to smite another, we bring the hurt on ourselves. What, is the other tumult of our soul, such as its outrageous lusts, its grief and sorrows not enough for us, that we need heap up a pile of others also? We might ask how is it possible to bear this, when one is insulted and abused? Words don’t hurt us! We should put things in perspective: If demoniacs<sup>427</sup> in their fits insult us, we don’t get angry. We just bear with it because it is not so much from enmity, as from infirmity that he behaves as he does. Again, if those who insult us are our friends, we also bear it; or also our superiors, we bear with that too. How then is it not absurd, that in the case of these three: madmen, friends, and superiors, we bear it; but where they are of the same rank or our inferiors, we do not bear it? I have often said, ‘It is just an impulse of the moment’, something that hurries us away all of a sudden. Let us endure it for a little, and we shall bear the whole thing. We could say ‘The greater the insults, the weaker the offender’.”

### **Paul Reasons with Governor Felix for Two Years**

But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of *the Way*, he adjourned the proceedings and said, ‘When Lysias the Chiliarch comes down, I will make a decision on your case’. 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. And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time, I will call for you’. Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore, he sent for him more often and conversed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound” (Acts 24:22-27).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>428</sup> that Felix, of his own accord, spoke to Paul frequently over a long period of time, just on the subject of righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. However, there were bribes changing hands, and Felix didn’t release Paul, even though he was terrified by Paul’s words.

“Notice how much close investigation is made by the many in a long course of time, Paul’s trial was not rushed. Since the orator made mention of Lysias, that he took ‘him away with violence’, Felix deferred them. Having knowledge of the Way, he put them off on purpose, not because he wanted to learn, but wishing to get rid of the Jews. On their account, he did not like to let

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<sup>427</sup> That is, the mentally ill.

<sup>428</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LI, vv. 22-26.

Paul go; yet to punish him was not possible; that would have been too barefacedly biased. So, he let him have liberty, and forbid none of his acquaintance to visit him. So entirely did he too acquit him of the charges! However, to gratify the Jews, he detained him; and expecting to receive money<sup>429</sup>, he called for Paul.”

“Felix sent for Paul frequently, not that he admired him, not that he praised the things spoken, not that he wished to believe, but why? ‘He expected that money should have been given him’. Notice how Luke does not hide the mind of the judge. If he had condemned him, he would not have done this, nor have wished to hear a man, condemned and of evil character. Notice Paul, though reasoning with a ruler, he says nothing of the sort that was likely to amuse and entertain, but ‘he reasoned about righteousness, the coming judgment and the resurrection’. Such was the force of his words, that they even terrified the governor.”

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>430</sup> that the governors were annoyed with the constant complaining<sup>431</sup> of the Jews. Yet Drusilla, Felix’s wife, shows great honor to Paul; she seems to be truly interested in what Paul has to say; Felix was only looking for a bribe.

“Observe on all occasions how the governors try to keep from themselves the annoyance of the Jews, and are often compelled to act contrary to justice, and seek pretexts for deferring. Of course, it was not from ignorance that he deferred the cause, but knowing it. His wife, Drusilla, also hears, together with the governor (Acts 24:24). This seems to me to show great honor to Paul. He would not have brought his wife to be present with him at the hearing, unless she thought great things of him. It seems to me that she also longed for this. Notice how Paul immediately speaks not only about faith, nor about remission of sins, but also about practical points of duty. ‘Go away for now; when I have a convenient time, I will call for you’ (Acts 24:25). Notice his hardness of heart; hearing such things, Felix hoped that he would receive a bribe from Paul. Even after speaking with Paul privately many times — for it was towards the end of his government — he left him bound, ‘wanting to do the Jews a favor’ (Acts 24:27); he not only coveted money, but also glory. How can this wretch look for money from a man who preaches the contrary? That he did not get it is clear from his leaving Paul bound; he would have freed him, had he received it.”

### **Festus Succeeds Felix as Governor**

“But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.”

“Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem -- while *they* lay in ambush along the road to kill him. But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at

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<sup>429</sup> That is, he expected a healthy bribe from Paul! Probably the Jews gave Felix a very good bribe to try to get him to see things their way. Felix wanted Paul to at least come close to matching what the Jews gave. But Paul didn’t do that.

<sup>430</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LI, Recapitulation.

<sup>431</sup> This may also be the reason why Emperor Claudius expelled all the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2) in c. 50 AD.

Caesarea, and that he himself was going *there* shortly. ‘Therefore’, he said, ‘let those who have authority among you go down with *me* and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him’. And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, while he answered for himself, ‘Neither against the Law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all’. But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, ‘Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?’ So, Paul said, ‘I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar’. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, ‘You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!’” (Acts 24:27-25:12)

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>432</sup> that there was a noticeable effort on the part of both Felix and Festus to gratify the Jews. After all, they could cause the governor considerable trouble. The implication is that there may have been some bribes given also. But the bribes were thwarted by the Hand of God. When the Jews returned to Caesarea again, this time they attacked Paul with offenses against Caesar.

“When Festus succeeded Felix, Felix left Paul a prisoner; and yet he ought not to have done this; he ought to have put an end to the business. But he left him, by way of gratifying the Jews<sup>433</sup>. The Jews however were so urgent, that they again sought the judge. Yet against none of the other Apostles had they set themselves this tenaciously. So providentially Paul is removed from Jerusalem, away from such wild beasts. The Jews nevertheless request again that he might be brought there to be tried. But God’s providence interposed, not permitting the governor to do this; it was natural that the new governor, having just come into office, would wish to gratify them; but God did not allow him. After the Jews came down to Caesarea, they made their accusations shamelessly and with more vehemence; and not having been able to convict him on grounds relating to the Law, according to their custom again they stirred the question about Caesar, being just what they did in Christ’s case (John 19:12-15). That they did this is clear by the fact that Paul defended himself regarding offenses against Caesar. Festus also gratifies<sup>434</sup> the Jews, the whole people, and the city. Such being the case, Paul terrifies him also, using a human weapon for his defense, by appealing to Caesar<sup>435</sup>. Someone might say that Paul appealed to Caesar as if unbelieving. However, he did it because he so strongly believed. It would have been a tempting of God to cast himself into numberless dangers, and to say, ‘Let us see if God is able to deliver me again’. Quietly Paul also reproves the governor. He put him in fear, so that even if he wished, he could not sacrifice him to the Jews.”

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<sup>432</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LI, vv. 1-12.

<sup>433</sup> This suggests that the Jews had given him a good bribe, and he wanted to show some consideration to them.

<sup>434</sup> This suggests that another bribe had been given to Festus.

<sup>435</sup> All Roman citizens had the right to appeal lower court decisions to the Caesar.

Chrysostom examined<sup>436</sup> the words spoken by Paul and Festus carefully. Festus saw through the plots of the Jews in Jerusalem, even though they bribed him to pass the judgment they requested. Festus just couldn't be as barefaced as they asked him to be. So, he tried to reason with Paul to agree to it. Paul refused and appealed to Caesar – which was his right as a Roman citizen. Paul's trial is again lengthened out, and the plot against him becomes another occasion for the preaching.

“When Festus first came into office, he visited Jerusalem for ten days (Acts 25:1-3), and the priests came to him immediately; they did not hesitate to go down to Caesarea with him. Why did Festus spend ten days in Jerusalem? In order to be open to those who wished to corrupt him with bribes. Why did the Jews desire it as a favor, if Paul was deserving of death, to bring him to Jerusalem? He was already in prison! Thus, their plotting became evident even to Festus, so that he spoke of it later to King Agrippa. The Jews wanted to induce Festus to pass sentence now immediately, being afraid of Paul's tongue. What are they afraid of? Why are they in such a hurry? The expression, ‘that Paul should be kept at Caesarea’ (Acts 25:4), shows that Festus discerned the Jews' intent. Does Paul want to escape? No! Again accusers, again at Caesarea, again Paul is brought out. The day after arriving in Caesarea, Festus sat on the judgment-seat; the Jews so drove, so hurried him. Festus as yet had not gotten acquainted with the Jews, nor experienced the honor paid to him by them; however, he answered rightly. Now that he had been in Jerusalem ten days, he too wants to please them (by sacrificing Paul to them). To deceive Paul, Festus said, ‘Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?’ (Acts 25:9) Festus was saying that he was not giving Paul up to the Jews — but this was the fact — and he left the point to Paul's choice, that by this mark of respect he might get him to yield. It was Festus' sentence to make, and it would have been too barefaced to unilaterally send Paul to the Jews, when he had been convicted of nothing here. But Paul said, ‘I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged’ (Acts 25:10). Paul did not say, ‘I will not’, lest he should make the judge more vehement, but here again is Paul's great boldness. The Jews cast me out once for all themselves, and they think to condemn me by showing that I have offended against Caesar? At Caesar's bar I choose to be judged. When Paul said, ‘To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know’, he reprovved Festus indicating that he knew that Festus wished to sacrifice him to the Jews. (The bribes given by the Jews were probably showing their effect on Festus.) Then, on the other hand, Paul relaxed the sternness of his speech, saying, ‘if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying’. That is, I pass sentence against myself. Along with boldness of speech there must be also justness of cause, so as to embarrass the hearer. Paul didn't say, ‘I am not worthy of death’, nor, ‘I am worthy to be acquitted’, but ‘I am ready to take my trial before Caesar’. At the same time too, Paul remembered the dream (Acts 23:11), and he was the more confident to appeal. Festus then conferred with the Jewish council; notice how he seeks to gratify them? Paul's trial is again lengthened out; notice how the plot against him becomes another occasion for the preaching. With ease and in safe custody Paul

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<sup>436</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LI, Recapitulation.

would be taken away to Rome, with none to plot evil against him. It was not the same thing as Paul simply coming to Rome, and his coming on such a cause. This was what made the Jews come together there” (Acts 28:17).

At this point Paul has already spent two years in captivity. Why is he doing this? He could have been so useful elsewhere in the world where people have softer hearts! We’ve seen that wherever Paul traveled, he did so at the Hand of God. Against the advice of the brethren in Tyre (Acts 21:3-4) and against the advice of the Prophet Agabus (Acts 21:10-12), who both had heard from God, Paul went to Jerusalem, knowing that he would be imprisoned! Why did he go? It seems that Paul sees something that others don’t see.

Paul had a deep love for his countrymen (Romans 9:3), even though some of them were ungrateful for everything that God had done for them; the result was that they were downright evil. And Paul saw that God’s judgment on all this was not far away. Festus took office in c. 59 AD; the First Jewish-Roman War began<sup>437</sup> in c. 66 AD, which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in c. 70 AD. One might criticize Paul for not taking the advice of those around him, and instead taking the advice of James in keeping the details of the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:20-26). We might also criticize Paul for concentrating on appearances before men. But Paul seems to have a vision beyond all this for the salvation of the Jews in Jerusalem who are about to get massacred and who are being led astray by the Zealots bent on nationalism. Instead we need to respect Paul for hearing from God and for trying to save anyone who was willing to listen in Jerusalem.

### **Paul Appears before King Herod Agrippa II**

After some days King Agrippa<sup>438</sup> and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king, saying: ‘There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. To them I answered, ‘It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him’. Therefore, when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to

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<sup>437</sup> The First Jewish-Roman War began in 66 AD over taxation protests, and the rebels had some early success including a massacre of 6000 Roman troops. This emboldened them and greatly surprised the Emperor that they were able to do this. Rome’s reaction: send many more troops. Gradually all the Jewish fighters holed up in Jerusalem, where the Zealots began assassinating anyone who disagreed with them. For more information see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Jewish%E2%80%93Roman\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Jewish%E2%80%93Roman_War).

<sup>438</sup> King Herod Agrippa II was the last of the Herod family to reign as king. He was the brother of Bernice, but they lived as husband and wife. Emperor Claudius had given him the right of superintending the Temple in Jerusalem and appointing the high priest. He spent large amounts of money beautifying Jerusalem, but his appointing and deposing of the high priests caused him to be disliked among the Jews. In 66 AD, the Jews expelled him and Bernice from Jerusalem; he responded by sending 2000 troops to support Vespasian, and himself accompanied Titus on some of his campaigns during the First Jewish-Roman War. He supplied some information to the historian Josephus for his history “Antiquities of the Jews”.

Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar'. Then Agrippa said to Festus, 'I also would like to hear the man myself'. 'Tomorrow', he said, 'you shall hear him'. So, the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the chiliarchs and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. And Festus said: 'King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore, I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him'" (Acts 25:13-27).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>439</sup> what the results were of Paul's two years of captivity in Judea. Every ruler in the area pronounced sentence against the Jews and they openly made a show and a parade of it. The evil design and plotting of the Jews were exposed for what it was. The whole thing was so dramatic that everyone wanted to listen to Paul. Paul was given the opportunity to give a public harangue against the Jews in a very orderly manner.

This king Agrippa was also a Herod, but a different Agrippa than him of James' time, so that this is the fourth Herod<sup>440</sup>. Notice how Paul's enemies cooperate with him against their will. To make the audience larger, Agrippa falls into a desire of hearing; and he does not simply hear, but with much parade. Notice what a vindication! Festus documents the ruthlessness of the Jews and openly makes a show of it. When it is the governor that says these things, he is a witness above all suspicion; so that the Jews are condemned by him also. When all had pronounced sentence against the Jews, then, and not sooner, God brings on them the punishment<sup>441</sup>. Notice: Lysias, the Chiliarch, gave it against them (Acts 23:25-30); Felix gave it against them (Acts 24:22-25); Festus gave it against them (Acts 25:7-12, 24-27) — even though he wished to gratify them — and now Agrippa gave it against them (Acts 26:27-32). What more could we want? The Pharisees — even they gave it against themselves (Acts 23:9). No evil, says Festus, 'they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed' (Acts 25:18). They did bring charges, true, but they did not prove them. Their evil design and daring plot against Paul suggested this, but the examination brought out nothing of the kind. 'They had some questions about a certain Jesus who had died'. He says naturally enough, not knowing what to make of the inquiry concerning these things that the examining into these matters went beyond a judge's hearing. If Festus was at a loss, why drag Paul to Jerusalem? Listen to the appeal of the Jews! Listen to their plotting! Listen to their factious spirit! All these things provoked Agrippa to desire to hear Paul; Festus gives him the gratification and Paul becomes more renowned. These are the evil designs of

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<sup>439</sup> John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, LI, Recapitulation.

<sup>440</sup> There was Herod the Great, who murdered the 14,000 babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16-18); Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist (Matthew 14:8-13); Herod Agrippa I, who murdered James the son of Zebedee (Acts 12:1-3); and now Herod Agrippa II, who deals with Paul.

<sup>441</sup> That is, the destruction of Jerusalem under Vespasian and Titus from 66 to 70 AD.



enemies. Had not these things been so, none of these rulers would have wanted to hear Paul; none would have heard with such quietness and silence. Paul seems to be teaching! He seems to be making a defense; but he rather makes a public harangue with much orderliness. Let us not think that evil designs against us are a grievous thing. So long as we do not make evil designs against ourselves, no one will be able to have evil designs against us. Or rather, people may do this, but they do us no hurt; they even benefit us in the highest degree. It rests with ourselves, whether we shall suffer evil, or not suffer evil.

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>442</sup> that Festus and King Agrippa proclaimed Paul's innocence before the whole city, which greatly embarrassed the Jews present. From Festus' viewpoint, he was required to send Paul to the emperor (Nero), but he didn't have any charges to send along with Paul for Nero to review.

“Notice what an audience is gathered together for Paul. There were all his guards, the governor, the king, and the chiliarchs, ‘with the principal men of the city’ (Acts 25:23). Then Paul was brought out, as if he were proclaimed as conqueror. Festus himself acquits him from the charges, that he had committed nothing worthy of death (Acts 25:25), even though the Jews has said that he was not fit to live any longer (Acts 22:22, 25:24). Since Paul had appealed to Caesar, Festus couldn't even put together a list of charges, for Caesar to review, so thoroughly had Paul been acquitted. Therefore, Festus brought Paul out before King Agrippa that, after examination, he might have somewhat to write about to Caesar. ‘For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him’ (Acts 25:27). Notice how Festus accuses the Jews, while he acquits Paul. What an abundance of justifications! After all these repeated examinations, the governor does not find how he may condemn Paul. Such were the great difficulties into which the Jews brought themselves and their rulers!”

### **Paul Speaks Boldly to King Agrippa**

When Paul was allowed to speak, he said, ‘My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead? Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities. While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language,

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<sup>442</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LII, vv. 23-27.

'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' So, I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 'But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come -- that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles'. Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, 'Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!' But Paul said, 'I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe'. Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian'. And Paul said, 'I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains'. When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, 'This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains'. Then Agrippa said to Festus, 'This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar'" (Acts 26:1-32).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>443</sup> that Paul spoke boldly to King Agrippa, since Agrippa was no stranger to the Jewish faith. Agrippa, on the other hand, was eager to hear. In speaking, Paul further cleared himself of all charges, and went on to speak more about the Resurrection.

"From his great desire to hear, King Agrippa permitted Paul to speak. But Paul spoke out with boldness, not flattering, but for this reason saying that he is happy; namely, because Agrippa was an expert in all questions among the Jews. Had Paul been conscious of guilt, he should have feared at being tried in the presence of someone who knew all the facts; this is a mark of a clear conscience, not to shrink from a judge who has an accurate knowledge of the circumstances, but even to rejoice."

"How should Paul have become a seditious person? When he was young everyone testified of him. Then too from his sect (the Pharisees), he lived after the strictest sect of the Jewish faith. How then, if the sect was indeed worthy of admiration, could Paul have been evil?"

"Two arguments Paul lays down favoring a belief in the Resurrection. One, the argument from the prophets; he does not bring forward any prophet in particular, but the doctrine itself was held by the Jews. The other and stronger one was the argument from the facts that Christ Himself had spoken with him.

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<sup>443</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LII, vv. 1-8.

Paul lays the ground for this by other arguments, relating accurately his former madness. Then too, with high commendation of the Jews, Paul said, ‘To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain’ (Acts 26:7). Even if Paul had not had an unblemished life, it is not for this doctrine that he ought to be brought to trial, (but for persecuting the Christians). Then another argument ‘Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?’ If such an opinion had not existed, but they were now for the first time brought in, perhaps someone might not have received it.”

Chrysostom pointed out<sup>444</sup> Paul’s boldness in addressing King Agrippa. Festus noticed this and commented that Paul had gone mad. Paul replied by turning his attention to King Agrippa, saying that the king knew that all this was true. The Jews should have known also.

“Paul, who instructed others also concerning the most excellent way of living, how should he himself have become the author of sedition and contention? Notice how free from flattery Paul’s speech is, and how he ascribes the whole to God. Then notice his boldness — for it is from the prophets that he urges the question, ‘That the Christ would suffer’. Then he points out the Resurrection and the promise, ‘that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles’ (Acts 26:23). Festus saw the boldness, and called Paul mad. Paul turned from him, and addressed his speech to King Agrippa, ‘For the king knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner’ (Acts 26:26). Paul shows, that the king knows everything perfectly; at the same time, he all but says to the Jews, ‘You surely ought to have known these things too’ — for this is the meaning of that which he adds, ‘For this thing was not done in a corner’. Agrippa’s response to Paul was, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian’”.

Chrysostom also noted<sup>445</sup> that the hope that Paul pursued and testified about is the same hope that the Jews pursue. Moreover, Paul was not a disciple of Christ, but was an enemy of the Christians until he was suddenly changed by Christ appearing to him. Therefore, he has a right to be believed. This is not something he would have naturally chosen to do.

“When the whole people were present, then Paul challenges the testimony of the Jews; not just before the tribunal, but before Lysias, and again here, when more were present. Whereas in that hearing Paul didn’t need much vindication of himself, since Lysias’ letter cleared him. Paul does not say what kind of life his was, but leaves it to their own conscience, and lays the whole cause on his sect (the Christians), as he would not have chosen that sect, if he had been a man of evil disposition and bad character. Paul keeps returning to ‘I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers’ (Acts 26:6-7). This hope is honored among the Jews also; because of this they pray, because of this they worship, that to this they may attain; this same Paul shows forth. It is acting like madmen for the Jews to be doing all things for the sake of attaining to this, but yet persecuting him who believes in the same thing! Prior to his conversion, ‘Paul

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<sup>444</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LII, vv. 23-32.

<sup>445</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LII, Recapitulation.

thought with himself, that he must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth' (Acts 26:9). Paul was not one of Christ's disciples; he was among those who fought against Him. Therefore, he is a witness who has a right to be believed, because he was a man who was doing numberless things, making war on the believers, persuading them to blaspheme, stirring up all against them, cities, rulers, and doing all this of his own accord; but he was suddenly changed."

Chrysostom further noted<sup>446</sup> how Paul turned from being the defendant to being the Teacher. He even exhorted King Agrippa to repent! Paul spoke both to the soldiers (the small) and to the rulers (the great). Festus reacted in anger that Paul would speak so boldly to the king, but King Agrippa was not offended and was almost persuaded. Paul actually gloried in his chains!

"After Paul mentioned his vision on the Road to Damascus, he then goes on to speak without fear of the good things that came about because of it. 'I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will send you to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith' (Acts 26:16-18). He shows the evils which possess unbelievers, 'Satan, darkness'; and the good things belonging to believers, 'light, God, the inheritance of the saints'. He not only exhorts them to repent, but also to show forth a life worthy of admiration. Notice how everywhere the Gentiles are admitted into connection with the people of God; for those who were present were Gentiles. Paul testified 'both to great and small' (Acts 26:22); that is, both to distinguished and undistinguished. This is also for the soldiers. Notice that Paul left the post of defendant and took up that of teacher — and therefore Festus said to Paul with a loud voice, in anger and displeasure that Paul would speak this way to the king, 'Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!' (Acts 26:24) But Paul had brought what the prophets and Moses had said, 'that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles' (Acts 26:23). Therefore, Paul replied, 'I am not mad'; for this thing was not done in a corner' (Acts 26:25-26). Here Paul spoke of the Cross, of the Resurrection; that the teaching had come to every part of the world. Addressing King Agrippa, Paul said, 'King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets'; Paul did not ask if he believed the Resurrection, only 'the prophets?' (Acts 26:27) Then Paul interrupted him and said, 'I know that you do believe'. Agrippa replied, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian' (Acts 26:28). Paul didn't say, 'I do not wish that, but, 'I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains' (Acts 26:29). Note how free from flattery Paul's speech was. He glories in his chains, puts them out as a golden chain, belittles them for these men; for they were as yet too weak in their minds, and it was rather in condescension that he so spoke. For what could be better than those chains which he always prefers in his Epistles to all other things. 'Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you

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<sup>446</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LII, Recapitulation.

Gentiles' (Ephesians 3:1); and again, 'for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain' (Acts 28:20), and 'I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained'" (2 Timothy 2:9).

Chrysostom also noted<sup>447</sup> that Paul imitated Christ in his trial before the Roman authorities. It was marvelous to see how intricately Paul was mixed up in this, yet received no harm from it.

"Notice again the Roman authorities pass sentence in Paul's favor; after having said, 'Paul, you are beside yourself!' (Acts 26:24), they acquit him, as undeserving not only of death, but also of bonds. Indeed, Agrippa would have released him entirely, if he had not appealed to Caesar. But this was done providentially, that he should also depart with chains. 'I suffer to the point of chains as an evildoer' (1 Timothy 2:9). If his Lord 'was numbered with the transgressors' (Mark 15:28), much more Paul; but as the Lord did not share with them in their character, so neither did Paul. For in this is seen a marvelous thing, Paul was mixed up with such, and yet received no harm from them."

Chrysostom additionally noted<sup>448</sup> the results of Paul's two years in captivity in Judea. The Jews became the heralds of both their own wickedness and Paul's virtue. Paul was carried off to Rome with more renown, free of all suspicion, than if he had gone there by himself.

"The Jews backed off as soon as Paul exercised his right of appeal to Caesar. The theatrical effects then became a splendid one; 'with great pomp' everyone was present. 'And Festus said,' etc. The whole multitude of the Jews, 'not some of them only, and not others both at Jerusalem, and also here' said 'that Paul ought not to live any longer' (Acts 25:24). It shows that Paul did right in appealing to Caesar. Though the Jews had no great matter to allege against Paul, yet those at Jerusalem were mad at him; with good reason he might go to Caesar. Notice how the matter is repeatedly put to the test. The Jews therefore may thank themselves for this vindication of Paul, which would come to the ears of those also who were at Rome. Notice how they become the unwilling heralds both of their own wickedness and of Paul's virtue, even to the emperor himself. Paul was carried away to Rome with more renown than if he had gone there without bonds. After so many judges had acquitted him, he was now carried there not as an impostor and a deceiver. Exonerated therefore of all charges from those with whom he was bred and born, and thus free from all suspicion, he makes his appearance at Rome."

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<sup>447</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 30-32.

<sup>448</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LII, Recapitulation.

## Paul's 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey – As Prisoner to Rome

Two years earlier, Paul had heard from the Lord while he was in prison during the night, “The Lord stood by him and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome’” (Acts 23:11). During these two years, Paul has been doing just that, and he has been growing bolder and bolder, not just defending himself, but actually teaching as he did so. He knew that he was going to go to Rome, and he wasn't very concerned about when or how he got there. These two years were just the warm-up; in Rome he would be testifying before Emperor Nero. When Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar” (Acts 26:32), this was not a disappointment to Paul; this was the Hand of God directing his way forward.

By “Paul's 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey”, we are covering the time period of his leaving Judea until he was released from house-arrest in Rome, or from c. 60 AD to c. 62 AD. There are two major parts to this “Missionary Journey”. The first part involves the trip itself, during which the entire crew of the ship and the entire population of Malta came to know the Lord. The second part of this “Missionary Journey” involves Paul's stay in Rome under house-arrest, where many people came to see him, and where he wrote some of his Epistles.

### The Beginning of the Journey to Rome

“And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. So, entering a ship of Adramyttium<sup>449</sup>, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus<sup>450</sup>, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us<sup>451</sup>. And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care. When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city of* Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board. When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of* Crete off Salmone. Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea. Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, ‘Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives’. Nevertheless, the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul” (Acts 27:1-11).

Storms and bad weather in the Mediterranean are not understood well in other parts of the world. On the Mediterranean, there is a “sailing season” typically from April to October and

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<sup>449</sup> Adramyttium was a seaport of Mysia in Asia Minor. This ship had come from Adramyttium and was heading back in that direction.

<sup>450</sup> Aristarchus lived very much like John the Baptist, wearing a garment of animal skin, a leather belt and eating locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6). Thus Aristarchus was a very visible companion for Paul. See [The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church](#), translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 14. The term “locusts” refers not to an insect, but to the bean of the “locust tree”, which was ground into flour. The “locust tree” is similar in nature to a carob tree. See [http://www.sierrapotomac.org/W\\_Needham/BlackLocust\\_060515.htm](http://www.sierrapotomac.org/W_Needham/BlackLocust_060515.htm).

<sup>451</sup> Luke's use of the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural “us” indicates that Luke himself was present on the ship.

there is a “no sail season” typically from December to February during the winter. During the summer the weather is generally pleasant, where it rarely rains and the seas are free from violent storms; during the winter the opposite is the case<sup>452</sup>. Paul’s Journey to Rome took place during the winter when violent storms can appear suddenly and unexpectedly. Figure 5 shows the route taken by the ships that Paul was on.

**Table 8**  
**Those of the Seventy Who Served with Paul on the 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey to Rome**  
 For More Details, see Appendix B

| Member of Seventy      | Native To    | Journey       | Later Bishop of | Comments                         |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Aristarchus            | Thessalonica | 3, 4, 5       | Apamea          | Joined at end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Luke                   | Antioch      | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Roving Apostle  |                                  |
| Timothy <sup>453</sup> | Lystra       | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Ephesus         |                                  |
| Erastus <sup>451</sup> |              | 3, 5          | --              | Expert at finances               |

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>454</sup> that Aristarchus and Luke were present on the journey to Rome, and that the journey was very wearing on Paul because of his chains. God allowed the sailors to do their own thing, sailing in mid-winter, in order that the miracle of their survival would be greater.

“Notice how far Aristarchus<sup>455</sup> accompanied Paul. To good and useful purpose is Aristarchus present, as he would take back the report of all to Macedonia. Julius ‘treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care’ (Acts 27:3). It was but natural that he should be much the worse from his chains and the fear, and being dragged here and there. Notice how Luke does not hide this either, that Paul wished to refresh himself. We note again trials, again contrary winds. Notice how the life of the saints is thus interwoven throughout; Paul escaped from the court of justice, only to fall in with shipwreck and storm. It is likely that both those in the former ship would carry to Asia the report of what had happened to Paul, and that these would do the same in Lycia. Notice how God does not innovate or change the order of nature, but allows them to sail into the unfavorable winds. But even so the miracle is accomplished. By ‘the fast’ here, Luke means that of the Jews. They departed a long time after the Pentecost (and after the Day of Atonement), so that it was about midwinter that

<sup>452</sup> For example, in December 2010, the 90,000-Ton cruise liner “Brilliance of the Seas”, was carrying over 2000 passengers and a crew of over 800, experienced huge waves from a Mediterranean storm. Witnesses said that waves crashed over the 10<sup>th</sup> floor windows of the 12-deck ship. The ship listed violently and many people were injured as they were tossed around like rag dolls. By contrast, the wood-hulled ship that Paul was on carried 276 including crew and passengers (Acts 27:23) crowded onto a ship about 60 feet long. Most of these 276 people were probably oarsmen (usually slaves) who rowed from the hold of the ship; many ships had both a galley of rowers and a sail. All the cargo was kept above deck, some at the bow, and some at the stern.

<sup>453</sup> According to the Chronicles of Edessa, Timothy, Erastus and Menaeus accompanied Paul until his house-arrest in Rome following the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey. See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of the Apostles”, 10, in *Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

<sup>454</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 1-11.

<sup>455</sup> We note that the author Luke uses the first person “we” and “us” often at this point (Acts 27:1-7), indicating that Luke was on the ship also.

they arrived at the coasts of Crete. And this too was no slight miracle that they also should be saved on Paul's account."

**Figure 5**  
**Map of Paul's 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey to Rome<sup>456</sup>**



Chrysostom also said some nice things about Aristarchus in that he desired to travel with Paul as a prisoner to Rome. Even the prophets only referred to themselves as strangers and foreigners, not as prisoners. Paul was treated much worse than most prisoners are treated.

“When Paul said, ‘Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner greets you’ (Colossians 4:10), nothing can surpass<sup>457</sup> this praise. This is he that traveled from Jerusalem with Paul to Rome as a prisoner. Paul said a greater thing than the prophets; for they felt like strangers and foreigners, but Paul calls himself even a prisoner. Just like a prisoner of war he was dragged up and down, and lay at everyone's whim to suffer evil from them, which is rather worse than most prisoners. Their enemies, after taking them prisoner, generally treat them with much attention, and care for them as their own property. Paul, as though an enemy, was dragged up

<sup>456</sup> © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available.

<sup>457</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, XI, v. 10.



and down, beaten, scourged, insulted and maligned. This was a consolation to those also that Paul was writing to, when even their master was in such circumstances.”

Captives have<sup>458</sup> no further foe after they are led away, but they even experience great care from those who have captured them. But Paul was continually in the midst of enemies, and saw spears on every side, sharpened swords, arrays, and battles. Since Paul and Aristarchus likely shared many dangers, Paul calls them fellow-captives, as in, ‘Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner’ (Colossians 4:10).

Notice how far Aristarchus goes<sup>459</sup> to accompany Paul (Acts 27:1-3). It was good and useful that Aristarchus was present, since he would take back the report of all to Macedonia.

### **Paul Lost at Sea in a Storm**

“Because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and winter there*. When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon<sup>460</sup>. So, when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. And running under *the shelter of* an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty. When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship<sup>461</sup>; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands<sup>462</sup>, they struck sail and so were driven. And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up. But after long abstinence from food<sup>463</sup>, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, ‘Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed, God has granted you all those who sail with you.

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<sup>458</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 5.

<sup>459</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 1-3.

<sup>460</sup> From <http://www.keyway.ca/htm2005/20050506.htm>, a Euroclydon, also known as a gregale (i.e. a "Greece gale") is a strong wind system that blows down from Europe into [The Mediterranean Sea](#), mostly in autumn and winter.

<sup>461</sup> Cables to undergird the ship were used to hold the ship together in very rough weather so that planks did not come off and cause the ship to sink.

<sup>462</sup> The Syrtis Sands are on the North coast of Africa. “The Syrtis Sands were greatly feared by sailors because of their shifting sandbars and treacherous shallows. They had a horrible reputation as a sailors’ graveyard and saying the name alone struck terror in those who heard it. For more information, see <http://sampimentel.wordpress.com/2011/09/05/the-syrtis-sands/> If the wind was blowing from the North or Northeast, it would blow them South onto the African coast. Having a compass on board, they wanted to head west to avoid crashing onto the African coast.

<sup>463</sup> This two-week abstinence from food may not have been entirely voluntary due to mass seasickness and mass vomiting. If the ship was so tossed about that no one had any hope of being saved, everyone was likely so seasick that they couldn’t eat anything and keep it down even if they wanted to.

Therefore, take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island” (Acts 27:12-26).

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>464</sup> that Paul continued his boldness in speaking to the ship’s crew. At first, they didn’t listen; then when they were in really bad straits Paul emphasized that he was right on when he warned them earlier. Then he tells them exactly what was going to happen next, and they are receptive to him this time.

“Paul advised them to remain at Fair Haven on Crete (Acts 27:10), and he foretold the disaster that would come of it if they didn’t listen; but they, being in a hurry, and not liking the place, wished to winter at Phoenix<sup>465</sup>. Note the providential ordering of the events: first, ‘When the south wind blew softly<sup>466</sup>, supposing that they had obtained their desire’, they hoisted anchor, and came out of the harbor; then when the wind bore down upon them, they gave way to it driving them<sup>467</sup>, and were with difficulty saved.”

“After so great a storm Paul does not speak insultingly to the crew, but as wishing that at any rate he might be believed for the future. He states what had taken place for a testimony to the truth of what was about to be said by him. He foretells two things; both that they must be cast upon an island, and that though the ship would be lost, those who were in it should be saved — which thing he spoke not of conjecture, but of prophecy — and that he ‘must be brought before Caesar’ (Acts 27:24). What he says, ‘God hath given you all’, is not spoken boastfully, but in the wish to win those who were sailing in the ship. Paul spoke thus not that they might feel themselves bound to him, but that they might believe what he was saying. This is as much as to say that they are worthy indeed of death, since they would not listen to Paul; however, this is done out of favor to Paul.”

### **Paul’s Shipwreck on Malta**

“Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, ‘Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved’. Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off. And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, ‘Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. Therefore, I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a

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<sup>464</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 12-26.

<sup>465</sup> Phoenix was a sheltered harbor on the other side of Crete from where they were. In trying to get there, they were blown out to sea by the storm.

<sup>466</sup> A gentle wind out of the South would have kept them close to the Southern shore of Crete, where Phoenix was located. However, once they were out of port, the wind changed direction suddenly and the storm came up.

<sup>467</sup> That is, they let the wind drive them wherever it would ride out the storm. This usually meant hoisting a smaller sail to maintain better control and to avoid having the main sail torn to shreds.

hair will fall from the head of any of you'. And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. And in all we were 276 persons on the ship. So, when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat<sup>468</sup> into the sea. When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosening the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so, it was that they all escaped safely to land" (Acts 27:27-44).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>469</sup> that while the centurion believed Paul, the sailors did not and tried to escape in the lifeboat. Paul spoke up to the centurion since the sailors were needed in order to maneuver the ship onto the beachhead. The rest of the crew was sufficiently impressed with what Paul said that they began eating when he did.

"The sailors were about to escape in the lifeboat, having no faith in what Paul said. But the centurion did believe Paul, for Paul said, if these flee, 'you cannot be saved'. Paul said this, not for his own benefit, but that he might restrain them, and the prophecy might not fall to the ground. Notice how as in a church they are instructed by the calmness of Paul's behavior, and how he saved them out of the midst of the dangers. It is of providential ordering that Paul is disbelieved, that after proof of the facts, he might be believed, which accordingly was the case. Paul exhorted them again to take some food, and they do as he asks them; he takes some first, to persuade them not by word, but also by act, that the storm did them no harm, but rather was a benefit to their souls."

Chrysostom wondered<sup>470</sup> how the crew of the ship could go without food for 14 days; he concluded that they were so consumed by fear of dying that they couldn't eat. Seasickness may have been involved also. The result is a great wonder that all hands were saved in spite of the rough conditions on the Adriatic.

"How did the ship's crew go without food for fourteen days, having taken nothing? How did they bear it? Their fear possessed them, and did not let them fall into a desire of food, being, as they were, at the point of extreme jeopardy, so that they had no care for food."

"They made towards shore having given the rudder-handles to the wind; often they don't do it in this way. They were carried along, having loosened the rigging, i.e. the sails. 'Falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the bow stuck fast, and remained unmovable, but the stern was broken with the violence of the waves' (Acts 27:40-41); for when there is a strong

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<sup>468</sup> This ship had come from Alexandria heading for Rome, where Egypt is the breadbasket for Rome. At various times, Rome became desperate for wheat shipments from Egypt and had no other ready source.

<sup>469</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 27-33.

<sup>470</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 27-44.

wind, this is the consequence; the stern bearing the brunt of the storm. The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape (Acts 27:42). Again the devil tries to hinder the prophecy; the soldiers wanted to kill some, but the centurion didn't allow them that he might save Paul, so much was the centurion attached to him."

"Notice what good came of the storm! The storm did not come upon them because they were forsaken by God. This happened because of the season of the year; but the wonder is greater, that at such a season they were saved from the midst of the dangers, both Paul, and for his sake the rest, and this too in the Adriatic Sea. There were 276 souls in all; this is no small matter, if indeed they believed. The voyage was at a bad time of year. It is natural to suppose they would ask the reason why they were sailing at this time of year, and would learn why. The voyage was so protracted in that it afforded Paul an opportunity for teaching."

Chrysostom also noted<sup>471</sup> how circumstances contributed to Paul being believed by all on board. It took a while, and everyone had to first experience the consequences of not doing what Paul recommended. Then they all were ready to accept what he said.

"Paul had said, 'I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss' (Acts 27:10). Notice how unassuming the expression is. Paul did not want to be perceived as prophesying, but speaking as of conjecture; so, he said, 'I perceive'. They would not have received it, had he prophesied at the outset. In fact, he does prophesy, as he does afterward, when he said, 'The God whom I serve', leading them to believe. Why did none of them lose their lives as Paul had said? (Acts 27:10) It would have been so, but God brought them safe through it. As far as depended on the nature of the thing, they were dead meat, but God prevented it. Then, to show that it was not from conjecture that Paul had spoken, the master of the ship said the opposite of what Paul said, and he was a man of experience in the matter; so far was it from being the case that Paul's advice was given from conjecture. Moreover, the place suggested what the shipmaster said, 'the harbor was not suitable to winter in'; and it was from conjecture that 'the majority advised to set sail' (Acts 27:12) as they did, rather than Paul. After the severe storm and the deep darkness that ensued, that they may not forget what had been said, the vessel goes to pieces, the grain is flung out and all besides, that they may experience the full shame of what they did. This is why the vessel goes to pieces, and their souls are tightly braced. Moreover, both the storm and the darkness contributed not a little to Paul's obtaining the hearing he did. Notice how the centurion does what Paul asks him; he even let the life boat go, and destroyed it. The sailors did not comply with Paul's request at first, yet afterwards they do so; for in fact this is a reckless sort of people. When Paul said, 'Men, you should have listened to me' (Acts 27:21) he was not likely to get a good reception, when he chides in the midst of calamity. But when he tells them what more there is to come of the calamity, and then predicts the good, then he is acceptable. Therefore, he attacked them first, when 'all hope that we would be

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<sup>471</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, Recapitulation.

saved was finally given up' (Acts 27:20), that none may say, 'Nothing has come of it'".

"This part of the Mediterranean was a trying one, for it was in the Adriatic, and then they had had a long abstinence. They were in the midst of death. It was now the fourteenth day that they had gone without food, having taken nothing. Therefore, Paul said, "I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you' (Acts 27:34). Notice Paul giving thanks after all that had happened strengthened them. This showed an assured mind that they would be saved. 'Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves (Acts 27:36). Not only so, but after this, they so cast all their care upon Paul, such that they even cast the wheat overboard."

Chrysostom drew<sup>472</sup> an analogy between Paul on board the ship and a holy man in a house. By not listening to what Paul says, we fall into numberless evils that are worse than what Paul encountered on the Adriatic. By obeying Paul, we will be freed from our dangers, though we are being tested severely. We can think of the whole world as a ship, in which are evildoers and those who have numberless vices, some rulers, others guards, others just men, as Paul was, others prisoners, bound by their sins. If we do as Paul asks us, we won't perish in our bonds, but are released from them.

"Notice that the soldiers were also given to Paul! It was for his sake that the centurion did not allow them to be slain. So confessedly wicked do those men seem to me to have been: insomuch that they would have chosen even to slay their own benefactor. But they all were thus saved, and the prophecy received accomplishment, for they were beyond the reach of hope. So, it was through being saved that they learned who Paul was. But someone may say: why did Paul not save the ship? That they might perceive how great a danger they had escaped; and that the whole matter depended, not on the help of man, but on God's hand saving them independently of a ship. Righteous men, though they are in a tempest, or on the sea, or in the deep, suffer nothing dreadful, but even save others together with themselves. If here was a ship in danger and suffering wreck, and prisoners were saved for Paul's sake, consider what a thing it is to have a holy man in a house. Many are the tempests which attack us also, tempests far more grievous than these natural ones; but He can also allow us to be delivered, if only we obey holy men as those in the ship did, if we do what they ask. They are not simply saved, but themselves also contributed to other men's believing. Though the holy man is in chains, he does greater works than those who are free. The free centurion stood in need of his bound prisoner; the skillful pilot needed him who was not a pilot — rather, of him who was the true pilot. Paul steered as pilot not a vessel of this earthly kind, but the Church of the whole world, having learned of Him Who is Lord also of the sea, by the wisdom of the Spirit. Look at our whole life; it is just like this voyage. At one time we meet with kindness, at another with a tempest; sometimes from our own lack of counsel, sometimes from our idleness, we fall into numberless evils; from our not listening to Paul, when we are eager to go somewhere where he does not direct us. Paul is sailing even now with us, only

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<sup>472</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, Recapitulation.

not chained as he was then; he admonishes us even now, and says to those who are sailing on this sea, ‘take heed to yourselves: after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock’ (Acts 20:28-29). And again, ‘In the last days perilous times will come; and men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters’ (2 Timothy 3:1-2). This is worse than all storms. Let us therefore dwell where he directs us — in faith, in the safe haven; let us listen to him rather than to the pilot that is within us, that is, our own reason. Let us not immediately do just what reason may suggest; not what the owner of the ship says. No, but what Paul suggests; he has passed through many such tempests. Let us not learn to our loss by experience, but before the experience let us avoid both harm and losses. Hear what he says: ‘those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition’ (1 Timothy 6:9). Let us therefore obey him; otherwise, see what they suffered, because they did not take his advice. Again he tells us in another place what causes shipwrecks. ‘Who having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck’ (1 Timothy 1:19). But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them’ (2 Timothy 3:14). Let us obey Paul, though we are in the midst of a tempest. We shall surely be freed from the dangers, though we remain without food fourteen days, though hope of safety may have left us, though we are in darkness and mist, by doing what he suggests, we shall be freed from the dangers. Let us think that the whole world is a ship; in this ship are evildoers and those who have numberless vices, some rulers, others guards, others just men, as Paul was, others prisoners, those bound by their sins. If we do as Paul asks us, we won’t perish in our bonds, but are released from them; God will give us also to him. Do we doubt that sins and passions are grievous bonds? It is not the hands only that are bound, but the whole man. Tell me, when anyone possessed of much money doesn’t use it, or spend it, but keeps it close, is he not bound by his miserliness more grievously than any prisoner?”

### **The Maltese Receive Paul with Kindness**

“Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold” (Acts 28:1-2).

The time of year when the shipwreck occurred was probably late December. Everyone left Malta three months after they had arrived on an Alexandrian ship that had spent the winter in a Maltese harbor (Acts 28:11). Since the sailing season starts in early April, this suggests that the shipwreck occurred in late December or early January.

Late December and early January on Malta can be cold and wet, since most of the annual rainfall occurs during the winter, spurred by the polar jet stream<sup>473</sup>. About half the days of December and January are rainy days, while little rain falls in the summer. Malta has a steady,

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<sup>473</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean\\_climate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_climate)

predictable climate due to its proximity to the ocean. Temperatures in December and January average in the low 60's during the day and in the high 40's at night. Since the shipwreck occurred at daybreak (Acts 27:39-43), the temperature was probably in the high 40's and it was raining (Acts 28:2). Since everyone coming out of the water was soaking wet, keeping warm was difficult with the weather in the high 40's. They were very grateful for the hospitality shown by the people of Malta.

In order to dry the clothes of 276 people who came off the shipwreck, there was probably a large fire, or several fires for people to crowd around to get warm and to let their clothes dry. So, it was natural for everyone to help gather wood to burn. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Malta was considerably more forested than it is today, so plenty of brushwood was available.

### **Paul Gets Bitten by a Snake**

But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. So, when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow him to live'. But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god" (Acts 28:3-6).

As Paul did his part to help with the fire, a poisonous snake that had been hiding in a pile of sticks came out<sup>474</sup> because of the heat of the fire and fastened onto Paul's hand. The Greek word *echidna* does not define the exact species of snake, only that it was an adder or a viper. Today there are no vipers on Malta; but there are many more people living on Malta now than there were in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and the people could easily have displaced a snake population over 2000 years. One local snake sometimes identified with the one that bit Paul is called the Leopard Snake<sup>475</sup>. However, the Leopard Snake is not venomous; so, this could not be the one involved. A more likely candidate is the European viper (*vipera berus*, known by a number of different names) or the European asp (*vipera aspis*), where both of these are widespread throughout Southern Europe. Of these two, the European asp<sup>476</sup> has much stronger venom, and the reaction of people to bites from the European Asp is very much like what the Maltese were expecting to happen to Paul (Acts 28:5).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>477</sup> that Paul was allowed to be bitten by the snake for the benefit of the Malta natives, so that they would recognize who he really was. All they could see is Paul wearing chains; they couldn't recognize that Paul was a man of God until they saw this.

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<sup>474</sup> Many snakes hide from the cold weather in the winter.

<sup>475</sup> See <http://www.shadowservices.com/nature/Maltese/biology/snakes.htm>.

<sup>476</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vipera\\_aspis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vipera_aspis). The venom of the European Asp causes rapidly spreading acute pain, followed by edema (swelling) and discoloration at the site of the bite. Severe hemorrhagic necrosis (dead tissue) may occur within a few hours. Vision may be severely impaired, most likely due to degradation of blood and blood vessels in the eyes. Also the European Asp is rather short (about 2 feet long); therefore the Maltese natives saw the (short) snake hanging from Paul's hand (Acts 28:4).

<sup>477</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, vv. 3-6.

“Well also was this permitted, that they should both see the thing and utter the thought that he must have been a murderer, in order that, when the result ensued, there might be no disbelieving the miracle. Notice their good feeling towards the distress of Paul and the others, in saying what they did (not aloud, but) among themselves. Notice also the natural judgment clearly expressed even among barbarians, and how they do not condemn without assigning a reason. They watch Paul carefully, that they may wonder the more. But Paul just calmly shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. They expected him to fall down dead; having seen that nothing of the kind happened to him, they said, He is a god. Again, just as earlier (Acts 14:11), another excess on the part of these men.”

Chrysostom compared<sup>478</sup> the Jews that Paul left behind in Judea with the barbarians on Malta. The Jews had seen many miracles by the Apostles, yet they persecuted them. The Maltese had seen none of this, yet they were kind to them. The Maltese also had some sense of Providence, more so even than the philosophers, for they believed that God was present everywhere. The Maltese were kind simply because the people from the ship were unfortunate. Then the Maltese were greatly stunned that Paul didn't die from the snake bite.

“The Jews beheld all the many miracles the Apostles did, yet they persecuted and harassed Paul; but the barbarians, who had seen none of these, merely on the ground of his misfortune, were kind to him. ‘No doubt’, they say, ‘this man is a murderer’ (Acts 28:4). They do not simply pronounce their judgment, but say, ‘No doubt’, i.e. as anyone may see ‘and vengeance’, they say, ‘does not allow him to live’. Notice that they held the doctrine of Providence, and these barbarians were far more philosophic than the philosophers, who don't allow the benefit of Providence to extend to things ‘below the moon’. By contrast these barbarians suppose God to be present everywhere, and that although a guilty man may escape many a danger, he will not escape in the end. They do not attack Paul immediately, but for a time respect him on account of his misfortune. They do not openly proclaim what they think, but speak it ‘among themselves: a murderer’; for the chains led them to suspect this. ‘They showed no small kindnesses, and yet some of them were prisoners. Let those be ashamed that say, ‘Do not do good to those in prison’; let these barbarians shame us; for they didn't know who these men were, but simply because they were in misfortune, they were kind. This much they perceived: that they were human beings, and therefore they considered them to have a claim upon their humanity. ‘For a great while, they expected that Paul would die from the snake bite’ (Acts 28:6). But when he shook his hand, and flung off the snake into the fire, then they saw and were astonished. The miracle did not take place suddenly, but the men watched Paul a long length of time; so plainly was there no deceit, no haste here.”

### **The Chief Citizen of Malta Receives Paul Kindly**

In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. And it happened that the

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<sup>478</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, Recapitulation.



father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. So, when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary” (Acts 28:7-10)

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>479</sup> how Publius with compassion received the shipwreck victims; in doing so he brought down the grace of God upon himself at the hand of Paul. All 276 victims of the shipwreck received great kindness because of Paul. Everyone on Malta believed in God as a result of this shipwreck.

“Notice another hospitable man, Publius, who was both rich and of great possessions; he had seen nothing, but purely out of compassion for their misfortune, he received them, and took care of them. So that he was worthy to receive kindness; therefore, Paul as a payment for his receiving them healed him. Notice how when they were free from the storm, they did not become more negligent; but what a liberal entertainment was given to them for Paul’s sake. Three months they were on Malta; all of them were provided with sustenance. Notice how all this is done for the sake of Paul, to the end that the prisoners should believe, and the soldiers, and the centurion. Even if they had hearts of stone, yet from the advice they heard him giving, from the prediction they had heard him making, from the miracles they knew him to have done, and from the sustenance they by his means enjoyed, they must have got a very high notion of him. Notice that when the judgment is right, and not preoccupied by some passion, it immediately gets the right judgment, and gives sound verdicts.”

If Paul had visited Malta on one of his missionary journeys, he could not have done a better job of leading the people of Malta – and the crew of the ship and the soldiers – to faith in Christ. As we will see, this provided a major impetus to Paul’s life in Rome for the next two years as word of Paul as a benefactor to everyone spread throughout Rome.

Chrysostom noted<sup>480</sup> that Publius willingly lodged all 276 people; Paul recognized his good will and repaid him by healing his father. After the others were healed, it is apparent that Paul was able to invest time in teaching everyone on the island for three months. All the new converts responded by supplying the ship with everything that was needed.

“Publius lodged all 276 persons courteously for three days (Acts 28:7). Consider how great the gain of his hospitality: not as of necessity, not as unwilling, but as reckoning it a gain he lodged them for three days. When Paul repaid him by healing his father, he naturally honored Paul much more, when the others also received healing. It was not that Paul received wages for doing what he did, God forbid; but as it is written, ‘The worker is worthy of his food’ (Matthew 10:10). ‘When we departed, they loaded us with such things as were necessary’ (Acts 28:10). It is plain that having thus received them, they also received the word of the preaching. It is not to be supposed, that during an entire three months they would have had all this kindness shown them, if these persons hadn’t believed strongly, and thus exhibited the fruits of their conversion. From this we may see a strong proof of

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<sup>479</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, vv. 7-10.

<sup>480</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, Recapitulation.

the great number there was of those that believed. This was enough to establish Paul's credit with his fellow voyagers. Notice how in this whole voyage they nowhere touched at a city, but were cast on an island, and spent the entire winter there. Paul's fellow-voyagers were under training for their faith. 'And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor<sup>481</sup> and Pollux' (Acts 28:11). Probably this was painted on the ship; so addicted were they to their idols.

### **Paul Arrives in Rome**

"After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind<sup>482</sup> blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so, we went toward Rome. And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns<sup>483</sup>. When Paul saw them<sup>484</sup>, he thanked God and took courage. Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him" (Acts 28:11-16).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>485</sup> how word of what Paul had done preceded him like a royal ovation. From the brethren who came to meet him Paul took courage. Once in Rome, the fact that Paul was allowed to live by himself is proof that he was held in great admiration, even though he still wore chains.

"Already the preaching has reached Sicily! Notice how it has progressed even to those lands. At Puteoli they found some brethren; others also came to meet them. Such was the eagerness of the brethren; it didn't bother them at all, that Paul was in chains. But notice also how Paul himself was affected after the manner of men. For it says, 'When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage' (Acts 28:15). Although he had worked so many miracles, nevertheless even from sight he received a wave of confidence. From this we learn, that he was comforted after the manner of men. And when we came to Rome, 'Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him' (Acts 28:16). Permission was given to a prisoner to dwell by himself! This is no slight proof that Paul was held in much admiration; it is clear they did not number him among the rest."

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<sup>481</sup> Castor and Pollux are known in Greek and Roman mythology as the Twin Brothers, who were supposedly conceived when Zeus raped Leda, the wife of Tyndareus.

<sup>482</sup> The "south wind", that is, the wind out of the South, means that it was now springtime, and the sailing season had arrived along with good weather that would last all summer.

<sup>483</sup> The Appii Forum is almost 50 miles South of Rome, so this was quite a hike.

<sup>484</sup> The implication is that Paul knew these brethren, even though he had never been to Rome before. From his Epistle to Rome, written about 5 years earlier, Paul addressed eighteen of the Seventy Apostles plus Mary Magdalene (Romans 16). Paul and Peter had sent these brethren to Rome to help out with problems they faced regarding heresy. For details, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004.

<sup>485</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, vv. 11-16.

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>486</sup> that when the travelers got to Puteoli in Italy, brethren met them there and they stayed seven days. The centurion in charge, now probably a Christian, felt comfortable doing this. When they got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself; the soldier stationed with him was there to prevent plots by the Jews from developing.

“Notice them staying a while, before they hurried onwards. ‘When the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns’ (Acts 28:15); they did not fear any danger. Paul therefore was now so much respected, that he was even permitted to stay by himself; for if even before this they used him kindly, much more would they now. ‘The soldier that kept him’ (Acts 28:16) was there that it might not be possible for any plot to be laid against him there either, for there could be no raising of a riot now like there was in Jerusalem. So that in fact they were not keeping Paul in custody, but guarding him, so that nothing unpleasant should happen. It was not possible now, in so great a city, and with the Emperor there, and with Paul’s appeal, for anything to be done contrary to order. So surely it is the case, that always through the things which seem to be against us, all things turn out for us.”

### **Paul Speaks to the Jewish Leaders in Rome**

“And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So, when they had come together, he said to them, ‘Men *and* brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who, when they had examined me, wanted to let *me* go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. But when the Jews spoke against *it*, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. For this reason, therefore, I have called for you, to see *you* and speak with *you*, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain’. Then they said to him, ‘We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere’. So, when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at *his* lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. So, when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: ‘The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, ‘Go to this people and say: “Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, so that I should heal them”’. Therefore, let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!’ And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves (Acts 28:17-29).

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<sup>486</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, Recapitulation.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>487</sup> a complete turnaround of the Apostle Paul in Rome. Here the Jews don't dare start a riot. When Paul spoke to them, he taunted them by saying that the Gentiles will receive what they rejected. We need to consider the examples of Moses, Aaron, Cain, Abel, the Three Youths in the fire, Daniel, Adam and Judas. Nothing anyone does to us will hurt us; the only thing we need to be concerned about is what we do to ourselves.

“When Paul called the Jews together (Acts 28:17) and spoke to them; they departed contradicting each other. They are even taunted by Paul, yet they dare not say anything, for it was not permitted them to deal with his matter any way they wanted like at Jerusalem. This is a marvelous thing; not by the things which seem to be for our security, but by their very opposites, all comes together for us. We need to understand this! Consider how Pharaoh commanded the infants to be thrown into the river (Exodus 1:22). Unless this had happened, Moses would not have been saved, and he would not have been brought up in the palace. When he was safe with his parents, he was not honored; when he was exposed to the river, then he was honored. God did this to show His riches of resource. The Jews threatened Moses, saying, ‘Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ (Exodus 2:14); this too was profitable to Moses. It was God’s providence, in order that he should see that vision in the desert, in order that the proper time should be completed, that he should learn philosophy in the desert, and there live in security. In all the plotting of the Jews against him the same thing happened; then he became more illustrious. In the case of Aaron; Korah rose up against him, and thereby made him more illustrious (Numbers 16:1-19). This happened that his ordination should be unquestionable and that he might be held in admiration for the future also from the plates of brass (Numbers 16:37-40). Let us go over the same examples from the beginning. Cain slew his brother, but in this he rather benefited him. Listen to the Scripture, ‘The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground’ (Genesis 4:10); and again, in another place, ‘To the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of Abel*’ (Hebrews 12:24). God freed Abel from the uncertainty of the future; He increased his reward; we have all learned by this what love God had for him. How was he injured? Not at all; he just received his end sooner. What do they gain who live longer? Nothing; having good days does not depend on living many years or few years, but in using life properly. The Three Children were thrown into the furnace, and through this they became more illustrious (Daniel 3); Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den, and because of this he was made more renowned (Daniel 6). Trials in every case bring forth great good even in this life, much more in the life to come. Regarding malice, however, the case is the same as if a man should try to fight a fire having nothing more than a stick; the stick may beat the fire, but it only makes the fire brighter, and the stick gets consumed. The malice of the wicked becomes food and an occasion to make virtue more splendid. God turns the unrighteousness to good account, and our character shines forth all the more. When the devil works anything of this kind, he makes those more illustrious that endure. How then was this not the case with Adam, but, on the contrary, he became more disgraced? In this case of all others God turned the malice of that wicked one to good account. If Adam was the worse for

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<sup>487</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, Recapitulation.

it, it was he that injured himself. It is the wrongs that are done to us by others that become the means of great good to us, not so the wrongs which are done by ourselves. When we are hurt by others, we grieve; but not so when we hurt ourselves. Therefore, God shows that he who suffers unjustly at the hands of another gets renowned, but he who injures himself, receives hurt. Besides, the whole thing there was Adam's own doing. Why did he do what the woman said? (Genesis 3:6) When she counseled him contrary to God, why didn't he repel her? He was assuredly himself the cause. Otherwise if the devil was the cause, at this rate all that are tempted ought to perish; but if all do not perish, the cause of our destruction rests with ourselves. 'But', you will say, 'all that are tempted ought at that rate to succeed'. No; for the cause is in ourselves. 'At that rate it ought to follow that some perish without the devil having anything to do with it'. Yes; and in fact, many do perish without the devil's being concerned in it. Surely the devil does not bring about all our evil doings. Much comes also from our own sluggishness by itself; and if the devil is anywhere concerned as a cause, it is from our offering the occasion. When did the devil prevail in Judas' case? When 'Satan entered him' (John 13:27), you will say. Yes, but listen to the cause; it was because 'he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it' (John 12:6). It was he that himself gave the devil a wide room for entering into him; so, then it is not the devil that begins our downfall, it is we that receive and invite him. 'But', you will say, 'if there were no devil, the evils would not have become great'. True, but then our punishment would be more severe; as it is, beloved, our punishment is milder; whereas if we had done the evils of ourselves, the chastisements would be intolerable. If Adam, without any counsel, had committed the sin he did, who would have snatched him out of the dangers? 'But he would not have sinned', you will say. We can't really say this! Adam had so little solidity, that he was ready for foolishness, receiving such advice as he did; much more would he without any counsel have become what he did become. What devil incited the brethren of Joseph to envy? If we are watchful brethren, the devil becomes to us the cause even of renown."

Chrysostom pointed out<sup>488</sup> that Paul's words to the Jews in Rome were of a forgiving nature. He only did what he did to escape the danger in Jerusalem, and he was bound with his chains for their sake. The Roman Jews apologized for their counterparts in Jerusalem, and wanted to hear directly from Paul, since Christianity was spoken against everywhere. Many of the Roman Jews were convinced and Paul brought forward Isaiah's words to help confirm them in the Faith.

"Notice how Paul, in speaking with the Jews in Rome, details the charges of the Jews in Jerusalem against him. Thus, he explained that he 'was constrained to appeal to Caesar', so that his whole speech is of a forgiving nature. Paul didn't accuse them of anything; he only did this that he might escape the danger. He explained that it is for your sakes 'that I am bound with this chain' (Acts 28:20). So far am I, he says, from any hostile feeling towards you. Then the Jews in Rome were so subdued by his speech that they too apologized for those of their own nation (Acts 28:21). But they wanted to hear from Paul himself, 'We desire

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<sup>488</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, vv. 18-27.

to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere' (Acts 28:22). Paul spoke to them for an entire day and 'some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved' (Acts 28:24). They didn't say, we speak against it, but 'it is spoken against'. When they didn't agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had spoken one word from the Prophet Isaiah regarding the Gentiles (Acts 28:25-27). When they departed, opposed to each other, then Paul reproached them, in order to confirm those that believed. No wonder then if the unbelieving Jews contradicted; this was foretold from the first."

Chrysostom noted<sup>489</sup> that the Jews in Rome were different than those in Jerusalem. They actually wanted to hear what Paul had to say! However, they still tried to exonerate the Jews in Jerusalem, even though they knew that they were very much in the wrong. Paul does not try to impress them with miracles, but he speaks to them entirely from the Law and the Prophets, and he puts them to silence. He even shows them from the Prophets that God foretold that they wouldn't believe. It was the Providence of God that Paul should go to Jerusalem and speak to them as a Jew to his fellow Jews. When Paul finished speaking to the Jews in Rome (c. 60 AD), this was the beginning of his two years in Rome under house-arrest. It was just six years until the Judgment of God would fall on Judea for their apostasy.

"Notice the Jews in Rome speaking more mildly to Paul. 'We desire to hear from you what you think' (Acts 28:22), they said, and wish to exonerate those at Jerusalem. Whereas they ought to accuse them, they plead for them; by the very fact of their exonerating them, they do in fact accuse them. This was a proof that they knew themselves exceedingly in the wrong. Had they been confident, they would not have done this, so that Paul should not be able to make out his story in his own way; and besides they shrank from coming. They knew about Christianity (this sect) 'that it is spoken against everywhere' (Acts 28:22). True! But people are also everywhere persuaded (as, in fact, here), 'some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved' (Acts 28:24). Notice again how not by miracles but by the Law and the Prophets Paul puts them to silence, and how we always find him doing this. Paul could have done signs; but then it would no longer have been a matter of faith. In fact, this itself was a great sign, his speaking from the Law and the Prophets. That we may not think it strange that they didn't believe, Paul introduced the prophecy which said 'Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand', more now than then; 'and seeing you will see, and not perceive' (Acts 28:26), more now than then. This is not spoken for the believers, but for the unbelievers. Was it contrary to the prophecy that those believed? No! The prophecy was addressed to the unbelieving people. Paul did not say this to insult them, but to remove the offense. 'Therefore, let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!' (Acts 28:28). Why did Paul bother to speak to them? Didn't Paul know this? Yes, but that they might be persuaded, and that he might exonerate himself, and give no one a handle against him. The unbelieving was those that withdrew. Notice how they do not now form plots against him. In Judea they had a sort of tyranny. Then why did the Providence of God order that Paul should go there,

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<sup>489</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, Recapitulation.

when the Lord had said, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me?’ (Acts 22:18) That both the wickedness of the Jews in Jerusalem might be shown and Christ’s prophecy made good. They would not endure to hear Paul! All might learn that Paul was ready to suffer all things, and that the event might be for the consolation of those in Judea; for there also the brethren were suffering many grievous evils. If while preaching the Jewish doctrines, Paul suffered thus, had he preached the doctrines of the glory of Christ, how would they have endured him? While ‘purifying himself’ (Acts 21:26) he was intolerable to them; how should he have been tolerable to them while preaching what he taught elsewhere? First Paul called the Jews; then having shown them the facts he goes to the Gentiles (Acts 13:42-48, 18:6-7). Notice that it is not Paul that they disbelieve, but God. But God foreknew this from the beginning.”

### Members of the Seventy Apostles in Rome with Paul

**Table 9**  
**Those of the Seventy Working with Paul on the 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey**  
 For More Details, see Appendix B

| Member of Seventy      | Native To    | Journey       | Later Bishop of       | Comments                         |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Aristarchus            | Thessalonica | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Apamea                | Joined at end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Clement of Sardis      |              | 4             | Sardis                | Philippians 4:3                  |
| Demas                  |              | 3, 4, 5       | Priest for idols      | Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:10  |
| Epaphras               |              | 3, 4, 5       | Colossae area         | Colossians 1:7, 4:12             |
| Epaphroditus           | Philippi     | 2, 3, 4       | Colophon in Pamphylia | Philippians 2:25, 4:18           |
| Justus                 | Nazareth     | 2, 4          | Eleutheropolis        | Colossians 4:11                  |
| Linus                  |              | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Rome                  |                                  |
| Luke                   | Antioch      | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Roving Apostle        | Colossians 4:14                  |
| Mark, Barnabas’ Cousin | Cyprus       | 4, 5          | Appolonia,            | Colossians 4:10                  |
| Onesimus               |              | 4             | Berea                 | Colossians 4:9                   |
| Philemon               |              | 3, 4, 5       | Colossae area         | Philemon 1:1-23                  |
| Timothy                | Lystra       | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Ephesus               | Colossians 1:1                   |
| Tychicus               | Asia Minor   | 3, 4, 5       | Caesarea after Philip | Colossians 4:7                   |

### Paul Wrote a Number of Epistles from Rome

“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him” (Acts 28:30-31).

During Paul’s two years in Rome under house-arrest, he wrote Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, Philemon, and his treatise to the Hebrews. Thus, this was a very

productive time in his life, and this period of his life has had an enormous impact on Christianity over the last 2000 years.

The probable sequence of Paul's letters can be seen from who was with him at the time. In the Epistles to Philemon, the Colossians and the Philippians, the Epistles are from Paul and Timothy. In the treatise to the Hebrews, Paul mentioned that Timothy had just been released. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, Timothy was no longer in Rome and was probably in Ephesus. Therefore, we can say that the probable sequence was:

1. Paul met & converted Onesimus.
2. Paul wrote to Philemon with Timothy still in Rome (Philemon 1:1)
3. Paul wrote to the Colossians with Timothy still in Rome (Colossians 1:1).
4. Paul wrote to the Philippians with Timothy still in Rome (Philippians 1:1).
5. Paul wrote to the Hebrews with Timothy just released from prison (Hebrews 13:23).
6. Paul wrote to the Ephesians with Timothy no longer in Rome (Ephesians 1:1).

### **Paul Met Onesimus in Rome**

The subject matter of Paul's Epistle to Philemon was Onesimus, who was at one time a slave of Philemon. Onesimus stole something from Philemon and left for Rome, where Paul was in prison. We do not know the exact reason for Onesimus' departure, for Paul simply comments that he 'once was unprofitable to you', and that if Onesimus wronged Philemon in anything or owes something to Philemon, 'I (Paul) shall repay it' (Philemon 1:11, 18-19). Somehow Onesimus met Paul in Rome and Paul converted him (Philemon 1:10). After Onesimus had been serving Paul for a while, Paul sent him back to Philemon, asking Philemon to forgive him and free him for service to Paul (Philemon 1:12-14). If Onesimus owed Philemon anything, Paul offered to repay it from his own pocket (Philemon 1:18-19). In his letter to Philemon, Paul spoke of Onesimus as 'my own heart' (Philemon 1:12), indicating that Onesimus had become as a son to him.

Ignatius of Antioch in c. 107 AD addressed<sup>490</sup> one Onesimus as Bishop of Ephesus, referring to him as a man of inexpressible love, who had refreshed him in all things and greatly commends your good order in God. However, Ignatius does not refer to this Onesimus as the former slave of Philemon.

Eusebius of Caesarea mentioned<sup>491</sup> that Onesimus was Bishop of Ephesus in the late 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. However, Eusebius does not say that this Onesimus was the runaway slave of Philemon.

On the other hand, early Christian tradition mentioned<sup>492</sup> that the following were Bishops in the following cities: We note that Onesimus the former servant of Philemon was ordained as Bishop of Berea. This list of Bishops does not mention the successor to Ignatius, who was Bishop of Antioch from c. 68-107 AD; therefore, it must date to well before 107 AD. This suggests that another man named Onesimus was Bishop of Ephesus in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

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<sup>490</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Ephesians, 1-2, 6.

<sup>491</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 36.

<sup>492</sup> Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VII, iv, 46.



| <b>Bishop</b>      | <b>City</b>                |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
|                    |                            |
| James              | Jerusalem                  |
| Simeon             | Jerusalem after James      |
| Zacchaeus          | Caesarea of Palestine      |
| Evodius            | Antioch                    |
| Peter              | Antioch after Evodius      |
| Ignatius           | Antioch after Peter        |
| Annianus           | Alexandria                 |
| Linus              | Rome                       |
| Clement            | Rome after Linus           |
| Timothy            | Ephesus                    |
| Aristo             | Smyrna                     |
| Gaius              | Pergamus                   |
| Demetrius          | Philadelphia               |
| Lucius             | Cenchrea                   |
| Titus              | Crete                      |
| Dionysius          | Athens                     |
| Marathones         | Tripoli                    |
| <b>Archippus</b>   | <b>Laodicea in Phrygia</b> |
| <b>Philemon</b>    | <b>Colossae</b>            |
| <b>Onesimus</b>    | <b>Berea in Macedonia</b>  |
| Crescens           | Galatia                    |
| Aquila and Nicetas | Parishes of Asia           |
| Crispus            | Aegina                     |

One of the early canons of the Church addresses<sup>493</sup> the situation that Onesimus was in; that is, being a slave. A slave was not allowed by Canon 82 to be a Bishop unless he was freed by his master. This was probably done such that a Bishop was not put in a position where he was forced to serve two masters (Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13).

There is still some confusion today between the two men named Onesimus: one the former slave of Philemon; the other a 2<sup>nd</sup> century Bishop of Ephesus. Because they had the same name and lived close in time, this is understandable. Some early references state<sup>494</sup> that Onesimus was one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles along with his master Philemon. This is unlikely, since Paul had to baptize Onesimus in Rome (Philemon 1:10). Other references state<sup>495</sup> that Onesimus traveled extensively with the Apostles after the death of Peter and Paul to Spain, Carpetania, Ephesus and Patras.

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<sup>493</sup> Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VIII, v, 47, Canon 82, which reads: “We do not permit servants to be ordained into the clergy without their masters’ consent; for this would grieve those that owned them. For such a practice would occasion the subversion of families. But if at any time a servant appears worthy to be ordained into a high office, such as our Onesimus appeared to be, and if his master allows it, and gives him his freedom, and dismisses him from his house, let him be ordained.” This canon 82 is not the same as Canon 82 of the Council of Trullo in 692 AD.

<sup>494</sup> Dorotheus, “The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles”, in Lives of Orthodox Christian Saints, New Valaam Trading Company, 2008.

<sup>495</sup> <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for February 15.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>496</sup> some details about Philemon and Onesimus, and said that there is much to learn from this. Onesimus, the slave, had stolen from Philemon and run away; yet he found Paul in prison and Paul baptized him<sup>497</sup>. From this we can (1) learn to be diligent like Onesimus; (2) see that we should abandon no one, no matter how wicked they are; and (3) see that a person can blossom and shine wherever he is planted.

“Philemon was a man of admirable and noble character. That he was an admirable man is evident from the fact that his whole household was of believers, and of such believers as even to be called a Church. Therefore, Paul says, ‘And to the church in your house’ (Philemon 1:2). Paul bears witness also to Philemon’s great obedience, and that ‘the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother’ (Philemon 1:7). Paul himself in this Epistle commanded Philemon to prepare him a guest room. (Philemon 1:22). It seems to me therefore that his house was altogether a guest room for the Saints. This excellent man, then, had a certain slave named Onesimus. This Onesimus, having stolen something from his master, had run away. That Onesimus had stolen, hear what Paul says: ‘If he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account; I will repay’ (Philemon 1:18-19). Coming therefore to Paul at Rome, and having found him in prison, and having enjoyed the benefit of his teaching, Onesimus there also received Baptism. That Onesimus obtained there the gift of Baptism is clear from Paul’s saying, ‘Whom I have begotten *while* in my chains’ (Philemon 1:10). Paul therefore writes, recommending him to his masters that on every account he should forgive him, and receive him as one now regenerated.”

“It is useful for us to learn that this Epistle was sent upon necessary matters. Notice how many things are rectified thereby. We have this one thing first, that in all things one ought to be earnest. If Paul bestows so much concern on a runaway, a thief and a robber, and does not refuse nor is he ashamed to send him back with such commendations; much more does it become us not to be negligent in such matters. Secondly, we ought not to abandon slaves, even if they have proceeded to extreme wickedness. If a thief and a runaway become so virtuous that Paul was willing to make him a companion, and says in this Epistle, ‘that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the Gospel’ (Philemon 1:13), much more ought we not to abandon the free. Thirdly, we ought not to withdraw slaves from the service of their masters. For if Paul, who had such confidence in Philemon, was unwilling to detain Onesimus, so useful and serviceable to minister to himself, without the consent of his master, much less ought we so to act. If the servant is so excellent, he ought to continue in that service by all means, and to acknowledge the authority of his master, that he may be the occasion of benefit to all in that house. Why would we take the candle from the lampstand to place it under the bushel?”

Chrysostom also spoke<sup>498</sup> about the order in which Paul wrote his Epistles and what clues we have for discerning this. In doing so, Chrysostom mentioned that Paul wrote to Philemon on

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<sup>496</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, The Argument.

<sup>497</sup> Since Onesimus is remembered as one of the Seventy Apostles, this is testimony to his zeal for the Faith after his baptism, and it makes Paul’s commendation of Onesimus to Philemon all the more outstanding. However, Onesimus was probably not one of the original Seventy, he had to have been added later.

<sup>498</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, The Argument.

behalf of Onesimus; then he wrote to the Colossians saying that he had sent Tychicus and Onesimus to them.

“Paul wrote to the Philippians from Rome; therefore, he says, ‘All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household’ (Philippians 4:22). Paul wrote to the Hebrews from Rome likewise; therefore, he says, ‘Those from Italy greet you’ (Hebrews 13:24). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle to Timothy Paul sent also from Rome, when in prison; which also seems to me to be the last of all the Epistles. This is plain from the end, ‘For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand’ (2 Timothy 4:6). But that he ended his life there is clear, I may say, to everyone. That to Philemon is also very late, yet previous to that to the Colossians, for Paul wrote it in extreme old age; therefore, he said, ‘as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner in Christ Jesus’ (Philemon 1:9). This again is plain from the end of the Epistle to the Colossians. In writing to the Colossians, Paul says, ‘Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you’ (Colossians 4:7-9). This was that Onesimus in whose behalf he composed the Epistle to Philemon. That this was no other of the same name with him is plain from the mention of Archippus. It is Archippus whom Paul had taken as worker together with himself in the Epistle to Philemon, when he appealed to Philemon for Onesimus; when writing to the Colossians he stirs up this same Archippus saying, ‘Say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it’” (Colossians 4:17).

Chrysostom stepped through<sup>499</sup> the logic and phrasing of Paul's request to Philemon. First, he introduced Onesimus as one like his own son. Then he mentioned that Onesimus was a changed man, and that Paul himself would make up for any wrongdoing. Since Philemon owed Paul a favor anyway, Paul asked very confidently and tenderly, but also in a way to excite Philemon for doing the will of God.

“After Paul said to Philemon that Onesimus is ‘his son’, that he is a partaker of the Gospel, that he is ‘my heart’, that Philemon might receive him back ‘as a brother’, Paul's desire was for Philemon to ‘hold him as a brother’. Paul was not ashamed to be called the servant of the faithful, but confesses that he was such; much more would he not refuse this. What he says is to this effect. If you (Philemon) are of the same mind with me, if you run on the same terms, if you consider me a friend, receive Onesimus as you would me.”

“Notice where and when Paul introduced the mention of the injury: last, after having said so many things on Onesimus' behalf. Since the loss of money is particularly apt to annoy men, in order that Philemon might not accuse Onesimus of this, (for it was most likely that it was all spent) Paul brings this up and says, ‘If he has wronged you’. Paul does not say, ‘If he has stolen anything’. At the same time Paul confessed the offense, not as if it were the offense of a servant, but of a friend against a friend, using the expression of ‘wrong’ rather than of

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See also John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, I, vv. 1-2.

<sup>499</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, III, vv. 20-21.

theft. ‘Put that to my account’, Paul says; that is, reckon the debt to me, ‘I will repay it’”.

“Paul wrote at the same time movingly and pleasantly. If Paul did not refuse to do something for Philemon, how could Philemon refuse to receive Onesimus? This would both shame Philemon into compliance, and bring Onesimus out of trouble. Nothing is more affectionate than Paul’s ‘heart’, nothing more earnest and nothing more zealous. Notice what great concern Paul makes on behalf of one man. Apparently, Philemon owed Paul a big favor. That it might not appear insulting to Philemon, if Paul didn’t have the confidence to ask and obtain in behalf of a theft, he in some measure relieves this, saying, ‘not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides’ (Philemon 1:19). This proceeded from love, and was according to the rule of friendship, and was a proof of his great confidence. Notice how Paul asks with great security, and that this may not seem a sign of too little confidence in Philemon.”

“Paul continued, ‘Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord’ (Philemon 1:20). Receive him, Paul says. We must understand this though unexpressed. Dismissing all pleasantries, Paul pursues his considerations, which are serious ones.”

“Paul continued, ‘Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say’ (Philemon 1:21). What stone would these things not have softened? What wild beast would these things not have rendered mild, and prepared to receive him heartily? At the same time in saying this Paul excited Philemon. Philemon would have been ashamed, if having such credit with Paul as this, saying that he would do more than he said, and then he should not do so much.”

Chrysostom also noted<sup>500</sup> how Paul phrased his letter to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus. For stealing from Philemon and running away, Onesimus could have been executed. To solve this difficulty, Paul wanted Philemon to free Onesimus from his bondage, so that Onesimus could serve God just as Philemon was doing.

“Who would not receive with open arms a combatant who had been crowned? Who seeing Paul bound for Christ’s sake, would not have granted him ten thousand favors? By so many considerations having previously soothed Philemon’s mind, Paul did not immediately introduce Onesimus, but defers making so great a request. We know what is on the minds of masters towards slaves that have run away; and particularly when they have done this with robbery. Even if they have good masters, how the anger of the master is increased! Paul took all these pains to soothe the anger; having first persuaded Philemon readily to serve him in anything whatever, and having prepared his soul for obedience, then he introduced his request. Paul says, ‘I appeal to you’, and with the addition of praises, ‘for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten *while* in my chains” (Philemon 1:10).

“Again, the chains are mentioned to shame Philemon into compliance, and then Paul introduces Onesimus. Paul had not only extinguished Philemon’s anger, but has caused him to be delighted. Paul would not have called Onesimus

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<sup>500</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, II, v. 9.

his son, if he were not especially profitable. Paul calls Onesimus by the same name that he calls Timothy; that is, son. Paul repeatedly shows his affection; he urges Philemon by the very period of Onesimus' new birth, 'I have begotten him in my chains'. On this account also Onesimus was worthy to obtain much honor, because he was begotten in Paul's conflicts, in his trials in the cause of Christ."

Chrysostom further pointed out<sup>501</sup> how Paul treated Onesimus, a runaway slave. He treated Onesimus as a brother and a fellow Apostle, which is quite contrary to many who have high positions in Church leadership.

"Paul calls a slave, a brother, and with reason; seeing that he styles himself the servant of the faithful (2 Corinthians 4:5). Let us take down all of our pride and tread under foot our boastfulness. Paul calls himself a slave, he that is worth the world, and ten thousand heavens; and do we entertain high thoughts of ourselves? He that seized all things for spoil as he will, he that has the first place in the kingdom of heaven, he that was crowned, he that ascended into the third heaven, calls servants, 'brethren', and 'fellow-servants' (Philemon 1:16). Where is our madness? Where is our arrogance? So trustworthy had Onesimus become, as to be entrusted even with such things as these by Paul."

Chrysostom further noted<sup>502</sup> that whether one is a "true" son can change, because it depends on the power of choice. Titus was a true son of the Apostle Paul because he chose to follow Paul's instruction. Onesimus became "untrue" when he left Philemon; but he became true again when Paul converted him.

"To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith' (Titus 1:4), that is, my true son. It is possible for men not to be true sons, as those of whom Paul says, 'I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, covetous, an idolater, a reviler, a drunkard, or an extortionist -- not even to eat with such a person' (1 Corinthians 5:11). Paul thus speaks of a son, but not a true son. A son indeed he is, because he has once received the grace, and has been regenerated. But he is not a true son, because he is unworthy of his Father, and a deserter to the usurped sovereignty of another. In children by nature, the true and the outwardly similar are determined by the father that begot, and the mother who bore them. But it is not so in this case, but it depends on the disposition. For one who was a true son may become false, and a false son may become a true one. It is not the force of nature, but the power of choice, on which it depends; therefore, it is subject to frequent changes. Onesimus was a true son, but then he was not true again, for he became 'unprofitable' (Philemon 1:11). Then he again became a true son, so as to be called by Paul his 'own heart' (Philemon 1:12).

Chrysostom then stated<sup>503</sup> that Christ expects us to manage most of our own affairs rather than expect everything to be done by grace. In doing this, we need to take a humble attitude, and we can do much no matter what our circumstances are. Paul was very poor; all the Apostles

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<sup>501</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, XI, v. 9.

<sup>502</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Titus, I, vv. 1-4

<sup>503</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XX, vv. 10-12.

were uneducated men; Onesimus was even a slave. Yet they accomplished a great deal, and Paul made some great statements concerning Onesimus.

“Many things Christ leaves to be done by ordinary human wisdom, that we may learn that His disciples were men, that everything was not done everywhere by grace. Otherwise they would have been mere motionless logs; but in many things they managed matters themselves. This is nothing less than martyrdom – not to shrink from any suffering for the sake of the salvation of the many. Nothing so delights God! Again, I will repeat what I have often said; I repeat it, because I do exceedingly desire it, as Christ also did, when speaking concerning forgiveness. ‘Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses’ (Mark 11:25). Again, to Peter He said, ‘I do not say to you, forgive up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven’ (Matthew 18:22). He in fact forgives the transgressions against Him (Luke 23:34). This is the very goal of Christianity! Nothing is more frigid than a Christian, who doesn’t care for the salvation of others. We cannot here plead poverty; for she that deposited the two mites, shall be our accuser (Luke 21:1-4). Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have’ (Acts 3:6). Paul was so poor, that he was often hungry, and lacked necessary food (1 Corinthians 4:11). We cannot plead lowness of birth; for they too were common men, and of common parents. We cannot allege want of education; for they too were ‘unlearned men’ (Acts 4:13). Even if we are a slave and a runaway slave, we can perform our part; for such was Onesimus. Yet consider what Paul calls him, and to how great honor he advances him: ‘that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the Gospel’ (Philemon 1:13). We cannot plead infirmity, for such was Timothy, having frequent infirmities; Paul says, ‘Use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities’ (1 Timothy 5:23). Everyone can profit his neighbor, if he will fulfill his part.

Philemon, Apphia and Archippus were martyred<sup>504</sup> during the persecution of Nero, probably in the late 60’s AD. During a pagan festival an enraged crowd rushed into the Christian Church when services were going on. All fled in terror, and only Philemon, Archippus and Apphia remained. They were seized and led off to the city prefect Androcles. The crowd like beasts brutally beat and stabbed Archippus with knives, and he died on the way to the court. Philemon and Apphia were buried up to the waist in the ground, and then stoned until they died by order of the prefect.

### **Paul Wrote to Philemon in Colossae**

In John Chrysostom’s introduction to his homilies on Philemon, he noted<sup>505</sup> that Philemon was a man of admirable and noble character. Some in the 4<sup>th</sup> century didn’t think that Paul’s Epistle to Philemon should be included in Scripture due to its dealing with small matters.

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<sup>504</sup> <http://oca.org/FSLives.asp>, February 19, November 22

Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, February 19, November 22.

*The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2004, February 19; 2002, November 22.

<sup>505</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philemon*, Argument.

However, Chrysostom argues that all the details of the history of the Apostles are important, and most people have no idea of the benefit that would result. These are the general instructors of the world; their spiritual life, their habits, their walk, their words and actions, in short, all that relates to them, profits the hearers, and nothing is a hindrance or impediment.

“First, it is necessary to state the argument of the Epistle to Philemon, then also the matters that are questioned respecting it. Philemon was a man of admirable and noble character. That he was an admirable man is evident from the fact that his whole household was of believers, and of such believers as even to be called a Church. Therefore, Paul says in this Epistle ‘And to the Church in your house’ (Philemon 1:2). Paul bears witness also to Philemon’s great obedience and that ‘the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother’ (Philemon 1:7). In this Epistle Paul commanded Philemon to prepare him a guest room (Philemon 1:22). It seems to me therefore that Philemon’s house was altogether ‘a guest room for the Saints’. This excellent man, then, had a certain slave named Onesimus. This Onesimus, having stolen something from his master, had run away. For that he had stolen, hear what Paul says, ‘If he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. I will repay’ (Philemon 1:18-19). Coming therefore to Paul at Rome, and having found him in prison, and having enjoyed the benefit of his teaching, Onesimus there also received Baptism. That Onesimus obtained there the gift of Baptism is clear from Paul’s saying, ‘Whom I have begotten *while* in my chains’ (Philemon 1:10). Paul therefore writes, recommending him to his master, that on every account he should forgive him, and receive him as one now regenerated. Some say, that it was superfluous that this Epistle should be included in the Canon of Scripture, since Paul is making a request about a small matter in behalf of one man; let them, who make these objections, learn that they are themselves deserving of very many censures. It was not only proper that these small Epistles, in behalf of things so necessary, should have been inscribed, but I wish that it were possible to meet with one who could deliver to us the history of the Apostles. It is important not only all they wrote and spoke of, but of the rest of their conversation, even what they ate, when they ate, when they walked, where they sat, what they did every day, in what parts they were, into what house they entered, and where they lodged. So replete with advantage is all that was done by them that we should relate everything with minute exactness. But most people, not knowing the benefit that would result from this, proceed to censure it.”

“If we could only see those places where they sat or where they were imprisoned, mere lifeless spots, we often transport our minds there, imagine their virtue, are excited by it, and become more zealous. Much more would this be the case, if we heard their words and their other actions. Concerning a friend, a man inquires where he lives, what he is doing, where he is going; should we not make these inquiries about these the general instructors of the world? When a man leads a spiritual life, the habit, the walk, the words and the actions of such a one, in short, all that relates to him, profits the hearers, and nothing is a hindrance or impediment.”

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>506</sup> that Paul's prison Epistles, such as the one to Philemon, have some advantages over the others in that it is like a champion writing in the midst of carnage and victory. Paul had begotten Onesimus while in prison, and he wrote to Philemon, an eminent citizen and later a traveling Bishop, concerning Onesimus.

“Holy indeed are all the Epistles of Paul, but those which he sent after he was in bonds have some advantage, such as the one to Philemon. The one to the Romans he wrote before he had seen them, but the one to the Colossians, after; and near the close of his preaching. In the Epistle to Philemon Paul says, ‘Being such a one as Paul, the aged’ (Philemon 1:9), and makes request for Onesimus; but in the Epistle to the Colossians he sends Onesimus himself, as he says, ‘With Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother’ (Colossians 4:9), calling him faithful, beloved, and brother. Therefore, Paul says, ‘from the hope of the Gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven’ (Colossians 1:23). By then it had been preached for a long time. The Epistle to Timothy was written after this. When Paul had come to the very end of his life, he says, ‘I am already being poured out as a drink offering’ (2 Timothy 4:6); this is later than that to the Philippians, for in that Epistle he was just entering his final imprisonment at Rome.”

“But why do I say that these Epistles have some advantage over the rest in this respect, because Paul writes while in bonds? As if a champion were to write in the midst of carnage and victory; so also, in truth did Paul. Paul was aware that this was a great thing, for writing to Philemon he said regarding Onesimus, ‘Whom I have begotten *while* in my chains’ (Philemon 1:10). Paul said that we should not be dispirited when in adversity, but even rejoice. At this place was Philemon with the Colossians. In the Epistle to Philemon Paul said, ‘And to Archippus our fellow-soldier’ (Philemon 1:2); and in the Epistle to the Colossians, ‘Say to Archippus’ (Colossians 4:17). Philemon seems to me to have been charged with some office in the Church.”

Chrysostom also noted<sup>507</sup> how Paul addressed Philemon, who was a great man. He could have commanded Philemon from his authority as an Apostle, but instead he beseeches him out of love.

“Paul wrote, ‘Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting’ (Philemon 1:8). Notice how cautious Paul is, lest any of the things which were spoken even from exceeding love should so strike the hearer, that he should be hurt. For this reason, before Paul says, ‘to enjoin you’, since it was offensive, although, as spoken out of love, it was more proper to soothe him. Nevertheless, from an excess of delicacy, Paul as it were corrects it by saying, ‘Having confidence’ (Philemon 1:21), by which he implies that Philemon was a great man; that is, ‘You have given confidence to us’. Not only that, but adding the expression ‘in Christ’, by which he shows that it was not that Philemon was more illustrious in the world, not that he was more powerful, but it was on account of his faith in Christ. Paul also adds, ‘to enjoin you’, and ‘that which is convenient’; that is, a reasonable action. Notice out of how many things

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<sup>506</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, I, vv. 1-2.

<sup>507</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, II, vv. 8-9.



Paul brings proof for this. You do good to others, Paul says, and to me, and for Christ's sake, and that the thing is reasonable, and that love gives; so, Paul adds, 'Yet for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*'" (Philemon 1:9).

"It was as if Paul had said, 'I know that I can affect it by commanding with much authority, from things which have already taken place'. But because I am very solicitous about this matter, 'I beseech you'. Paul shows both these things at once; that he has confidence in him for he commands him; and that he is exceedingly concerned about the matter, wherefore he beseeches him."

## Paul Wrote to the Colossians

Colossae<sup>508</sup> is located in Phrygia of Asia Minor on the Lycus River, which is a tributary of the Maeander River. Colossae is about 100 miles East of Ephesus and about 12 miles Southeast of Laodicea. In earlier times, Colossae was an important merchant place, but by the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, it had dwindled greatly in size and significance.

Paul wrote to the Church in Colossae while he was under house-arrest in Rome, living in a rented house (Acts 28:16, 30-31). Timothy was still with Paul in Rome at that time (Colossians 1:1) and so was Justus (Colossians 4:11), Jesus' step-brother and one of the Seventy Apostles. Colossae was the home of Philemon, a member of the original Seventy, and also the home of Epaphras.

We are not told directly about the founding of the Church in Colossae; all we are told is that during Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). Paul said, "For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:1-3). If many people had never seen Paul, he may have been to Colossae only briefly or not at all. It is often assumed that Epaphras founded the Church in Colossae with the help of others during Paul's two years in Ephesus (Colossians 1:7, 4:12). Paul wrote to Philemon in Colossae of his intended visit, which implies he had either never been there or was there only briefly,

"Meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to *visit* you. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers" (Philemon 1:22-24).

Since the same members of the original Seventy Apostles<sup>509</sup> were with Paul when he wrote to the Church in Colossae, Paul's Epistle to Philemon was probably written at about the same time.

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<sup>508</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colossae>.

<sup>509</sup> That is, John Mark (Colossians 4:10, Philemon 1:24), Aristarchus (Colossians 4:10, Philemon 1:24), Demas (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24), Luke (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24) and Epaphras (Colossians 4:12, Philemon 1:23).

But what is the “great conflict” (Colossians 2:1) that Paul had for Colossae and Laodicea? Paul got word of what was happening in Colossae from Epaphras, who had journeyed to Rome to seek Paul’s help. Demetrius of Rostov stated<sup>510</sup> that Epaphras was later the Bishop of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis<sup>511</sup>. Epaphras brought word to Paul about the inroads that the heresies of Simon Magus had been making in Colossae.

“You have the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth. You learned this from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit. For this reason, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:5-9).

Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear witness to him that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis” (Colossians 4:12-13).

The situation at Colossae was somewhat complicated by the fact that Demas, one of the original Seventy Apostles, was with Paul when he wrote to the Colossians, but Demas later apostatized to become a priest for the idols<sup>512</sup>. Paul wrote,

“Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house” (Colossians 4:14-15).

About five years later, Paul wrote to Timothy that Demas had abandoned his work as an Apostle saying, Demas “has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica” (2 Timothy 4:10).

Throughout Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians, Paul refers to heretical teachings, but he doesn’t identify where these teachings came from. However, early Christian writers have given us quite a bit of information on what Paul was referring to.

Simon Magus was a renowned and charismatic heretic<sup>513</sup> in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and he and his followers taught that Jesus was merely one of the angels sent by the Supreme God to create man and the universe. And therefore, worship of angels was common among the heretic groups<sup>514</sup>. To address this, Paul stated:

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<sup>510</sup> Demetri of Rostov, “The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints”, tr. Fr. Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2002

<sup>511</sup> Hierapolis was about 15 miles North of Laodicea.

<sup>512</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>513</sup> For more details, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

<sup>514</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I, xxiii, 4-5.

Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix, 3.

Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1.

Tertullian, A Treatise on the Soul, I, ix, 23.

Eusebius, Church History, III, 26.

“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:18).

Prior to that, Paul had said, “This I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:4, 8).

In contrast to the Ebionites, who advocated a return to circumcision and the Mosaic Law, Paul stated that the Colossians had a greater “circumcision”. “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ” (Colossians 2:11).

The Early Church spoke out<sup>515</sup> very strongly against Simon and his followers regarding Who Jesus really is. Eusebius stated<sup>516</sup> that there were “a great many members of the Church who were fighting for the truth and defending apostolic and ecclesiastical doctrine with uncommon eloquence” in the face of these heresies. To address the heretics’ claim that Jesus was a lesser God and not equal to the Father, Paul wrote:

“Christ is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn over all creation; He created all things, is before all things and in Him all things consist. All the fullness of God dwells in Him” (Colossians 1:15-19).

Part of the teachings of the heretics was either an indifference to or a concentration on certain foods and behavior, such as taught by the Ebionites<sup>517</sup>. Eating of meat offered to idols and the renunciation of the faith in times of persecution were matters of indifference to Simon<sup>518</sup>, since, he said, salvation has not been promised to *bodies*. Since bodies didn’t matter, some, like the Nicolaitans, were grossly immoral<sup>519</sup>. On the other hand, others of these heretics<sup>520</sup> abhorred certain kinds of food. Timothy had to address a similar problem in Ephesus a few years later (1 Timothy 4:3). Paul addressed the Colossians regarding the ascetic, food-abhorring group of heretics:

“Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths<sup>521</sup>, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations -- ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle’, which all concern things which perish with the using -- according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed

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<sup>515</sup> Ignatius, “To the Philadelphians”, 6, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I, xxiii, 4-5. See also Irenaeus, Against Heresies, II, xxxii, 5.

<sup>516</sup> Eusebius, Church History, IV, 7.

<sup>517</sup> Eusebius, Church History, III, 28.

<sup>518</sup> Eusebius, Church History, IV, 7.

<sup>519</sup> Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1

<sup>520</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”, VI, ii, 8, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7.

<sup>521</sup> These were some of the major observances of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Judaism.

religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh” (Colossians 2:16-17, 20-23).

Toward the end of the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul referred to another epistle that was circulating,

“Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Colossians 4:16)

Modern commentators speculate that the “Epistle from Laodicea” is the one we know as the Epistle to the Ephesians. However, John Chrysostom stated<sup>522</sup> that it was a letter from Laodicea, perhaps to Paul.

“Some say that this is not Paul’s to them, but theirs to Paul, for Paul didn’t say that it was written to the Laodiceans, but that it was written ‘from Laodicea’”.

Thus, things were changing in Colossae and there were a number of heresies present that Epaphras brought to Paul’s attention. Paul answered many of them in his Epistle. When Paul was released from house-arrest in Rome, two of his stops on his 5<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey were Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20) and Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), both of which are near Colossae. Paul could have easily gotten to Colossae, and stayed in the guest room, that he asked Philemon to prepare for him (Philemon 1:22).

### **Paul Addresses Archippus of the Seventy in Colossae**

In his letter to the Colossians in c. 62 AD, Paul addressed several Churches and he addressed Archippus directly, “When this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the Church of Laodicea, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, ‘Pay attention to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it’” (Colossians 4:16-17).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>523</sup> that Paul was very emphatic when he wrote to Archippus. The Apostle Archippus apparently heeded Paul’s words since he was martyred for the Faith not too long afterward.

“Paul wrote thus to the Colossians, ‘Say to Archippus, pay attention’. Everywhere Paul uses this word, he uses it to alarm them; as when he said, ‘Pay attention to<sup>524</sup> dogs’ (Philippians 3:2). ‘Pay attention lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men’ (Colossians 2:8). ‘Pay attention lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak’ (1 Corinthians 8:9). Paul always expresses himself like this when he means to terrify. Paul does not allow Archippus the option of choosing, as he said himself, ‘If I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship’ (1 Corinthians 9:17). ‘That you may fulfill it’, continually using diligence, ‘which

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<sup>522</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, XII, v. 14.

<sup>523</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, XII, vv. 16-17.

<sup>524</sup> The term “dog” referred to an impure and profane person (Matthew 15:26, Revelation 22:15), just as a dog is an unclean animal. See Merrill F. Unger, Unger’s Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967.

you have received in the Lord' (Colossians 4:17), where the word 'in' means 'through the Lord'. He gave it to you, Paul said, not we. Paul shows that they had been committed to his hands by God."

Chrysostom also referred<sup>525</sup> to Paul's reference to Archippus in his letter to Philemon, written about the same time as his letter to Colossae, where he gave Archippus the same encouragement. Others were also encouraging Archippus to continue the ministry he had been given. Archippus may have been having so many problems with local heretics that he was considering quitting.

"When Paul referred to Archippus as 'our fellow-soldier', he did not wish to accomplish such things by command, but he begs Archippus to do what a stranger might have done to aid his request. Not only was Archippus being asked by many, but the petition was urged by many; this contributed to its being granted. On this account Paul said, 'Archippus our fellow-soldier'. If Archippus was a fellow-soldier, he ought to be concerned about these things. This is the Archippus, about whom Paul said, 'Say to Archippus, pay attention to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it' (Colossians 4:16-17). It seems to me, that Archippus, whom he joins with him in this request, was also one of the Clergy. Paul calls him his fellow soldier that he may by all means cooperate with him."

### **The Mission of Epaphroditus to Paul in Rome**

Paul wrote, "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed, I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:17-19).

From Rome, Paul sent the Apostle of the Seventy Epaphroditus to Philippi<sup>526</sup> to give the Philippians some news on what was going on in Rome, since they were very worried about Paul and since Epaphroditus was likely a native of Philippi. Also, the Philippians had heard that Epaphroditus had been very sick and had almost died. Epaphroditus, on the other hand was very concerned about the Philippians (Philippians 2:25-30). When Epaphroditus returned to Rome from Philippi, he brought a contribution from Philippi to Paul to help out with the work there (Philippians 4:18-19).

Another of the Seventy helping out in Macedonia was Hermas. Epaphroditus was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). We first see him in Paul's letters in c. 62 AD when Paul sent him to Philippi from Rome. Epaphroditus had been longing for the Philippians and was distressed because they were worried about him when he was very sick (Philippians 2:26-30). This implies that he had been working with Paul for quite a while already. Earlier in c. 49-50 AD, when Paul passed through Philippi on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Epaphroditus was probably there also. On Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, as he passed through

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<sup>525</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, I, vv. 1-3.

<sup>526</sup> For more details, see the Section "Epaphroditus Also Joins Paul in Philippi".

Philippi again, Luke started traveling with Paul again<sup>527</sup>. Probably Epaphroditus did so also and Hermas of the original Seventy was left behind in Philippi. Hermas thus became known as the first Bishop of Philippi<sup>528</sup>.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>529</sup> that the Philippians had sent Epaphroditus to Paul with alms. They were very concerned about Paul's imprisonment (house-arrest) in Rome and about Epaphroditus' illness. Paul reassured them about Epaphroditus, by having him carry the Epistle to them, that he had recovered and that Paul's arrest had resulted in progress for the Gospel.

“The Philippians had sent Epaphroditus to Paul, to carry him money, and to know the things concerning him, for they were most lovingly concerned about him. Paul replied saying, ‘I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you’ (Philippians 4:18). Paul reassured them about their concerns saying, ‘But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the Gospel’ (Philippians 1:12). And again, ‘I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state’ (Philippians 2:19). Paul was thus saying, ‘Just as you for full assurance sent to know the things concerning me, so I also, that I may be of good comfort when I know the things concerning you’. It had been a long time since they communicated with Paul, and Paul acknowledged this, ‘Now at length you have revived your thought for me’ (Philippians 4:10). Then they heard that Paul was in prison (Philippians 2:26); they also heard about Epaphroditus, that he was gravely sick; it was reasonable that they should be disturbed. Therefore, Paul offers them much consolation about his bonds, showing that they should not be disturbed, but even rejoice.”

Chrysostom also stated<sup>530</sup> that just as Paul was very concerned about what was happening in Philippi, so the Philippians were very concerned about what was happening to Paul. Paul was under house-arrest in Rome, but the Philippians didn't know if he was about to be executed. The Apostle Epaphroditus, whom they knew well, had been gravely sick and they didn't know if he was now OK.

“Paul had said, ‘the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard’ (Philippians 1:12, 13). Again, ‘Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all’ (Philippians 2:17). By these words Paul strengthened the Philippians. Perhaps they might suspect that his former words were spoken just to comfort them. ‘I will send Timothy to you’, Paul said; for the Philippians desired to hear everything that concerned him. Why didn't Paul say, ‘that you may know my state’, but instead said, ‘that I may know yours’? Epaphroditus would have reported Paul's state before the arrival of Timothy. Why further on did Paul say, ‘I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother’ (Philippians

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<sup>527</sup> See the Section, “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

<sup>528</sup> There were two cities not too far apart: Philippi and Philippoupolis. Philippi was on the coast of the Aegean Sea while Philippoupolis was inland about 100 miles almost due North. Both cities were named after Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. Philippoupolis today is named Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

<sup>529</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, Introductory Discourse, 2.

<sup>530</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, IX, v. 19.

2:25); but I wish to learn of your affairs? It is likely that Epaphroditus had remained with Paul a long time because of his bodily weakness. Therefore, Paul said, 'I wish to know your state'. Notice how Paul refers everything to Christ, even the mission of Timothy, saying, 'I hope in the Lord Jesus'; that is, I am confident that God will facilitate this for me that I too may be of good courage, when I know your state. I refreshed you when you heard the things about me which you had prayed for: (1) that the Gospel had advanced, (2) that its enemies were put to shame, (3) that the means by which they thought to injure, rather made me rejoice. Now I want to learn of your affairs, that I too may be of good courage when I know your state. Paul shows that they ought to rejoice for his bonds, and to be compliant in them, for they gave him great pleasure."

Chrysostom also noted<sup>531</sup> exactly what Epaphroditus had dared to do and how much Paul loved and respected him for doing it. Paul had sent Epaphroditus to Philippi because he was really concerned about the Philippians; Epaphroditus returned with alms he collected there. When Epaphroditus returned to Rome, he found Paul in imminent danger. Instead of backing off, Epaphroditus ignored the danger and did what he could to help Paul.

"Paul showed how much he esteemed Epaphroditus, by saying that his preservation was so useful to himself that the mercy which had been shown to Epaphroditus reached him also. When Paul said, 'Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow' (Philippians 2:27), he meant sorrow from the death of Epaphroditus in addition to that which sprung from his sickness. By this Paul showed how much he prized Epaphroditus."

"Why did Paul send Epaphroditus diligently to Philippi? (Philippians 2:28) Paul sent Epaphroditus without procrastination, without delay, with much speed, having asked him to drop everything and to go to Philippi, that Paul might be freed from heaviness. We rejoice not on hearing of the health of those we love, so much as when we see them, and chiefly so when this happens contrary to hope, as it was in the case of Epaphroditus."

"Paul sent Epaphroditus to Philippi the 'more diligently', that when they saw him, they may rejoice, and that Paul may be less sorrowful' (Philippians 2:28). How was Paul 'less sorrowful?' If they rejoice, he too rejoices. Paul didn't say that he would be without sorrow, but 'less sorrowful', to show that his soul never was free from sorrow. He who said, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I don't burn with indignation?' (2 Corinthians 11:29) When could such a person as Paul be free from sorrow? What he means, 'this despondency I now cast off'".

"Epaphroditus had been publicly sent by the city of the Philippians, and had come as minister to Paul, bringing him some contribution. Toward the end of the Epistle Paul shows that Epaphroditus brought him money, 'Having received of Epaphroditus the things sent by you'" (Philippians 4:18).

"It is probable then, that on his arrival at the city of Rome, he found Paul in great and urgent peril, so that those who were accustomed to resort to him were unable safely to do so, but were themselves in peril by hanging around. This tends to happen chiefly in very great dangers, due to the exceeding wrath of

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<sup>531</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, IX, v. 26-29.

kings; when anyone has offended the king, is cast into prison, and is strictly guarded, then even his servants are barred from access. This probably happened to Paul; Epaphroditus, being of a noble nature, despised all danger, that he might go in to Paul, minister to him, and do everything which need required. He therefore sets forth two facts, by which he gains their respect for Epaphroditus; (1) that he was in jeopardy well near death, for Paul's sake; (2) that in so suffering he was representing their city, so that the recompense for his peril would be accounted to those who sent him. It is as if the city had sent him as their ambassador, so that a kind reception of him and approval of what he had done may rather be called a participation in the things that he had dared."

Chrysostom concluded, "Dejection and care<sup>532</sup>, whenever they strain the soul beyond due measure; bereave it of its native force. Therefore, Paul relieves the Philippians, who were in great despondency because they did not know how matters were with Paul. They thought that it was already over with Paul, because of the preaching, and they were grieved because of Epaphroditus' sickness. In giving them assurance on all these points, he introduces the words, 'Finally, my brethren, rejoice' (Philippians 3:1). You no longer have cause for despondency. You have Epaphroditus, for whose sake you were grieved; you have Timothy; I am myself coming to you; the Gospel is gaining ground. What more could you want? Rejoice!"

Cyprian of Carthage pointed out<sup>533</sup> how we lend to God when we have pity on the poor in giving alms. The Philippians did this when they sent alms to Paul by the hand of Epaphroditus.

"Paul, when aided in the necessity of affliction by his brethren, said that good works which are performed are sacrifices to God. 'I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God' (Philippians 4:18). For when one has pity on the poor, he lends to God; and he who gives to the least gives to God — sacrifices spiritually to God an odor of a sweet smell."

John Chrysostom praised<sup>534</sup> the alms given by the Philippians, which was carried to Paul by Epaphroditus, for the great benefit that it had on the Philippians.

"I have often said that almsgiving has been introduced not for the sake of the receivers, but for the sake of the givers, for the givers make the greatest gain. Paul shows this here. The Philippians had sent him some alms, after a long time, and had committed it to Epaphroditus. When Paul is about to send Epaphroditus as the bearer of this Epistle, he praises them, and shows that this action was for the need, not of the receiver, but of the givers. This he does, both that they who gave the gift may not be lifted up with arrogance, and that they may become more zealous in well-doing, since they rather benefit themselves. He also did this that they who receive may not fearlessly rush forward to receive more, lest they meet with condemnation. Because 'it is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35).

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<sup>532</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, X, vv. 1-3.

<sup>533</sup> Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, IV, 33.

<sup>534</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, XV, vv. 10-14.



Chrysostom also noted<sup>535</sup> that with respect to Epaphroditus' illness, even those who guard the baggage share in the victory and often have an equal portion of the spoils.

“Paul, speaking of Epaphroditus, said ‘For the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me’ (Philippians 2:30). In the service of kings, not only those who fight the battle, but also those who guard the baggage, share in the honor. Frequently even these have an equal portion of the spoils, though they have not gotten their hands bloody, nor stood in array, nor even seen the ranks of the enemy. He who relieves the combatant, when wasted with hunger, who stands by him, encouraging him by words, and rendering him every service, he is not inferior to the combatant.”

Chrysostom also stated<sup>536</sup> that there was a purpose that Epaphroditus was sick – as there is a purpose for our sicknesses. If our bodies were not weak, we would ascribe all glory to them and not to God.

“Listen to Paul, saying, ‘lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me’ (2 Corinthians 12:7). But this, you might say, was an expression of humility. Far from it! The thorn was not sent to Paul that he might be humble and he does not say this only out of humility. There are other causes besides to be assigned for it. Observe therefore how God, accounting for it, says, ‘My grace is sufficient for you’; not ‘that you may not be exalted above measure’, but ‘For my strength is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Corinthians 12:9). Two ends therefore were answered at once: what God was doing was clearly revealed, and the whole was ascribed to God. For this cause, Paul said elsewhere, ‘We carry this treasure in earthen vessels’ (2 Corinthians 4:7); that is, in bodies weak and liable to suffering. Why? God set it up this way so that the excellence of the power may be of Him, and not of us! If our bodies were not subject to infirmity, all would be ascribed to our bodies. Elsewhere we see Paul grieving at the infirmity of Epaphroditus, concerning whom he writes, ‘He was sick near unto death, but God had mercy on him’” (Philippians 2:27).

Chrysostom also noted<sup>537</sup> that Paul only wrote Epistles to Timothy and Titus, even though the others – Silas, Luke, and Clement – were good men also. The difference is that Timothy and Titus had already been assigned archdioceses by that time, while Luke and Clement were with Paul in Rome.

“If it should be asked why Paul addresses Epistles to Titus and Timothy alone, though Silas was approved, as also was Luke, for he writes, ‘Only Luke is with me’ (2 Timothy 4:11), and Clement was one of his associates, of whom he says, ‘with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers’ (Philippians 4:3). For what reason then does Paul write only to Titus and Timothy? It is because he had already committed the care of Churches to them, and certain archdioceses had been assigned to them, but the others were traveling with him. So preeminent in

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<sup>535</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, III, vv. 13-18.

<sup>536</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, X, v. 20.

<sup>537</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Timothy, Argument, 2

virtue was Timothy, that his youth was no impediment to his promotion; therefore, Paul writes, ‘Let no one despise your youth’” (1 Timothy 4:12)

### **Paul Wrote to the Philippians**

Philippi was a city in Macedonia that was originally founded by Philip II<sup>538</sup>, king of Macedon, in 356 BC. The city had a long prosperous history due largely to gold mines nearby. The city had a relatively small urban area, with villages surrounding it, but it had a very privileged position due to the wealth coming from the mines. Philippi was located on the Via Egnatia, the main trade route constructed by Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, which connected Italy with Asia Minor. Cities along this trade route (from East to West) are Neapolis (Acts 16:11), Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia (Acts 17:1), Thessalonica and Dyrrhachium on the western coast of Greece.

Paul wrote to the Church in Philippi while he was under house-arrest in Rome and Timothy was still with Paul in Rome at that time (Philippians 1:1). As part of his Epistle to Philippi, he mentioned some of the effects of his 2-year stay in Rome:

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear” (Philippians 1:12-14).

“Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Philippians 4:21-23).

Just as during Paul's captivity in Caesarea for two years, he was now having a major effect on those of the emperor's household. In Caesarea, the result of Paul's speaking was that every ruler in the area pronounced sentence against the Jews and they openly made a show and a parade of it. The evil design and plotting of the Jews were exposed for what it was. The whole thing was so dramatic that everyone wanted to listen to Paul. Paul turned from being the defendant to being the Teacher. He even exhorted King Agrippa to repent! Paul spoke both to the soldiers (the small) and to the rulers (the great). From Paul's words to the Philippians, the same thing was happening in Rome with everyone at Nero's Palace wanting to listen to him.

We note that Paul addressed his Epistle to the Philippians “To all the saints with the Bishops and the Deacons” (Philippians 1:1). Thus, at this time of writing, there was an established clergy in Philippi and several Bishops. Olympas had been there as Bishop earlier and Hermas was probably there at this time. Other Bishops in that area from the ranks of the original Seventy Apostles were: Amplias (Odessos in Macedonia), Andronicus & Junia (Illyricum), Apelles (Heraclea in Thrace), Hermes (Dalmatia), Phlegon (Marathon in Thrace) and Urbanus (Macedonia).

Paul mentioned to the Philippians that he planned to send Timothy to them shortly, “that I also may be encouraged when I know your state; for I have no one like-minded, who will

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<sup>538</sup> Philip II was the father of Alexander the Great.

sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel” (Philippians 2:19-22).

Paul was confident that he would get through this time of “house-arrest” in Rome for their sake. For Paul, to die would be gain (Philippians 1:21); but Paul felt that he still had some things to do with the Philippians.

“For me to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again. Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit. With one mind strive together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God” (Philippians 1:24-28).

There were some heretical ideas that the Philippians were exposed to that Paul needed to warn them about. Prior to the founding of the Church in Philippi, Nicolas of Antioch, one of the first deacons (Acts 6:5), and one of the Seventy, had joined Simon’s heresy. Since Simon taught<sup>539</sup> that only the spirit was resurrected (and that at baptism), it did not matter what one did with the body. The Nicolaitans therefore engaged in grossly immoral practices in keeping with the teachings of Simon<sup>540</sup>, who said that to enter fully into their mysteries, they needed to practice all the worst kinds of wickedness in order to escape the cosmic powers<sup>541</sup>.

The influence of the Nicolaitans and others in Philippi is evident from Paul’s Epistle, where Paul warned the Philippians to beware of the sensuality and depravity of the Nicolaitans and other followers of Simon. Paul said,

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame -- who set their mind on earthly things” (Philippians 3:18-19).

Prior to saying this, Paul had warned the Philippians to beware of those who follow the practices of the Nicolaitans, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit” (Philippians 3:2-3). The term “dog” was used in the Mosaic Law to refer to a Sodomite, where the Law stated:

“There shall be no temple prostitute of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the wages of a prostitute or the price of a dog to the house of the Lord your God for any vowed offering, for both of these *are* an abomination to the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 23:17-18).

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<sup>539</sup> For more details about Simon Magus and his heresies, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

<sup>540</sup> Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1.

<sup>541</sup> Eusebius, Church History, IV, 7.

Paul contrasted the term<sup>542</sup> “mutilation” with the term “circumcision”, again referring to some of the practices of the Nicolaitans and Ebionites that some of the Church Fathers<sup>543</sup> thought were so gross that they were embarrassed to even mention their practices in detail. By saying that the Philippians were the “circumcision who worships God in the Spirit”, Paul was referring to the Mosaic Law. The Law had taught that true worshippers of God were circumcised in heart (Deuteronomy 10:14-17, 30:5-6), and that the flesh was just an outward sign of something greater within.

Paul went on to contrast himself to the Ebionites. While they advocated a return to the Mosaic Law, Paul stated that if anyone should advocate such, it should be Paul himself (Philippians 3:4-6). Even though he was a Pharisee along with his father (Acts 23:6), he found the excellence in Christ to be far greater than anything else.

### **Paul Sent Tychicus to Ephesus and Colossae**

Tychicus, one of the original Seventy Apostles, was native to Asia Minor and was used as a courier by Paul on several occasions. For example:

- In c. 62 AD, Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus<sup>544</sup> (Ephesians 6:21).
- About the same time, Paul sent Tychicus to Colossae (Colossians 4:7).
- In c. 65 AD, Paul sent either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete to fill in for Titus, so that Titus could come to Nicopolis to meet with Paul (Titus 3:12).
- In c. 67 AD, Paul sent Tychicus back to Ephesus again (2 Timothy 4:12).

In his mission to Ephesus in c. 62 AD, Tychicus was probably carrying Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians. He may have also been carrying Paul’s Epistle to Philemon and Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians. As he traveled to Colossae, Onesimus was with him (Colossians 4:7-8).

But Tychicus was more than just a courier. Paul sent him to Colossae “that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts” (Colossians 4:8). Tychicus had the same mission at Ephesus “to comfort your hearts” (Ephesians 6:21). Some theological understanding was needed on the part of Tychicus to do this since Colossae was under attack by a number of heretics<sup>545</sup> who followed the teachings of Simon Magus.

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<sup>542</sup> Jesus had said, “There are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake” (Matthew 19:12). Those who were born eunuchs are the people who are comfortable remaining celibate. Those who were made so by men are the “mutilation”, also known in medieval times as the “Castrati”, or singers who were castrated as a boy to preserve a soprano voice. Those who made themselves eunuchs are the Twelve Apostles and others, who voluntarily gave up the pleasures of the flesh, along with other things of this world.

<sup>543</sup> Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1.

Jerome, Letter to Ctesiphon, CXXXIII, 4.

Jerome, “Dialogue Against the Luciferians”, 23, Treatises, Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 6.

Ignatius, “To the Trallians”, 10-11, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

Roberts and Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”, VI, ii, 8, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7.

<sup>544</sup> Ephesus is in Asia Minor.

<sup>545</sup> See the Section “Paul Wrote to the Colossians”.

In addition to being a teacher and an authority against the heretics, Tychicus was also sent to discern what the needs are in Colossae and at Ephesus (Colossians 4:8). In other words, Tychicus needed to do a lot of listening.

Tychicus' mission was also to convey how Paul was doing (Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7). Paul may have still been wearing chains, but the Gospel was being heard by many, many people. And this is a very comforting thing to know.

### **Paul Probably Wrote to the Hebrews at This Time**

As Paul wrote to the Hebrews, the time was getting much closer to the end for Jerusalem and Judea as they knew it. In just four years, the Roman army would come and methodically annihilate every town in Judea until they finally laid siege to Jerusalem. Things are about to get really, really gruesome in Judea. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews is his final plea for them to repent. There were some in Judea, like the political party of the Zealots, who were incorrigible, and they will be taken to task by the events that unfold. But this Epistle was addressed to those who still had a soft heart, but who may be strongly influenced by the Zealots.

We note the date of the Epistle as being before the advance of the Roman army in 66 AD to destroy Jerusalem, since there is no mention anywhere in the text of Hebrews of these events. Paul stated, "You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4). That was about to change! Yet Paul was writing the Epistle from Italy (Hebrews 13:24), meaning that he wrote it during his time of "house-arrest" in Rome. At the time that Paul wrote, Timothy had just been released from imprisonment with Paul (Hebrews 13:23).

#### **Arguments:**

1. Paul stated that he had received his apostleship and his knowledge of the truth was "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father" (Galatians 1:1). Yet the author of Hebrews ranks himself among those who had received through the medium of others that Gospel "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him" (Hebrews 2:3).
2. In favor of the authorship of St. Paul so far as the ideas and essential argument of the Epistle are concerned, Origen urges the beauty of the thoughts, and there must be some force in this argument, or the Epistle could hardly have been so long and so widely attributed to him. Perhaps it may be summed up in the words of an eminent and now departed divine, "If the Epistle were not written by St. Paul, then we have the remarkable phenomenon that there were two men among the Christians of that age who were capable of writing it."
3. Everyone must be struck with the marked difference in the construction of the Epistle to the Hebrews from any of Paul's Epistles. The omission of his name at the beginning has been more or less satisfactorily accounted for from ancient times, but the reasons for this do not apply to the absence of any sort of salutation, "any heading or introductory thanksgiving," by which St. Paul always takes pains to conciliate his readers, and of which there was especial need if he were writing to Hebrews disposed to prejudice against him.

**Table 10**  
**Opinions Concerning Who Was the Author of Hebrews**

| Author                               | Who Wrote Hebrews?   | Comments                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Tertullian                           | Barnabas             |                           |
| Pantaenus                            | Paul                 | Teacher of Clement A      |
| Clement of Alexandria                | Paul, trans by Luke  |                           |
| Eusebius                             | Paul, trans by Luke  |                           |
| Origen                               | Luke, Clement Rome?? | Didn't really know        |
| Augustine                            | Paul                 | hesitantly                |
| Jerome                               | Paul                 | Expresses Origen's doubts |
| John Chrysostom                      | Paul                 |                           |
| West, before 4 <sup>th</sup> century | ?                    | Hebrews was Not Scripture |
| East, before 4 <sup>th</sup> century | ?                    | Hebrews was Scripture     |
| Reformation-era writers              | Many Opinions        |                           |

4. Another striking feature of difference is that Paul always keeps close to his argument until it is completed, and then adds practical exhortations founded upon it, while in the Epistle to the Hebrews each short division of the argument is separated from that which follows by its appropriate practical application. This indicates quite a different habit of mind, and it is difficult to fancy someone who reasons in such a severely logical manner as Paul thus pausing in the flow of his argument. The style of the Epistle is so markedly different from that of Paul's other Epistles that attention has been drawn to this point from the time of Origen down. The "rounded oratorical periods" of the Epistle to the Hebrews are very unlike the "unstudied, broken, abrupt phraseology" of Paul's other Epistles. This difference might, in part at least, be accounted for as the work of the translator; only in that case, the translator could have been neither St. Luke, whose style is clear and smooth enough, but not at all oratorical, nor Clement, whose style is very unlike the Epistle to the Hebrews.
5. Some parts of the Epistle to the Hebrews favor a Pauline authorship. There is a quotation in Hebrews 10:30, which agrees precisely with the same quotation in Romans 12:19, but differs from either the Hebrew or the Greek of Deuteronomy 32:35. The Greek text for Hebrews and Romans is the same: "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay', says the Lord". Now the LXX reads, "I will repay on the day of vengeance"; the Hebrew reads, "To Me belongs vengeance and retribution". The clause "says the Lord" is not present in the text of Hebrews, but is present in Romans, thus constituting a slight difference between them. It is still true, however, that they both differ in the same way from the Hebrew and the LXX text. This might be a difficulty were it not that the quotation as it is in the Epistle is found exactly in the Targum<sup>546</sup>, and from that had probably passed into familiar use. Everywhere else the author of Hebrews quotes very closely from the LXX, and from that in what is known as its Alexandrine form, while Paul in his other Epistles uses the Vatican form, quotes far more loosely, and often follows the Hebrew rather than the Greek.
6. Some have interpreted the following to be at variance with the Pauline authorship. "Know that *our* brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly" (Hebrews 12:23). The argument goes that the Scripture doesn't say that Timothy was

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<sup>546</sup> The "Targum" or Targumim were spoken paraphrases, explanations or expansions of the Hebrew Scriptures that a Rabbi would give in the language of the people, usually in Aramaic, since most people didn't understand Hebrew.

imprisoned, at Rome or elsewhere, when St. Paul was with him; but as far as we know the history of the two, it seems unlikely. The passage might quite as well have been written by almost any of the companions of St. Paul who were also associated with Timothy. However, this assumes that Hebrews was written relatively late. If Hebrews was written during Paul's house-arrest in Rome, Timothy was with him for most of that time (Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, Philemon 1:1) and could easily have been detained under house-arrest also.

### **Paul Refers to the Heretics in Israel**

Paul began by reviewing events from the history of Israel as a nation and how heretics of the past never got away with anything.

“Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (Hebrews 2:1-4)

Paul then says that similar rebellion is going on in their midst and that those who are involved with it will not enter His rest.

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, “They always go astray in *their* heart, and they have not known My ways”. So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest”’ (Hebrews 3:7-11)

“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the Gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it” (Hebrews 4:1-2)

The Hebrews Christians that Paul was writing to have some problems, and more problems are coming when the Roman army arrives.

“We have much to say to you, and this is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:11-14).

### **The Murder of James the Lord's Brother in Jerusalem**

James, the Lord's brother, the Bishop of Jerusalem, had been skillfully guiding the Hebrew Christians toward godliness in spite of the plotting of the Zealots and the Sanhedrin.

However, James was assassinated in c. 62 AD, just about the time that Paul was drafting the Epistle to the Hebrews. Eusebius of Caesarea stated that the assassination of James was the last straw; after that, the Romans came and destroyed everything. This is detailed as follows.

Eusebius, the 4th Century church historian, wrote<sup>547</sup> a brief history about the life of James. In this history, he quoted from documents that are now either lost or which exist only in fragments.

“Then James, whom the ancients surnamed ‘The Just’ on account of the excellence of his virtue, is recorded to have been the first to be made Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem. This James was called the brother of the Lord because he was known as a son of Joseph. But Clement in the sixth book of his *Hypotyposes*<sup>548</sup> writes thus: ‘For they say that Peter, James and John after the Ascension of our Savior, as if also preferred by our Lord, did not strive after honor, but chose James the Just Bishop of Jerusalem’. But the same writer, in the seventh book of the same work, relates also the following things concerning him. ‘The Lord, after his resurrection, imparted knowledge to James the Just and to John and Peter, and they imparted it to the rest of the Apostles, and the rest of the Apostles to the Seventy, of whom Barnabas was one.’ Paul also makes mention of the same James the Just, where he writes, ‘Other of the apostles saw I none, except James the Lord’s brother’” (Galatians 1:19).

Eusebius also went into great detail about the martyrdom of James. Particularly impressive about James’ conduct was his unbending adherence to the truth, even under strong public pressure to do otherwise.

“After Paul had been sent to Rome by Festus, the Jews, being frustrated in their hope of entrapping him by the snares which they had laid for him, turned against James, the brother of the Lord, to whom the Episcopal seat at Jerusalem had been entrusted by the Apostles. Leading him into their midst they demanded of him that he should renounce faith in Christ in the presence of all the people. But, contrary to the opinion of all, with a clear voice, and with greater boldness than they had anticipated, he spoke out before the whole multitude and confessed that our Savior and Lord Jesus is the Son of God. They were unable to bear any longer the testimony of the man who, on account of the excellence of ascetic virtue, and of piety which he exhibited in his life, was esteemed by all as the most just of men, and consequently they slew him. Opportunity for this deed of violence was furnished by the prevailing anarchy, which was caused by the fact that Festus had died just at this time in Judea, and that the province was thus without a governor. The manner of James’ death has been already indicated by the above-quoted words of Clement, who records that he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, and was beaten to death with a club.

Eusebius quoted Hegesippus in a more detailed account of the martyrdom of James, where he said that Hegesippus agrees with Clement. Hegesippus, who lived immediately after

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<sup>547</sup> Eusebius, *Church History*, II, i. 2-4.

<sup>548</sup> Clement was a late 1st Century Bishop of Rome. His *Hypotyposes* (or *Outlines*) exists today only in scattered fragments.



the apostles, “gives<sup>549</sup> the most accurate account in the fifth book of his Memoirs”. He writes as follows:

“James, the brother of the Lord, succeeded to the government of the Church in conjunction with the Apostles. He has been called the Just by all from the time of our Savior to the present day; for there were many that bore the name of James. He was holy from his mother’s womb; he drank neither wine nor strong drink; and he did not eat meat. No razor came upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil, and he did not use the bath. He alone was permitted to enter into the holy place; for he wore not woolen but linen garments. He was in the habit of entering alone into the temple, and was frequently found on his knees begging forgiveness for the people. His knees became hard like those of a camel, in consequence of his constantly bending them in his worship of God, and asking forgiveness for the people. Because of his exceeding great justice, he was called the Just, and Oblias, which signifies in Greek, *Justice*, in accordance with what the prophets declare concerning him.”

Hegesippus was quoting from Isaiah, and applied to James the Lord’s brother the following: “Wherefore now their glory has been brought low, and the shame of their countenance has withstood them, and they have proclaimed their sin as Sodom, and made it clear. Woes to their soul, for they have devised an evil counsel against themselves, saying against themselves, ‘Let us bind the just, for he is burdensome to us’. Therefore, shall they eat the fruits of their works. Woe to the transgressor! Evils shall happen to him according to the works of his hands” (Isaiah 3:9-11).

Eusebius continued to say that as many as believed (among the Jews) did so on account of James. Therefore, when many of the rulers (i.e. the Sanhedrin) believed (Acts 15:5), there was a commotion among the Jews, Scribes and Pharisees, who said that there was danger that the whole people would be looking for Jesus as the Christ.

“Coming therefore in a body to James they said, ‘We entreat you, restrain the people; for they are gone astray in regard to Jesus, as if he were the Christ. We entreat you to persuade all that have come to the feast of the Passover concerning Jesus; for we all have confidence in you. We bear you witness, as do all the people, that you are just, and do not respect persons (Matthew 22:16). Do therefore persuade the multitude not to be led astray concerning Jesus. The whole people and all of us also, have confidence in you. Stand therefore on the pinnacle of the temple (Matthew 4:5), that from that high position you may be clearly seen, and that your words may be readily heard by all the people. All the tribes, with the Gentiles also, are come together on account of the Passover”.

“These Scribes and Pharisees therefore placed James on the pinnacle of the temple, cried out to him and said. ‘O just one, in whom we ought all to have confidence, forasmuch as the people are led astray after Jesus, the Crucified One, declare to us, what is the gate of Jesus’ (John 10:1-9). He answered with a loud voice, ‘Why do you ask me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man? He Himself sits in heaven at the Right Hand of the great Power, and is about to come on the clouds of heaven’ (Matthew 26:64, Mark 14:62). When many were fully convinced and

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<sup>549</sup> These works of Hegesippus are lost; most of what we know about them comes from Eusebius’ quotes.

gloried in the testimony of James, and said, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' these same Scribes and Pharisees said again to one another, 'We have done badly in supplying such testimony to Jesus. Let us go up and throw him down, in order that they may be afraid to believe him'".

"They cried out, saying, 'Oh! The just man is also in error'. And they fulfilled the Scripture written in Isaiah, let us take away the just man, because he is troublesome to us; therefore, they shall eat the fruit of their doings' (Isaiah 3:10 LXX). So, they went up and threw down the just man, and said to each other, 'Let us stone James the Just'. And they began to stone him, for he was not killed by the fall; but he turned, knelt down and said, 'I entreat you, Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). And while they were thus stoning him one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the prophet, (Jeremiah 35) cried out, saying, 'Stop; what are you doing? The just one prays for you'. One of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat out clothes and struck the just man on the head. Thus, he suffered martyrdom. They buried him on the spot, by the temple, and his monument still remains by the temple. He became a true witness; both to Jews and Greeks that Jesus is the Christ. And immediately<sup>550</sup> Vespasian besieged them."

### **The Mosaic Law Sacrifices Continue in Jerusalem, but the Saints Are Struggling**

We note from the text of Paul's Epistle that the sacrificial offerings in Jerusalem are continuing as they had been for the previous 1000 years. This confirms the date for the Epistle as being just before the destruction of Jerusalem.

"For such a High Priest (as Jesus) was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:26-27).

"The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience -- *concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:8-10).

"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Hebrews 10:1-4).

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<sup>550</sup> James was martyred in c. 62 AD, and Vespasian began the siege of Jerusalem in c. 66 AD.

Yet the Christians in Jerusalem were suffering. This began with the treatment of the Apostles by the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:40-42; 12:1-3), and had continued at the time Paul wrote. The normal mode of operation was the raiding of houses where Christians lived. The Christians would be hauled off to prison and their property would be confiscated. This led to the impoverishment of the Jerusalem Church; Paul took up collections for the brethren in Judea on at least two occasions (Acts 11:27-30; See Acts 24:17, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Of this persecution, part was brought on because the Hebrew Christians had compassion on Paul when he was imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 21:26-26:32); Paul said,

“Recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise” (Hebrews 10:32-36)

### **Paul Wrote to the Ephesians**

Ephesus<sup>551</sup> was an ancient Greek city on the coast of Ionia. It was built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC on the site of the former Arzawan capital by Attic and Ionian Greek colonists. During the Classical Greek era it was one of the twelve cities of the Ionian League. The city flourished after it came under the control of the Roman Republic in 129 BC. According to estimates Ephesus had a population of 33,600 to 56,000 people in the Roman period, making it the third largest city of Roman Asia Minor after Sardis and Alexandria Troas.

The city was famed for the Temple of Artemis (completed around 550 BC), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. In 268 AD, the Temple was destroyed or damaged in a raid by the Goths. It may have been rebuilt or repaired but this is uncertain, as its later history is not clear. Emperor Constantine I rebuilt much of the city and erected new public baths. What remained of the temple was destroyed in 401 AD.

Paul had spoken to the presbyters and Bishops of the Ephesus area at the end of his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, warning them that savage wolves would arise from within their midst.

“Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:28-32).

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<sup>551</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus>

Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians in the early 60's AD from the rented house where he was staying in Rome under house-arrest (Acts 28:16, 30-31), and this Epistle may have been meant to be circulated among several other Churches. The "savage wolves" had not become prominent in Ephesus yet. In this Epistle Paul did not include specific details about the heresies that he mentioned in other Epistles. He did give some general warnings:

- Referring generally to the followers of Simon Magus. Paul wrote, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6).
- And Paul described the general characteristics of the followers of Simon "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Ephesians 5:3-5).
- And Paul referred to the general practices of the followers of Simon, "It is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret (Ephesians 5:12). But Paul didn't say that the Ephesians had run headlong into the followers of Simon Magus yet. This situation would change five years later.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians in very glowing terms concerning the Kingdom of God (Ephesians 1:15-2:10), perhaps more so than Paul's other Epistles. The Christians in Ephesus and vicinity were probably in pretty good shape, but a little warning about the problems that others were experiencing is always helpful. A few years later when Paul wrote to Timothy, Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, and serious matters had developed in Ephesus. This will be covered later in the Section titled "Paul Wrote to Timothy Again"

### **The 5<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey – After Release from House-Arrest**

Below is a list of eight places Paul visited after his house-arrest in Rome, which ended in c. 62 AD. If Paul was finally martyred in Rome in 67 AD after a short imprisonment, this leaves about four years of travel after his release in c. 62 AD. We don't have much information as to what sequence this travel occurred, but there are some hints. Table 11 lists these places.

**Table 11**  
**Places Paul Visited after Release from House-Arrest**

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Spain   | Crete (Titus 1:5)         |
| Asia (Ephesus 1 Timothy 1:3)                    | Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3) |
| Troas (2 Timothy 4:13)                          | Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20)  |
| Corinth, Nicopolis (2 Timothy 4:20, Titus 3:12) | Rome                      |

## Paul Visits Spain

Paul had been meaning to visit Spain at least since 55 AD (Romans 15:24). At that time, Paul said,

“Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you (Rome) to Spain” (Romans 15:28)

Paul didn't mention anything about going to Spain or having been to Spain in his writings after his release in c. 62 AD. But most agree that he probably went there. Therefore, we might conclude that he went there first after his release from house-arrest. Luke most likely went with Paul along with Aristarchus. Both were of the Seventy and were with Paul toward the end of his house-arrest in Rome (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24), but they were the only ones<sup>552</sup> still with Paul just before Paul was executed (2 Timothy 4:11).

Spain had been evangelized<sup>553</sup> by James the son of Zebedee shortly after Pentecost 30 AD. This James is the one who had just returned from Spain when he was beheaded by Herod to please the Jews (Acts 12:1-3). The body of James was returned<sup>554</sup> to Spain and buried there with great honor. According to tradition, Mary the wife of Cleopas went<sup>555</sup> with James to Spain to help out and was also buried there.

## Paul Visited Titus on Crete

Paul had left Titus on Crete as a Bishop (Titus 1:5-7). Later Paul asked Titus to come to him in Nicopolis in Greece, and possibly not directly from Crete (Titus 3:12).

When Paul went to Macedonia, he left Timothy in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3) and Timothy was still there when Paul summoned him to Rome just before his (Paul's) martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:21). Thus, Paul went to Ephesus before going to Nicopolis on the West Coast of Greece.

Paul also mentioned that he left Trophimus in Miletus (near Ephesus) to recover from some illness. The implication is that Trophimus may not be better yet, which implies that Paul had been there recently, perhaps the last place he visited. Paul also went to Troas (2 Timothy 4:13) and Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20). The Figure 6 shows a possible route for Paul's fifth journey taking these things into account.

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<sup>552</sup> Aristarchus was beheaded at the same time as Paul in 67 AD. See The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 14.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15, September 27. <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 15, September 27

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>553</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 30.

Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 73-77. This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Moscow, Synodal Press, 1908, v. 8, (April) pp. 473-477.

<sup>554</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 30.

<sup>555</sup>

John Chrysostom stated<sup>556</sup> that Paul was released from captivity in Rome following his house arrest in Rome, but this happened after Luke closed his account in the Book of Acts. Paul then went to Spain, among other places, and was later brought to Rome a second time, where he ended his life. The rest of Paul's journeys were like those recorded in Acts: chains, tortures, fighting, prison, etc.

“Of Paul's affairs after the two years in Rome, what shall we say? The writer (Luke) leaves the reader thirsty for more; heathen authors do the same in their writings, for to know everything makes the reader dull and jaded. Notice the order of God's Providence, 'I also have been much hindered from coming to you'. And also 'having a great desire these many years to come to you' (Romans 15:22-23). But Paul fed them with hope. 'Whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you', and 'I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while' (Romans 15:24). Of this he says, 'I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ' (Romans 15:29). Paul had said, 'now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints' (Romans 15:25); this is the same that he has said here, 'after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation' (Acts 24:17). Notice how Paul did not foresee everything? Rome received him bound coming up from the sea, saved from a shipwreck — and Rome was saved from the shipwreck of error. Like an emperor that has fought a naval battle and overcome, he entered into that most imperial city. He was closer now to his crown. Rome received him bound, and saw him crowned and proclaimed conqueror. There he had said, 'I may enjoy your *company* for a while' (Romans 15:24); but this was the beginning of a course once more, and he added trophies to trophies, a man not to be overcome. Corinth kept him two years, and Asia three, and Rome two for this time. A second time Paul again entered Rome, when he was martyred (that is, in c. 67 AD). Thus, he escaped this time, and having filled the whole world, he so brought his life to a close. Why do we wish to learn what happened after these two years? Those years too are such as these: bonds, tortures, fighting, imprisonments, lying in wait, false accusations, and death, day by day. We have seen a small part of it! However much we have seen, such is Paul for all the rest. As in the case of the sky, if we have seen one part of it, go wherever we will and we shall see it such as this. As it is with the sun, though we have seen its rays but in part, we may conjecture the rest; so is it with Paul. His Acts we have seen in part; such are they all throughout, teeming with dangers.”

### **Jason and Sosipater Evangelize Corfu after Paul's Release**

When Paul wrote Romans in the middle of his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, he was staying in Corinth. With him in Corinth were Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (Romans 16:21), all members of the original Seventy and now doing Apostolic work with Paul.

Jason and Sosipater later teamed up as Apostles and began to evangelize<sup>557</sup> the Island of Corfu (West coast of Greece) in c. 63 AD just after Paul was released from house-arrest in

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<sup>556</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, Recapitulation.

<sup>557</sup> <http://oca.org/FSLives.asp>, April 28, January 4

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.

Rome. At first, they had great difficulty from the governor of the island, who even executed his own daughter and a number of others just because they had become Christians. This governor soon died in a shipwreck as he was pursuing other Christians to a neighboring island. The governor succeeding him gave orders to throw the Apostles Jason and Sosipater into a cauldron of boiling tar. When he beheld them unharmed, he cried out with tears, ‘O God of Jason and Sosipater have mercy on me!’

**Figure 6**  
**Approximate Route of Paul’s 5<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>558</sup>**



Probable Sequence:

|                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Rome               | 2. Spain                   |
| 3. Crete              | 4. Ephesus, Miletus, Troas |
| 5. Corinth, Nicopolis | 6. Rome (for execution)    |

Having been set free, the Apostles baptized the governor and gave him the name Sebastian. With his help, the Apostles Jason and Sosipater built several churches on the island, and increased the flock of Christ by their fervent preaching. They lived there until they reached old age.

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The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 29.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>558</sup> [http://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map\\_new\\_testament\\_world.html](http://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map_new_testament_world.html).

## Paul Wrote to Timothy the First Time

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he had already been released from house-arrest in Rome. Paul doesn't say where he was when he wrote, but he planned to come to Ephesus soon.

“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

Members of the Seventy who worked with Paul during this fifth journey are shown in Table 12 including the reference to them in the Scripture.

**Table 12**  
**Those of the Seventy Working with Paul on the 5<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey**

| Member of Seventy      | Native To    | Journey       | Later Bishop of        | Comments                        |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Aquila & Priscilla     | Pontus       | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Ephesus before Timothy | Acts 18:18-19, 2 Timothy 4:19   |
| Aristarchus            | Thessalonica | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Apamea                 | Beheaded with Paul              |
| Carpus                 |              | 2, 3, 5       | Berea, Troas           | 2 Timothy 4:13                  |
| Crescens               |              | 5             | Carthage, Galatia      | 2 Timothy 4:10                  |
| Demas                  |              | 3, 4, 5       | Priest for idols       | Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:10 |
| Dionysius              | Athens       | 2, 3, 5       | Athens                 |                                 |
| Erastus                |              | 3, 5          | Expert at finances     | 2 Timothy 4:20                  |
| Epaphras               |              | 3, 4, 5       | Colossae area          | Colossians 1:7, 4:12            |
| Herodion               | Tarsus       | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Neoparthis, Patras     | Martyred with Paul              |
| Linus                  |              | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Rome                   | 2 Timothy 4:21                  |
| Luke                   | Antioch      | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Roving Apostle         | 2 Timothy 4:11                  |
| Mark, Barnabas' Cousin | Cyprus       | 4, 5          | Appolonia              | 2 Timothy 4:11                  |
| Olympas                |              | 5             | --                     | Beheaded with Paul              |
| Onesiphorus            | Iconium      | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Colophon near Ephesus  | 2 Timothy 4:19                  |
| Pudens                 |              | 5             | Martyred with Paul     | 2 Timothy 4:21                  |
| Timothy                | Lystra       | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Ephesus                |                                 |
| Titus                  | Crete        | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Crete                  | 2 Timothy 4:10                  |
| Trophimus              |              | 3, 5          | --                     | 2 Timothy 4:20                  |
| Tychicus               | Asia Minor   | 3, 4, 5       | Caesarea               | 2 Timothy 4:13                  |

When Paul wrote to Timothy the first time, Timothy had already been serving as the Bishop of Ephesus. Paul states,

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).



When Paul said that he went into Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3), he was referring to the time after he was released from house-arrest in Rome. Timothy had already been in Ephesus and Paul asked him to remain there – rather than travel with him, as Timothy was accustomed to do.

**Table 13**  
**Chronology of Paul’s Missionary Journeys**

| Journey  | Acts References | Dates | Cities Visited  |
|----------|-----------------|-------|---|
|          |                 | [AD]  |   |
| <b>1</b> | 13:1-14:28      | 46-48 | Cyprus, Perga, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Lycaonia   |
|          | 15:1-35         | 48    | Council in Jerusalem  |
| <b>2</b> | 15:36-18:22     | 49-52 | Syria, Celicia, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Mysia, Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth (1 ½ years), Ephesus, Caesarea  |
| <b>3</b> | 18:23-21:17     | 53-57 | Galatia (Derbe, Lystra, Iconium), Phrygia, Antioch of Pisidia, Ephesus (2 years), Macedonia (Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea), Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, Miletus, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea |
|          | 21:18-26:32     | 57-59 | Jerusalem arrest, Caesarea  |
| <b>4</b> | 27:1-28:15      | 59-60 | Sidon, Myra, Fair Havens (Crete), Malta, Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Appii Forum, Three Inns, Rome  |
|          | 28:16-31        | 61-62 | Rome, under house-arrest  |
| <b>5</b> | After Acts 28   | 63-67 | Rome, Spain, Crete (Titus 1:5), Asia (Ephesus 1 Timothy 1:3), Macedonia (Nicopolis Titus 3:12), Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20), Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20), Rome  |

Timothy had a very important mission in Ephesus and the cities nearby. The Apostle John was probably now in the area of Asia Minor, and he had not yet been exiled to Patmos (Revelation 1:9). Timothy’s mission was more local; John’s mission was more global.

“These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership” (1 Timothy 4:11-14).

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge -- by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you” (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

One of the difficulties that Timothy faced was teachers who wanted everyone to return to a strict keeping of the Mosaic Law. On the surface, this may have appeared to be what Paul himself did<sup>559</sup> when he was in Ephesus.

“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. But we know that the Law *is* good if one uses it lawfully; knowing this: that the Law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers” (1 Timothy 1:5-9).

Two local heretics that Paul had to deal with were Hymenaeus and Alexander, where Paul had to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh in the hope that they may be saved later (1 Corinthians 5:5). Alexander responded by betraying Paul to the Roman authorities, which led to Paul’s death (2 Timothy 4:14-15). We will cover more on this under the Section “Paul Wrote to Timothy Again”.

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Timothy 1:18-20).

We can see the methods used by the heretics in Ephesus by the words of instruction Paul gave to Timothy. They embraced doctrines of demons, forbid to marry<sup>560</sup>, and abstained from certain foods<sup>561</sup>. Each of these things they did may have an appearance of godliness and may look like what the Apostles did, but it was twisted. Of this Paul said,

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. Every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer<sup>562</sup>. If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed” (1 Timothy 4:1-6).

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<sup>559</sup> For example, see the Section titled: “Paul Takes a Vow”, where Paul was very diligent in keeping the Mosaic Law, especially in his visits to Ephesus.

<sup>560</sup> All the Apostles lived a celibate life after Pentecost. When Jesus said that the Apostles had left their wives and children (Matthew 19:29), this did not mean that they abandoned their families. They just lived as brother and sister, and their family traveled with them wherever they went. The heretics twisted the practice of the Apostles into a legalistic approach.

<sup>561</sup> All the Apostles lived a life of prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21), sometimes going a few days without eating anything. The fasting, which resulted in bodily discipline, was twisted by the heretics into a fleshly legalism.

<sup>562</sup> The food being “sanctified by the word of God and with prayer” refers to the practice of prayers before meals.

Timothy's practice of prayer and fasting was evidently fairly rigorous and resulted in some stomach problems, perhaps due to brackish water supplies. Therefore, Paul asked him to back off a little and drink a little table wine.

“No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities” (1 Timothy 5:23).

Having settled the case between Philemon (the master) and Onesimus (the slave), Paul asked Timothy to do the same thing<sup>563</sup> in Ephesus. The issue between Philemon and Onesimus was that both were members of the Church, and Paul wanted to be sure that they both respected each other as such so that the Name of God was not blasphemed. Paul said:

“Let as many slaves as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:1-6).

“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

From these excerpts, we can see that Timothy had a battle on his hands, and that there were now some of the wolves in Ephesus that Paul had warned them about (Acts 20:29-30) at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey six years ago.

Hippolytus referred to Phygellus as the Bishop of Ephesus<sup>564</sup>, yet this is not recorded in any of Paul's letters. Since Phygellus had already apostatized before Paul was beheaded, Phygellus' time as Bishop of Ephesus must have been short-lived. When Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 56-58 AD), only the idolaters were prominent in Ephesus<sup>565</sup>, not the heretics; similarly when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians<sup>566</sup> (c. 62 AD). When Paul wrote his first

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<sup>563</sup> For more details about Philemon and Onesimus, see the Section titled: “Paul Met Onesimus in Rome” and “Paul Wrote to Philemon in Colossae”.

<sup>564</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>565</sup> See the sections titled:

“Paul's Return to Ephesus”

“The Jewish Exorcists and the Magicians”

“The Controversy over the Temple of Diana”

“The Widespread Renown of the Apostle Paul”

“The Riot over the Temple of Diana”

“Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus”

<sup>566</sup> At this time Paul warned the Ephesians about the heresies of the followers of Simon Magus. Earlier Paul had warned the Ephesians that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29 ).

Epistle to Timothy<sup>567</sup> (c. 64 AD), Paul asked Timothy to remain in Ephesus as Bishop, probably to counteract the teachings of Phygellus<sup>568</sup> who was Bishop there, and Hermogenes, another original member of the Seventy who had also apostatized. Paul stated,

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach<sup>569</sup> no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

This was a formidable task for Timothy, since Phygellus and Hermogenes were members of the original Seventy Apostles, but Timothy was not; besides, Timothy was probably much younger. Timothy’s task was something akin to coming to Ephesus and defrocking two archbishops (using today’s terminology). Siding with Phygellus and against Timothy and Paul were Hermogenes<sup>570</sup>, Alexander, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Alexander and Hymenaeus were so bad that Paul felt it necessary to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh in hope that they might be saved (1 Timothy 1:20). Paul stated to Timothy very strongly that he (Timothy) was involved in warfare against these heretics

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18).

Paul quoted Hymenaeus and Philetus as “straying concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:18). Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

Helping Timothy out in Ephesus<sup>571</sup> were Aquila and Priscilla, who were both well-versed in the Scriptures, and who Paul had earlier left in Ephesus after his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey to teach the Church<sup>572</sup>.

Tertullian lumped together<sup>573</sup> Hymenaeus, Philetus, Hermogenes and Phygellus in speaking of those who deserted Paul and the things of God, and he compared them to Judas Iscariot.

“The Scripture says, ‘Your eyes are upon the ways of the children of men’ (Jeremiah 32:19 LXX). ‘Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart’ (1 Samuel 16:7 LXX). ‘The Lord knows those who are His’ (2

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<sup>567</sup> Phygellus was apparently one of these wolves, and he appears to have been Bishop of Ephesus at this time.

<sup>568</sup> Phygellus was probably in league with Hermogenes, another member of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized also. Alexander and Philetus, who were not Apostles, helped Phygellus also.

<sup>569</sup> Those charged with “teaching” were usually the Bishops.

<sup>570</sup> Hermogenes was also one of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized.

<sup>571</sup> We can see that Aquila and Priscilla were in Ephesus at this time because they were not in Rome in 62 AD (Colossians 4:7-18) when Paul was under house-arrest there, and they were in Ephesus in c. 66 AD working with Timothy (2 Timothy 4:19) in his battle against Phygellus and Hermogenes of the Seventy Apostles who had apostatized.

<sup>572</sup> For more details about Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, see the section titled: “Paul Leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Charge in Ephesus”.

<sup>573</sup> Tertullian, The Prescription Against Heretics, II, I, 3.

Timothy 2:19); and ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted’ (Matthew 15:13); and ‘So the last will be first, and the first last’ (Matthew 20:16); and He carries ‘His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor’ (Matthew 3:12). Let the chaff of a fickle faith fly off as much as it will at every blast of temptation, all the purer will be that heap of grain which shall be laid up in the granary of the Lord. Did not certain of the disciples turn back from the Lord Himself, when they were offended? Yet the rest did not therefore think that they must turn away from following Him, but because they knew that He was the Word of Life, and had come from God, they continued in His company to the very last, after He had gently inquired of them whether they also would go away (John 6:66-67). It is a comparatively small thing, that certain men, like Phygellus, Hermogenes, Philetus, and Hymenaeus, deserted Paul (2 Timothy 1:15, 2:17; 1 Timothy 1:20); the betrayer of Christ was himself one of the apostles. We are surprised at seeing His churches forsaken by some men, although the things which we suffer after the example of Christ Himself, show us to be Christians. ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us’” (1 John 2:19).

### **Paul Wrote to Titus**

When Paul wrote to Titus, he was Bishop of Crete, and had been so for a while. Paul planned on sending Titus some help in the coming months, and he wanted Titus to join him in Nicopolis<sup>574</sup> soon. Artemas or Tychicus may have been intended to fill in for Titus while he went to Nicopolis to meet Paul, since they didn’t stay on Crete.

“To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. For this reason I left you on Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you” (Titus 1:4-5).

“When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing” (Titus 3:12-13).

The problems that Titus was having on Crete were not nearly as severe as the problems that Timothy was having in Ephesus. Just like in Ephesus, there were those of the circumcision who wanted to return to a strict keeping of the Mosaic Law in a fleshly way.

“For there are many insubordinates, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain” (Titus 1:10-11).

We note that Paul sent two Apostles to help out on Crete with questions over the Mosaic Law: Zenas the lawyer and Apollos. Zenas was an expert on the Mosaic Law, not civil law; Apollos was very good at showing from the (Old Testament) Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ

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<sup>574</sup> Nicopolis is on the West Coast of Greece.

(Acts 18:24-28). Apollos by himself had a tremendous impact in Corinth; combined with Zenas, these two Apostles had to have had the effect of “stopping the mouths of the circumcision” (Titus 1:11).

Titus’ main job on Crete was to appoint presbyters (i.e. priests) in every city. Paul reviewed for Titus some of the things to look for in candidates for presbyter.

“For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you -- if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination” (Titus 1:5-6).

Titus’ job as the Bishop, was not as being one of the boys as their good buddy. His job was to be a good example for everyone to follow.

“For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict” (Titus 1:7-9).

Titus was encouraged by Paul to seek to inspire everyone to maintain good works. This is part of being “fruitful”. Those who just talk the talk, but don’t walk the walk are unprofitable, useless, warped and sinning.

“The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you” (Titus 2:11-15).

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned” (Titus 3:8-11).

“And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful” (Titus 3:14).

## **The Apostle Paul’s Preparation for His Own Death**

During the years after Paul was released from house-arrest (c. 62 AD), but before he was beheaded in c. 67 AD, he seems to be preparing for his own death that was to occur soon. During this time, he sent a number of the Seventy on various missions that were more permanent in nature than these missions had been before. In the following pages, we will go into detail about these missions. During this time when Paul was in prison, Linus was still Bishop of Rome, but he was about to be martyred soon also and will be replaced by Clement of Rome. Clement was more immune to persecution than others, since he was a blood-relative of the emperors.

## Paul Wrote to Timothy Again

When Paul wrote to Timothy the second time, he was back in Rome and in prison, not just in house-arrest, and he is chained up in prison. Paul's tone is now more urgent, and he gives Timothy some final instructions. Onesiphorus (of the Seventy) was now in Rome with Paul.

“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. This you know, that all those in Asia<sup>575</sup> have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes<sup>576</sup>. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day -- and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me* at Ephesus” (2 Timothy 1:13-18).

One of the things that Paul especially asked Timothy to do was to commit to faithful men the things he had heard from Paul such that they can teach others and pass on the Faith to others after them. This was very important, since the band of heretics could easily silence Timothy by murdering him.

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:1-3).

“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:8-10).

As Paul's martyrdom was approaching, many heretics were rising up to pervert the Truth, just as Paul had warned about almost ten years earlier (Acts 20:29-31).

“But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past<sup>577</sup>; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:16-18).

“Demas<sup>578</sup> has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica” (2 Timothy 4:10).

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<sup>575</sup> That is, Asia Minor, where Ephesus is one of the cities of Asia Minor. Phygellus, Hermogenes, Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander had evidently been very effective in their war against Timothy and the Church.

<sup>576</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5 stated that Phygellus and Hermogenes had been two of the Seventy Apostles, but they apostatized to follow the teachings of Simon Magus. They were subsequently deleted from the Seventy and replaced with others.

<sup>577</sup> Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

<sup>578</sup> Demas was one of the original Seventy Apostles, and he had traveled with Paul extensively. Demas was with Paul as Paul drafted his Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24).

“Alexander the coppersmith<sup>579</sup> did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words” (2 Timothy 4:14-15).

Paul began his final words to Timothy by reminding him that this will be a long struggle against an array of the forces of evil. Yet we do not have a spirit of fear but of power, of love and of a sound mind<sup>580</sup>. We do not need to be ashamed of the testimony<sup>581</sup> of the Lord, or of Paul’s imprisonment, but Timothy can share in Paul’s sufferings. Paul was suffering because he had faithfully followed the leading of the Holy Spirit.

“I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason, I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Timothy 1:3-12).

Paul stated that “all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (2 Timothy 1:15); these were two of the original Seventy Apostles, along with Demas (2 Timothy 4:10), where Demas had been traveling with Paul until just recently (Philemon 1:24, Colossians 4:14). It is interesting that these three members of the original Seventy Apostles all apostatized at about the same time, but in different places, during the persecutions of Nero.

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However, Demas began following the teachings of Simon Magus shortly afterward, and within 5 years, Paul stated that Demas “had forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, v. 5 states that Demas became “a priest of idols”.

<sup>579</sup> Alexander was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who helped to carry Jesus’ Cross (Mark 15:21). Together with his father and brother Rufus, who was one of the Seventy, Alexander helped to found the Church in Antioch (Acts 11:20). By the mid 60’s AD, Alexander had become a follower of Simon Magus, and Paul delivered him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh on account of his blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:20). A year or two later, Alexander was instrumental in affecting Paul’s martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:14-15). Regarding delivering him over to Satan, Compare 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. The intent was the eventual salvation of the individual through a greater recognition of whom it is that he’s in league with.

<sup>580</sup> By contrast, those heretics who are resisting Timothy do not have a sound mind.

<sup>581</sup> Greek: *marturion*, from which we get the English word “martyr”



By contrast, Onesiphorus, another of the original Seventy Apostles, was not ashamed of Paul's imprisonment, but diligently sought him out in Rome. This may have been difficult if Paul was moved from one prison to another without any notice. For Onesiphorus, this was doubly hazardous since he had a wife and some children to be concerned about<sup>582</sup>. Onesiphorus must have stayed in Rome with Paul only briefly, since he was back in Ephesus with Timothy and with his family when Paul wrote this Epistle (2 Timothy 4:19). Onesiphorus' mission may have been to find out what Paul needed and how he could help. Paul said:

“The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day -- and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me* at Ephesus” (2 Timothy 1:16-18).

Paul's message to Timothy takes on a more urgent tone in his second Epistle since Paul realized that the time for his execution is approaching (2 Timothy 4:6-7). Besides giving Timothy written instructions, Paul also asked Timothy to come from Ephesus to Rome quickly before he gets beheaded (2 Timothy 4:9). Paul's instructions were:

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also, if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules” (2 Timothy 2:1-5).

“This is a faithful saying: For if we died with *Him*, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with *Him*. If we deny *Him*, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers” (2 Timothy 2:11-14).

In describing the heretics, Paul makes a very clear analogy to Simon Magus and those associated with him. Paul referred to Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians who resisted Moses in Egypt, saying that the heretics are just like them. In Egypt, the “magicians” were the sacred scribes or priests who were very skilled in the hidden or secret arts. Simon Magus and some of his followers learned these secret arts in Egypt in the early days of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and they were masters of these secret arts during the time of the Apostle Paul. Paul said:

“Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was” (2 Timothy 3:8-9).

The folly of Jannes and Jambres was clear to everyone after the disaster for Egypt at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:22-28). Egypt lost its entire army, which Josephus described<sup>583</sup> as comprising 600 select chariots, 50,000 cavalry and 200,000-foot soldiers. This left Egypt as a

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<sup>582</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 24.

<sup>583</sup> Josephus, Antiquities, II, xv, 3

nation almost defenseless and at the mercy of other nations; they could easily be conquered and made slaves themselves. Jannes and Jambres saw this coming! When they could not duplicate the third of the ten plagues with their secret arts, they admitted to Pharaoh that “This was the finger of God” (Exodus 8:19). But because they had a corrupt mind, they were unwilling to act on this observation.

As a magician, Simon was very much like Jannes and Jambres. Just as Jannes and Jambres were able to duplicate some of Moses’ miracles (Exodus 7:12, 7:22, 8:8), so Simon was very powerful in magic, and Simon learned the black arts from similar sources in Egypt as Jannes and Jambres. The Clementine Homilies describe<sup>584</sup> Simon as follows:

“Simon disciplined himself greatly in Alexandria, and being very powerful in magic, and being ambitious, wished to be accounted a certain supreme power, greater even than the God who created the world. And sometimes intimating that he is Christ, he styles himself ‘The Standing One’. This epithet he employs, intimating that he shall always stand, and have no cause of corruption that would cause his body to fall. He says that the God who created the world is not supreme, and he does not believe that the dead will be raised. He rejects Jerusalem, and substitutes Mount Gerizim for it (Compare John 4:20-23). Instead of our Christ, he proclaims himself”.

Clement of Rome described<sup>585</sup> some of Simon’s “miracles” as follows: Clement quoted the Apostle Peter as saying that Simon’s “signs” are useless and self-centered.

“He makes statues walk, and he rolls himself on the fire, and is not burned; and sometimes he flies. He makes loaves of bread out of stones; he becomes a serpent; he transforms himself into a goat; he becomes two-faced. He changes himself into gold; he opens locked gates; he melts iron. At banquets he produces images of all manner of forms. In his house he makes dishes to be seen as borne of themselves to wait upon him, no bearers being seen. I wondered when I heard them speak thus; but many bore witness that they had been present, and had seen such things”.

“The Apostle Peter stated, ‘Those are useless signs, which you say that Simon did. But I say that the making statues walk, and rolling himself on burning coals, and becoming a dragon, and being changed into a goat, and flying in the air, and all such things, not being for the healing of man, are of a nature to deceive many. But the miracles of compassionate truth are philanthropic, such as you have heard that the Lord did, such as being freed from all kinds of diseases, and from demons, some having their hands restored, and some their feet, some recovering their eyesight, and some their hearing’”.

Paul described the result of the work of these heretics as being all kinds of evil; and these wolves tried to bring it into the Church. The antidote to the teachings of these heretics is the Holy Scriptures, which make the man of God complete, equipped for every good work.

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<sup>584</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “The Clementine Homilies”, II, 22, PseudoClementine Literature, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>585</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “The Clementine Homilies”, II, 32-34, PseudoClementine Literature, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1-7).

“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture<sup>586</sup> is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:13-17).

As Timothy does this, the heretics will not endure his sound teaching, but will turn their ears away from the truth in favor of fables, like Jannes and Jambres did. This is exactly the way the followers of Simon Magus reacted.

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will pile up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:3-5).

## **The State of Things in Ephesus c. 67 AD**

Paul had sent Timothy various places (1 Thessalonians 3:1-3) to counter the advances of the heretics. By the mid 60's AD, Paul had been released from house-arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16, 30-31), and was in Macedonia. Timothy was in Ephesus when Paul wrote his first Epistle to him (1 Timothy 1:3). Timothy remained in the vicinity of Ephesus until his martyrdom in the mid 90's, after which ordained Gaius was ordained as Bishop of Ephesus in Timothy's place<sup>587</sup>.

Paul's first instruction to Timothy in Ephesus was to correct some of the teachers in Ephesus, who were paying attention to the web of lies and the endless genealogies<sup>588</sup> (1 Timothy 1:4) of Simon and his followers. The teachers simply did not understand the difference between what the Apostles had taught and what the heretics were teaching (1 Timothy 1:7). The key

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<sup>586</sup> When Paul referred to the “Scriptures”, this meant the Old Testament, since the New Testament wasn't agreed upon until about 300 years later. Paul's Old Testament included some writings that are now called “apocryphal”, such as the Wisdom of Solomon.

<sup>587</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30, November 5](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030,%20November%205).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>588</sup> The genealogies had to do with the seemingly endless lineage of the gods promoted by the heretics.

point that Timothy needed to make was an emphasis on the Mosaic Law, which was not made for righteous people, but exposes the lawless and insubordinate very clearly (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

There were three things that Timothy needed to emphasize (1 Timothy 4:13):

1. The Reading, that is from the Scriptures and the memoirs of the Apostles<sup>589</sup>.
2. The Exhortation, which was a homily or commentary appropriate for the time.
3. The Teaching or Doctrine, where the heretics cloaked their falsehoods in familiar sounding terms.

About these heretics, Paul stated, “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words. From which come envy, strife and reviling, evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. From such withdraw yourself” (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

Some people, Paul said, will not endure good teaching because their heart is not right with God. Simon and his followers simply tell these people what they want to hear.

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will pile up for themselves teachers. They will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:3-5).

Some of these heretics that Timothy had to deal with had been pillars of the Church, like Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:17, 4:14), where Paul had to deliver two of them over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. Others that Paul warned Timothy about were Phygellus, Hermogenes and Demas, three of the original Seventy, who had recently left Paul to follow the teachings of Simon Magus (2 Timothy 1:15, 4:10). These heretics taught that the Resurrection was already past (2 Timothy 2:18), which was a common element in Simon’s teaching<sup>590</sup>. They taught that by being baptized in the name of Simon, they would be immortal and not need a resurrection<sup>591</sup>. Paul warned Timothy to beware of these heretics when he encounters them.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer” (2 Timothy 2:15-18).

“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and

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<sup>589</sup> The canon of the New Testament was not established until c. 300 years later. The “memoirs of the Apostles” refers to the Gospels, and later to the writings of Paul.

<sup>590</sup> Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

<sup>591</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I, xxiii, 4-5. See also Irenaeus, Against Heresies, II, xxxii, 5. Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1.

been assured of, knowing from whom (plural) you have learned them” (2 Timothy 3:13-14).

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Paul gave Timothy a standard by which he could recognize the heretics, and a summary of their character, where he compared them with the magicians who opposed Moses in Egypt<sup>592</sup>. This agrees with descriptions of later writers<sup>593</sup>, who described Simon and his followers. Jerome wrote<sup>594</sup> that it was common for Simon and the heretics that followed him to have bands of women that they would use for fornication and other purposes

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith” (2 Timothy 3:1-8).

Part of the teachings of the heretics was either an indifference to or a concentration on certain foods and behavior, such as taught by the Ebionites<sup>595</sup>. Eating of meat offered to idols and the renunciation of the faith in times of persecution were matters of indifference to Simon<sup>596</sup>, since, he said, salvation has not been promised to *bodies*. Since bodies didn’t matter, some, like the Nicolaitans, were grossly immoral<sup>597</sup>. On the other hand, others of these heretics<sup>598</sup> abhorred certain kinds of food. Paul addressed the Colossians regarding the ascetic, food-abhorring group of heretics:

“Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths<sup>599</sup>, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to

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<sup>592</sup> That is, Jannes and Jambres, who were able to duplicate Moses’ sign with his staff (Exodus 7:8-13) and the first two of the Ten Plagues on Egypt (Exodus 7:17-22, 8:1-7). With the Third Plague, they recognized the hand of God (Exodus 8:16-19), just as Simon recognized a power greater than his in the giving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:13, 18-21)

<sup>593</sup> Tertullian, “On Idolatry”, I, ii, 9, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.3.

Roberts and Donaldson, “The Clementine Homilies”, II, 22, PseudoClementine Literature, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>594</sup> Jerome, Letter to Ctesiphon, CXXXIII, 4.

<sup>595</sup> Eusebius, Church History, III, 28.

<sup>596</sup> Eusebius, Church History, IV, 7.

<sup>597</sup> Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1

<sup>598</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”, VI, ii, 8, Ante-Nicean Fathers, v. 7.

<sup>599</sup> These were some of the major observances of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Judaism.

regulations -- ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle’, which all concern things which perish with the using -- according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh” (Colossians 2:16-17, 20-23)

Just before his death, Paul said to Timothy, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus” (2 Timothy 4:19). Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, and Priscilla and Aquila had now returned to Ephesus. John Chrysostom noted<sup>600</sup> that Paul greeted Priscilla first more than half of the time.

“Paul was then in Rome; to Onesiphorus he said, ‘The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day’ (2 Timothy 1:18). By this naming of him, he makes those of his household also more zealous in such good actions.”

“‘Greet Priscilla and Aquila’ (2 Timothy 4:19). These are the ones that Paul makes continual mention of, with whom too he had lodged, and who had taken Apollos into confidence with them. Paul names the woman first<sup>601</sup>, as being I suppose more zealous, and more faithful, for she had then received Apollos. It was to them no slight consolation to be thus greeted. It conveyed a demonstration of esteem and love, and a participation in much grace. For the bare greeting of that holy and blessed man was sufficient to fill with grace him who received it.”

Chrysostom also stated<sup>602</sup> that the “cloak” that Paul left in Troas with Carpus (2 Timothy 4:13) may be a mistranslation. Paul may have been referring to a “bag” to hold copies of the Scriptures and not an outer garment.

“The word here translated ‘cloak’ is not the same word as the outer garment referred to elsewhere (Matthew 5:40). This word may mean a garment, but more likely means a bag in which the books were contained. What did Paul have to do with books, when he was about to depart this life and go to God? He needed them a lot, that he might deposit them in the hands of the faithful, who would retain them in place of his own teaching. All the faithful would suffer a great blow, but particularly those who were present at his death.”

## **The State of the Church in Other Places**

The Memoirs of Edessa state<sup>603</sup> that Luke placed his record of the Acts of the Apostles in the hands of Priscilla and Aquila for safekeeping, and that they accompanied him after the death of Paul.

“Luke the evangelist had such diligence that he wrote the exploits of the Acts of the Apostles, and the ordinances and laws of the ministry of their priesthood, and where each one of them went. By his diligence, Luke wrote these things, and he placed them in the hand of Priscilla and Aquila, his disciples. They

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<sup>600</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, X, v.19.

<sup>601</sup> Acts 18:18, Romans 16:3, 2 Timothy 4:19, compare Acts 18:26, 1 Corinthians 16:19.

<sup>602</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, X, v. 13.

<sup>603</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of the Apostles”, 8-10, in Memoirs of Edessa, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

accompanied Luke up to the day of his death, just as Timothy and Erastus of Lystra, and Menaeus, the first disciples of the Apostles, accompanied Paul until he was taken up to the city of Rome because he had withstood Tertullus the orator” (Acts 24:1-21).

Before his death, Paul sent others of the Seventy on missions to various places. Crescens<sup>604</sup> spent the rest of his life in Galatia and died there of old age. Titus was only in Dalmatia (Macedonia) for a short time and spent the rest of his life as Bishop of Crete. Timothy finished his life in Ephesus just before the Apostle John was freed from exile on Patmos; John ordained Gaius as Bishop of Ephesus when he returned from Patmos. From Paul’s words, the implication is that he sent Tychicus to Ephesus to fill in for Timothy so that Timothy could come to Rome for some final discussions with Paul before Paul was beheaded.

“Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica -- Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark<sup>605</sup> and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the “cloak” that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come -- and the books, especially the parchments” (2 Timothy 4:9-13).

John Chrysostom noted<sup>606</sup> that the saints in the Early Church were bound together very tightly. Phoebe was very zealous on Paul’s behalf and Aquila and Priscilla risked their lives for Paul’s sake. Paul’s take-away was that scholars and their teachers should have a great loyalty and affection to each other.

The disciples were bound together perfectly with Paul; and not men only but women also. Listen to what Paul says about Phoebe, I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also’ (Romans 16:1-2). In this instance Paul bore witness to her of her zeal; but Priscilla and Aquila went as far even as death for Paul’s sake; and about them he thus writes, ‘Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles’ (Romans 16:3-4). They risked death clearly. Paul said, about Aquila and Priscilla, that they went as far as death, not considering their own life, in order that they might supply your deficiency in your service towards me’. Notice how they loved their teacher? Notice how they regarded his rest before their own life? (Compare 2 Corinthians 7:5). On this account no one surpassed them then. Now this I say: not that we may hear only, but that we may also imitate. Not to the ruled only, but also to those who rule is what we say addressed. Scholars should display anxiety about their teachers, and teachers should have the same loving affection as Paul toward those placed under them; not those present only, but also those who are far off. Paul, dwelling in the whole world just as in one house, thus continually took thought for the salvation

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<sup>604</sup> Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VII, 46.

Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 4

<sup>605</sup> This Mark is probably Barnabas’ cousin Mark.

<sup>606</sup> John Chrysostom, Homily on Lowliness of Mind, 6.

of all. He dismissed everything of his own: bonds, troubles, stripes and straits; he watched over and inquired each day into what state the affairs of the disciples were. Often for this very purpose alone he sent, now Timothy, and now Tychicus; about Timothy he says, 'That you may know our affairs, and *that* he may comfort your hearts' (Ephesians 6:22). Again, about Timothy; I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain' (1 Thessalonians 3:5). Paul sent Titus again elsewhere and another to another place. Since Paul himself, by the compulsion of his bonds, was often detained in one place, he was unable to meet those he needed to; so, he met them through the disciples.

### Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh"

John Chrysostom points out<sup>607</sup> that Paul was caught up into Paradise – at the beginning of his apostleship – so that he might not be inferior to the rest of the Apostles, or might not seem to be. They had accompanied Christ but Paul had not.

The third heaven, which Paul and John saw in their visions, is a term used by 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews to describe heavenly realms. For example, the sun is described as stopping in mid-heaven, or the second heaven, for Joshua (Joshua 10:13). Birds also fly in mid-heaven (Revelation 8:13, 19:17); the boundaries between these three heavens are somewhat blurred.

In order that Paul might not get too conceited concerning his visions, the Lord also gave him a "thorn in the flesh", "a messenger of Satan" to beat him up. (Greek: *kolaphizo* = to strike with the fist). Much speculation has been made concerning whether this was some physical problem or whether it refers to some people that Paul fought against. We may imply a physical weakness from Paul's words; however, John Chrysostom states<sup>608</sup> that the thorn in the flesh was actually Alexander the Coppersmith and those with him.

"We will explain what is meant by the 'thorn', and who this 'messenger of Satan' is. There are some who have said that Paul means a kind of pain in the head which was inflicted by the devil; but God forbid! The body of Paul never could have been given over to the hands of the devil, seeing that the devil himself submitted to the same Paul at his mere bidding. Paul set him laws and bounds, when he delivered over the fornicator for the destruction of the flesh, and the devil dared not to transgress them. What then is the meaning of what is said? An adversary is called, in the Hebrew, Satan; the Scripture has used this word to refer to adversaries<sup>609</sup>. Speaking of Solomon, it says, 'Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite' (1 Kings 11:14). What he says then is this: God would not permit the Preaching to progress at times, in order to check our conceit; but he permitted the adversaries to set upon us. This was enough to pluck down Paul's conceit; pains in the head would not do that. By the 'messenger of Satan', he means Alexander the coppersmith, the party of Hymenaeus and Philetus, all the adversaries of the word; those who contended

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<sup>607</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXVI, vv. 2-6.

<sup>608</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXVI, v. 7.

<sup>609</sup> For other uses of the Hebrew word "*satan*" to refer to "adversaries", see also Numbers 22:22, 32; 1 Samuel 29:4; 2 Samuel 19:22.



with and fought against him, those that cast him into a prison, those that beat him, that led him away to death; for they did Satan's business. Just as he calls those Jews children of the devil, who were imitating his deeds, so also, he calls a 'messenger of Satan' everyone that opposes God. Paul says therefore, 'A thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to punch me' (2 Corinthians 12:7); not as if God puts arms into such men's hands, God forbid! Not that He chastises or punishes, but for the time allows and permits them."

Alexander was most likely the son of Simon of Cyrene, who had been pressed into service to carry Jesus' cross at the crucifixion (Mark 15:21). Simon and his sons, Alexander and Rufus, were probably among those men from Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts 11:20) who had started the Church in Antioch.

Rufus was in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas were sent off on their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey and when Paul and Silas were sent off on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Rufus was sent to Rome by Peter and Paul and was there when Paul wrote Romans (Romans 16:13). Later Rufus was ordained Bishop of Thebes in Greece.

Alexander chose a different path for himself, however. He was associated with the craftsmen such as Demetrius the silversmith in Ephesus (Acts 19:24) who built small idols; he opposed Paul in about 54 AD (Acts 19:33). Later Paul referred to Alexander as a coppersmith (2 Timothy 4:14). Yet Alexander rejected the Faith. Along with Hymenaeus, Paul felt it necessary to deliver them to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme (1 Timothy 1:19-20). They were part of a Gnostic heresy that claimed that the resurrection was already past (2 Timothy 2:16-18); this overthrew the faith of some people. Finally, it was Alexander that was primarily responsible for Paul's martyrdom in about 67 AD (2 Timothy 4:14). Paul warned Timothy to beware of Alexander because he greatly resisted Paul's words (2 Timothy 4:15). The implication is that he went out of his way to have Paul hunted down, arrested and accused before the Roman authorities, and he may have even testified against Paul before Emperor Nero.

Whether the "thorn in the flesh" was Alexander or some physical weakness, Paul asked the Lord three times to remove it (2 Corinthians 12:8). But each time, the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in (your) weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Paul's example is a good lesson for us today. Whether we have had visions of the Lord in glory or not, the Lord will put limits on us so that we don't get too exalted above measure (2 Corinthians 12:7). That way the Lord gets the glory for the achievements and His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul took pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, needs, persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake (2 Corinthians 12:10). For being weak, then he was strong.

## Simon Magus' Last Dealings with Peter and Paul in Rome

Toward the end<sup>610</sup> of Nero's reign, about 67 AD, Simon had a major confrontation with the Apostles Peter and Paul. This would be the 4<sup>th</sup> time that the Apostle Peter was in Rome. The Church Historian Eusebius summarized<sup>611</sup> the need for this as follows.

“Because Christianity was becoming so widespread, Satan used Simon Magus to try to seize Rome for himself. Aided by his deceitful arts, Simon led many of the inhabitants of Rome astray, and thus brought them into his own power. Justin in his First Apology<sup>612</sup>, which he addressed to Antoninus (emperor 138-161 AD) in behalf of the Christians, states this. Irenaeus also agrees with him in the first book of his work, *Against Heresies*<sup>613</sup>, where he gives an account of the man and of his profane and impure teaching. We have understood that Simon was the author of all heresy from his time down to the present<sup>614</sup>. Modest men even refrain to utter with the lips those matters, which they keep secret, on account of their excessive baseness and lewdness. This most abominable sect makes a sport of those miserable females that are literally overwhelmed with all kinds of vices”.

“The evil power, who hates all that is good and plots against the salvation of men, constituted Simon at that time the father and author of such wickedness, as a mighty antagonist of the great, inspired Apostles of our Savior. But neither the conspiracy of Simon nor that of any of the others who arose at that period could accomplish anything in those Apostolic times. For everything was conquered and subdued by the splendors of the truth and by the divine word itself which had begun to shine from heaven upon men, and which was then flourishing upon earth, and dwelling in the Apostles themselves. Coming to the city of Rome, Simon was in a short time so successful in his undertaking that those who dwelt there honored him as a god by the erection of a statue. But this did not last long. Immediately, during the reign of Claudius, the all-good and gracious Providence led Peter to Rome against this great corrupter of life. He, like a noble commander of God, carried the costly merchandise of the light of the understanding from the East to those who dwelt in the West, proclaiming the light itself, and preaching the kingdom of heaven”.

While many of the Church Fathers and Church historians give an account of Simon's encounter with Peter and Paul in Rome, we are given the most details of this encounter from one

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<sup>610</sup> One source states that the attempt of Simon to ascend back to his father in heaven – which resulted in his death – took place early in Nero's reign before Paul arrived in Rome. The other sources all state that Paul was present, which places the time in the mid 60's. These other sources are: Eusebius, Arnobius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Severus, as well as *The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* and *The Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul*. We are following the pattern here of the vast majority of the accounts of the death of Simon.

<sup>611</sup> Eusebius, *Church History*, II, 13-14.

<sup>612</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, XXVI.

<sup>613</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, I, xxiii.

<sup>614</sup> Eusebius wrote in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century.

of the New Testament Apocryphal works<sup>615</sup>. Following this account, we will look at accounts of these same events from other sources.

“After Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:8-12) and headed for Rome, the Jews in Rome heard that he was coming. These Jews informed Emperor Nero that Paul was a magician and that he was coming to Rome to destroy them as he had destroyed their brethren in Judea; they persuaded Nero, with many gifts, to ban Paul from Rome. Christians in Rome sent word to Paul warning him of this and Paul landed at Syracuse<sup>616</sup> on Sicily instead (Acts 28:12). The Jews in Puteoli beheaded the shipmaster, who resembled Paul in appearance, and then sent his head to Caesar. Nero then rejoiced that the enemy of the Jews was dead”.

“When Paul arrived in Rome in c. 60 AD, great fear fell upon the Jewish leaders. When they met, the Jewish leaders, allied with Simon, tried to pit Paul against Peter, saying that while Paul was a Hebrew of Hebrews (Philippians 3:5), Peter was bringing in new teachings to the Gentiles<sup>617</sup>. Similarly, they tried to pit the Jewish Christians against the Gentile Christians, and an angry mob of both Jewish and Gentile Christians met Paul outside the door of his house the next day. Paul spoke to them saying that they ought not to make attacks upon each other, but that they should rather give heed to this, that God had fulfilled His promises which He swore to Abraham our father, that in his seed he should inherit all the (Gentile) nations (Genesis 12:3, 17:5). For God is not a respecter of persons. ‘As many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged according to the Law, and as many as have sinned without the Law shall perish without the Law’ (Romans 2:11-12). But we, brethren, ought to thank God that, according to His mercy, He has chosen us to be a holy people to Himself. We ought to boast only in this, whether Jews or Greeks, that we are all one in the belief of His Name” (Ephesians 2:11-22). “And Paul having thus spoken, the Jewish and the Gentile Christians were reconciled”.

“As a result of Peter’s preaching in Rome, Nero’s wife, Octavia (also called Libia), and Agrippina<sup>618</sup>, the wife of Agrippa the Prefect, felt that they could no longer live with their husbands because of their idolatry<sup>619</sup>. Others were no longer willing to return to the army or to serve in the palace. Simon Magus used this occasion to say many evil things about Peter, saying that he was a wizard and a cheat. And they believed Simon, wondering at his miracles; for he made a brazen serpent move itself, and stone statues to laugh and move themselves, and himself to run and suddenly to be raised into the air”.

“This reached the ears of Nero, and Simon was summoned to appear before the Emperor. Using his magic, Simon changed himself both in face and stature into different forms, and was in frenzy, having the devil as his servant. When Nero saw this, he supposed Simon to be truly the son of god”.

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<sup>615</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>616</sup> While this is the same route that Paul took as he was being led to Rome as a result of his appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:8-12), the circumstances appear different from those described in Acts 28. This account probably represents Paul’s return to Rome in c. 67 AD after his release from house arrest (Acts 28:30).

<sup>617</sup> We note that this is exactly the opposite of what Peter and Paul had agreed on. Peter was responsible for the Jews and Paul for the Gentiles. Apparently they didn’t like what Peter said to them.

<sup>618</sup> This Agrippina may not be the same person as Nero’s mother.

<sup>619</sup> Later, in 62 AD, Nero divorced Octavia, and then later had her killed.

“Prior to Paul’s arrival, Simon had “proved” to Nero that he was not a magician. Simon had said to Nero, ‘Order me to be beheaded in a dark place, and there to be left slain; and if I do not rise on the third day, know that I am a magician; but if I rise again, know that I am the Son of God’. And Nero having ordered this, in the dark, by his magic art Simon managed that a ram should be beheaded. The ram appeared to be Simon until he was beheaded. And when he had been beheaded in the dark, he that had beheaded him, taking the head, found it to be that of a ram; but he would not say anything to the emperor, lest he should scourge him, having ordered this to be done in secret. Thereafter, accordingly Simon said that he had risen on the third day, because he took away the head of the ram and the limbs — but the blood had been there congealed. And on the third day he showed himself to Nero, and said, ‘Order that my blood, that has been poured out, be wiped away; for behold, having been beheaded as I promised, I have risen again on the third day’. Thus, Nero had developed a liking for Simon”.

“Speaking to Nero, Simon said, ‘O good emperor: I am the son of god come down from heaven. Until now I have endured Peter only calling himself an Apostle; but now he has doubled the evil. For Paul also teaches the same things, and having his mind turned against me, is said to preach along with him. If you do not plan their destruction, it is very plain that your kingdom cannot stand. Then Nero, filled with concern, ordered to bring Peter and Paul speedily before him”.

“Before Nero, Simon began attacking Peter and Paul. Nero replied to Simon that they were from a race of men that teach us to love every man. Why then was he persecuting them? Simon replied that they had turned all Judea away from believing that Simon was the Christ. Peter injected that Simon had been deceiving many people about who was the Christ. If Nero wished to know the truth about what happened to the Christ, he could read the letter written by Pontius Pilate to Claudius. Nero ordered that this letter be brought and read publicly. In the letter, Pilate documented the deceit of the Jewish leaders in plotting the death of an innocent man (the Christ), and after He rose from the dead, they bribed the soldiers to continue their lies. Pilate warned Claudius against trusting anything the Jewish leaders say”.

“Turning to Peter, Nero asked Peter if all the things stated by Pilate were true. Peter replied that they were, and that Simon is full of lies and deceit. Simon replied that he wonders that the Emperor would consider trusting the words of a poor, uneducated fisherman. To prove who he is, Simon promised to send his angels against Peter. Peter scoffed at Simon’s angels”.

“To demonstrate that Simon was not a god, Peter challenged Simon to disclose what Peter was thinking, for God can search the hidden things of the heart. As a test of this, Peter asked Nero to have a barley loaf brought to Peter secretly; Nero ordered this to be done. Peter blessed the loaf, broke it and then stuffed the two halves up his sleeves”.

“Simon then turned the challenge around and demanded that Peter disclose what he was thinking. Peter replied that he would do this by deeds and not just by words. Simon said, ‘No one knows the thoughts of men, but God alone. Is not,

therefore, Peter lying?’ Peter said, ‘You say that you are the Son of God; tell what I have in my mind; disclose, if you can, what I have just done in secret!’”

“Then Simon, enraged that he was not able to tell the secret of the Apostle, cried out, saying, ‘Let great dogs come forth, and eat him up before Caesar’. And suddenly there appeared great dogs, and rushed at Peter. But Peter, stretching forth his hands to pray, showed to the dogs the loaf, which he had blessed; when the dogs saw the blessed bread, they disappeared. Then Peter said to Nero, ‘Behold, I have shown you that I knew what Simon was thinking of, not by words, but by deeds. For he, having promised that he would bring angels against me, has brought dogs, in order that he might show that he had not God-like but dog-like angels’”.

“And Peter said to Simon, ‘Certainly you pretend to be a god; why, then, don’t you reveal the thoughts of every man?’ Nero said, ‘And now, why do you delay, and not show yourself to be a god, in order that these men may be punished?’ Simon changed the subject again and said, ‘Give orders to build for me a lofty tower of wood, and I will go up on it, call my angels, and order them to take me, in the sight of all, to my father in heaven. And these men, not being able to do this, will be put to shame as uneducated men’”.

“And Nero said to Peter, ‘From this will appear how much power either he or your God has’. Peter said, ‘O most mighty emperor, if you were willing, you might perceive that he is full of demons’. Nero was unwilling to perceive that Simon was dodging all the tough questions and said to Peter, ‘Why do you talk in circles? Tomorrow will prove you’”.

### **Simon Tries to Return to “His Father in Heaven”**

In the face of Peter and Paul’s constant debunking of his tricks, Simon wanted to get away from the contest. He claimed that he would ascend back to his father in heaven; but in trying to do so, the events led to his death. Continuing<sup>620</sup> with the above account:

“Simon said, ‘Listen, O Caesar Nero, that you may know that these men are liars, and that I have been sent from the heavens, tomorrow I will go up into the heavens, that I may make those who believe in me blessed, and show my wrath upon those who have denied me’. Peter and Paul said, ‘You are called by the devil and hasten to punishment’. Simon said, ‘Caesar Nero, listen to me. Separate these madmen from you, in order that when I go into heaven to my father, I may be very merciful to you. Nero said, ‘And when shall we prove this, that you go away into heaven? Simon said, ‘Order a lofty tower to be made of wood, and of great beams, that I may go up upon it, and that my angels may find me in the air; for they cannot come to me upon earth among the sinners’. Nero said, ‘I will see whether you will fulfill what you say’. Then Nero ordered a lofty tower to be made in the Campus Martins, and all the people and the dignities to be present at the spectacle”.

“And on the following day, the entire multitude having come together, Nero ordered Peter and Paul to be present. Simon said, ‘In order that you may

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<sup>620</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

know, O emperor, that these are deceivers, as soon as I ascend into heaven, I will send my angels to you, and will make you come to me”.

Simon then addressed<sup>621</sup> the Roman people wrathfully from the top of the tower, saying, “Romans, since you have remained in your ignorance and abandoned me to follow Peter, I am leaving you. I will no longer protect this city, but will command my angels to take me up in their arms as you watch. I will ascend to my father in heaven, from which I shall send down upon you great punishments for not having heeded my words and believed in my deeds.”

Having said this, he clapped his hands together and launched himself into the air; borne up by demons, he flew through the air, soaring aloft.

As Simon lifted off, he was dressed in fine clothes and crowned with laurels to better give himself the appearance of a god. Some details<sup>622</sup> of the reaction to this are:

“When Nero saw him flying, he said to Peter, ‘This Simon is true; but you and Paul are deceivers’. Peter replied, ‘Immediately shall you know that we are the true Disciples of Christ; but that he is not Christ, but a magician, and a malefactor’. Nero said, ‘Do you still persist? Behold, you see him going up into heaven’. Then Peter, looking steadfastly at Paul, said, ‘Paul, look up and see’. And Paul, having looked up, full of tears, and seeing Simon flying, said, ‘Peter, finish what you have begun; for already our Lord Jesus Christ is calling us’. And Nero hearing them smiled a little, and said, ‘These men see themselves beaten already, and are gone mad’. Peter said, ‘Now you shall know that we are not mad’. Paul said to Peter, ‘Do it at once’”.

“And Peter, looking steadfastly against Simon, said, ‘I command you, angels of Satan who are carrying him into the air to deceive the hearts of the unbelievers, by the God that created all things, and by Jesus Christ, whom on the third day He raised from the dead, no longer from this hour to keep him up, but to let him go’. And immediately, he fell into a place called Sacra Via, that is, Holy Way, and was divided into four parts, having perished by an evil fate”.

The crowd that was watching began<sup>623</sup> to exclaim, “Great is the God preached by Peter! There is truly no other God than He!” From an elevated location, Peter then began to teach the people to acknowledge the true God. By his discourse, he converted many to the Christian Faith.

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<sup>621</sup> Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 17.

This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Synodal Press, Moscow, 1908, v. 10, (June) pp. 631-651.

Holy Apostles Convent, tr., The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Archimandrate Matthew Lagges, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 1979, Volume VI, pp. 428-439.

<sup>622</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

<sup>623</sup> Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 17.

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There are many accounts of Simon's death as a result of his encounter with Peter and Paul. All agree that Simon died from trying to ascend to his father in heaven, but the manner of his actual death differs.

In Arnobius' description<sup>624</sup> of Simon's attempt to ascend to heaven, Arnobius refers to some man-made device that carried Simon aloft, where there were flames associated with the man-made device. It is possible that Simon used hot air balloon techniques for his flying. Arnobius implies that Simon might have committed suicide after this embarrassing incident.

“In Rome herself, the mistress of the world, where men are busied with the practices introduced by king Numa<sup>625</sup>, and the superstitious observances of antiquity, they have nevertheless hastened to give up their fathers' mode of life, and attach themselves to Christian truth. They had seen the chariot of Simon Magus, and his fiery car, blown into pieces by the mouth of Peter, and vanish when Christ was named. They had seen him trusting in false gods, and abandoned by them in their terror, borne down headlong by his own weight, lying prostrate with his legs broken. And then, when he had been carried to Brunda, worn out with anguish and shame, again cast himself down from the roof of a very lofty house”.

Other early Christian tradition also refers<sup>626</sup> to Simon's fall as he was trying to ascend to heaven. In this account, Peter's prayer was to restrain the demons that carried Simon, to let him fall, but not to allow him to be killed by his injuries.

“Now when Simon was in Rome, he mightily disturbed the Church, and subverted many, and brought them over to himself; he astonished the Gentiles with his skill in magic. Once, in the middle of the day, he went into their theater, and commanded the people that they should bring Peter also by force into the theater, and promised he would fly in the air. And when all the people were in suspense at this, Peter prayed by himself. And indeed, Simon was carried up into the air by demons, and did fly on high in the air, saying that he was returning into heaven, and that he would supply them with good things from there. As the people made acclamations to him, as to a god, Peter stretched out his hands to heaven, and sought God through the Lord Jesus to throw down this pestilent fellow, to dash him against the ground, and bruise him, but not to kill him. Fixing his eyes on Simon, Peter said to him, ‘If I be a man of God, and a real Apostle of Jesus Christ, I command the wicked powers, by whom Simon the magician is carried, to let go their hold, that he may be exposed to the laughter of those that have been seduced by him’. When Peter had said these words, Simon was deprived of his powers, and fell down headlong with a great noise, and was violently dashed against the ground, and had his hip and anklebones broken. And the people cried out, saying, ‘There is only one God, whom Peter rightly preaches’. And many left him; but some that were worthy of perdition continued in his wicked doctrine. And after this manner the most atheistic heresy of the Simonians was first established in Rome”.

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<sup>624</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “The Seven Books of Arnobius Against the Heathen”, II, 12, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 6.

<sup>625</sup> That is, Numa Pompilius, the legendary second king of Rome, 715-675 BC.

<sup>626</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”, VI, ii, 9, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7.

Another early traditional account also states<sup>627</sup> that Simon did not die immediately, but experienced great suffering for about a day before dying.

“The fallen sorcerer, although his body was broken, yet in accordance with God’s providence, remained alive long enough (1) to realize the impotence of the demons and his own lack of power, (2) to be filled with shame and (3) to understand the power of the Almighty God. As he lay on the ground, his limbs shattered, he experienced intense suffering. The next day, he vomited out his impure soul in pain, surrendering it to the hands of the demons, to be dragged down to their father, Satan, in hell”.

John Cassian stated<sup>628</sup> that the encounter with Simon in Rome was such an ordeal for the Apostle Peter that he fasted the day before in accordance with the Lord’s teaching, “This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:21).

“Some people in some countries of the West think that fasting should be allowed on the Sabbath, because they say that on this day the Apostle Peter fasted before his encounter with Simon. But from this it is quite clear that he did this not in accordance with a canonical rule, but rather through the needs of his impending struggle. For the same purpose, Peter seems to have imposed on his disciples not a general but a special fast, which he certainly would not have done if he had known that it was to be observed by canonical rule. Similarly, he would surely have been ready to appoint it even on Sunday, if the occasion of his struggle had fallen upon it. But no canonical rule of fasting would have been made general from this, because it was no general observance that led to it, but a matter of necessity, which forced it to be observed on a single occasion”.

Cyril of Jerusalem also referred<sup>629</sup> to Simon’s claim to deity in Rome, and the statue that honored him as such. Cyril also mentioned that Simon’s death resulted from his attempt to ascend to heaven, which was thwarted by Peter and Paul.

“As the delusion was extending, Peter and Paul, chief rulers of the Church, arrived and set the error right. And when the supposed god Simon wished to show himself off, they subsequently showed him as a corpse. Simon promised to rise aloft to heaven, and came riding in a demons’ chariot on the air. But the servants of God fell on their knees, and having shown that agreement of which Jesus spoke, that if two of you shall agree concerning anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them (Matthew 18:19). They launched the weapon of their concord in prayer against Magus, and struck him down to the earth”.

“And marvelous though it was, yet this was not a marvel. These brought the supposed god down from the sky to earth, thence to be taken down to the regions below the earth. In this man first the serpent of wickedness appeared; but

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<sup>627</sup> Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 18.

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Holy Apostles Convent, tr., The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Archimandrate Matthew Lagges, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 1979, Volume VI, pp. 428-439.

<sup>628</sup> John Cassian, The Institutes of the Coenobia, III, 10.

<sup>629</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, VI, 14-15.



when one head had been cut off, the root of wickedness was found again with many heads in his followers”.

The Church Historian, Severus, also referred<sup>630</sup> to the encounter of Peter and Paul with Simon Magus in Rome, which resulted in the death of Simon. Severus places this encounter in c. 62 AD at Paul’s first visit to Rome instead of in c. 67 AD when Paul was executed.

“At that time, our divine religion had obtained a wide prevalence in the city. Peter was there executing the office of bishop, and Paul, too, after he had been brought to Rome, on appealing to Caesar from the unjust judgment of the governor (Acts 25:8-12, 28:19). Multitudes then came together to hear Paul (Acts 28:30-31), and these, influenced by the truth, which they were given to know, and by the miracles of the Apostles, which they then so frequently performed, turned to the worship of God. After that the well-known and celebrated encounter of Peter and Paul with Simon took place. After he had flown up into the air by his magical arts, he was supported by two demons (with the view of proving that he was a god). The demons were put to flight by the prayers of the Apostles, and he fell to the earth in the sight of all the people, and was dashed to pieces”.

Hippolytus gives a different account<sup>631</sup> of Simon’s death. In his account, Simon told his disciples to bury him alive, saying that he would rise on the third day, but never did. Since Hippolytus doesn’t mention Simon’s attempt to ascend to heaven, the “burial” could be connected with Simon’s injuries after his fall to give Simon a chance to escape and save face.

“This Simon, deceiving many in Samaria by his sorcery, was reproved by the Apostles, and was laid under a curse, as it has been written in the Acts (Acts 8:20-23). But he afterwards solemnly rejected the faith, and attempted this practice of sorcery. Journeying as far as Rome, he fell in with the Apostles. Peter offered repeated opposition to him since he was deceiving many by his sorcery. At last, when conviction was imminent, he stated that, if he were buried alive, he would rise the third day. And accordingly, having ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, he directed himself to be interred there. They executed the injunction given; whereas he remained in that grave until this day, for he was not the Christ. This constitutes the legendary system advanced by Simon, and from this Valentinus derived a starting-point for his own doctrine”.

### **Nero’s Reaction to Simon’s Death: the Martyrdom of Peter and Paul**

Nero was angry with Peter and Paul for their part in the death of his friend Simon. He ordered<sup>632</sup> Peter to die by crucifixion, and Paul, since he was a Roman citizen, to be beheaded.

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<sup>630</sup> Philip Schaff, “The Sacred History of Sulpitius Severus”, II, 28-29, Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series, v. 11.

<sup>631</sup> Hippolytus, The Refutation of All Heresies, VI, 15.

<sup>632</sup> Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 18.

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Holy Apostles Convent, tr., The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Archimandrate Matthew Lagges, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 1979, Volume VI, pp. 428-439.

“Then Nero ordered Peter and Paul to be put in irons, and the body of Simon to be carefully kept three days, thinking that he would rise on the third day. To whom Peter said, ‘He will no longer rise, since he is truly dead, being condemned to everlasting punishment’. And Nero said to him, ‘Who commanded you to do such a dreadful deed?’ Peter said, ‘His blasphemy against my Lord Jesus Christ has brought him into this gulf of destruction’. Nero said, ‘I will destroy you by an evil death’. Peter said, ‘This is not in your power, even if it should seem good to you to destroy us; but it is necessary that what our Master promised to us should he fulfilled”.

“Then Nero, having summoned Agrippa, said to him, ‘It is necessary that men introducing mischievous religious observances should die. Therefore, I order them to take iron clubs, and to be killed in the sea-fight<sup>633</sup>. Agrippa said, ‘Most sacred emperor, what you have ordered is not fitting for these men, since Paul seems innocent beside Peter’. Nero said, ‘By what fate, then, shall they die?’ Agrippa answered and said, ‘As seems to me, Paul’s head should be cut off, and Peter should be raised on a cross as the cause of the murder’. Nero said, ‘You have most excellently judged’. Then both Peter and Paul were led away from the presence of Nero. And Paul was beheaded on the Ostesian road”.

Ambrose of Milan mentioned<sup>634</sup> that there was a short gap between the death of Simon Magus and the arrest and martyrdom of Peter. Peter could have escaped, but he was told by Christ not to do so.

“After Peter had overcome Simon, in sowing the doctrine of God among the people, and in teaching chastity, he stirred up the minds of the Gentiles. When the Christians begged Peter to withdraw himself for a little while, although he desired to suffer, yet was he moved at the sight of the people praying. They asked him to save himself for the instruction and strengthening of his people. At night he began to leave town. Seeing Christ coming to meet him at the gate, and entering the city, he said, ‘Lord, where are You going?’ Christ answered, ‘I am coming to be crucified again’. Peter understood the divine answer to refer to his own cross, for Christ could not be crucified a second time, for He had put off the flesh by the passion of the death which He had undergone. ‘The death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God’ (Romans 6:10). So, Peter understood that Christ was to be crucified again in the person of His servant. Therefore, he willingly returned; and when the Christians questioned him, he told them the reason. Peter was immediately seized, and glorified the Lord Jesus by his cross.”

There are further details<sup>635</sup> of the beheading of the Apostle Paul associated with a one-eyed woman named Perpetua:

“As Paul was being led away to be beheaded by three soldiers, who were brothers, a God-fearing one-eyed woman named Perpetua wept for him as he was

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<sup>633</sup> The sea-fights were a favorite spectacle of the Roman emperors, where the combatants were persons condemned to death.

<sup>634</sup> Ambrose of Milan, *Sermon against Auxentius on the Giving Up of the Basilicas*, 13.

<sup>635</sup> The Story of Perpetua; part of Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul”, *Apocrypha of the New Testament*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

being dragged along. When Paul saw her, he asked her to give him her handkerchief, saying that he would return it to her. Knowing that Paul was about to be beheaded, Perpetua asked the soldiers to bind Paul's eyes with the handkerchief when they behead him. After Paul was beheaded, someone gave the woman her handkerchief back, and her eye was restored as she was carrying it".

"When the woman saw the three soldiers about three hours later, she noted that she had recovered her sight from the handkerchief, and that she had asked the Lord that she might be considered worthy to become His slave as Paul was. The soldiers exclaimed with one voice that they might be His slaves also".

"Perpetua later mentioned, in the Emperor's palace, that both she and the three soldiers had believed in Christ. Nero, filled with rage, executed the three soldiers and had Perpetua locked in irons in prison. While in prison, Perpetua met Potentiana, the sister of Nero's wife. Potentiana had desired to become a Christian, but didn't know what to do. She had informed her sister and the wives of some of the Senators about what she had heard about Christianity, and the other women then left the palace and refused to have anything to do with their husbands' idolatry. Perpetua informed Potentiana of what she knew of the Faith".

After a few days, Nero tortured Perpetua a great deal, and finally killed her by tying a large stone to her neck and throwing her off a cliff. Potentiana was also tortured a great deal and finally burned alive".

As Peter was being crucified<sup>636</sup>, the crowd of bystanders reviled Nero and wanted to kill him. But Peter restrained them and told them of earlier events where the Lord told him that this would happen. Angels also appeared to receive Peter's body.

"And Peter, having come to the cross, said, 'Since my Lord Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven upon the earth, was raised upon the cross upright, and He has called me to heaven, my cross ought to be fixed head downward, so as to direct my feet towards heaven. I am not worthy to be crucified like my Lord. Then, having reversed the cross, they nailed his feet up".

"And the multitude was assembled reviling Caesar, and wishing to kill him. But Peter, hanging on the cross, restrained them saying, 'A few days ago, being exhorted by the brethren to leave, I was going away. And my Lord Jesus Christ met me, and having adored Him, I said, Lord, where are You going? And He said to me, I am going to Rome to be crucified. And I said to Him, Lord, weren't You crucified once for all? And the Lord answered and said, I saw you fleeing from death, and I wish to be crucified instead of you. And I said, Lord, I'm going; I will fulfill Your command. And He said to me, Fear not, for I am with you. On this account, then, children do not hinder my going; for already my feet are going on the road to heaven. Do not grieve; therefore, rather rejoice with me, for today I receive the fruit of my labors". And thus speaking, he said, "I thank You, Good Shepherd, that the sheep which You have entrusted to me, sympathize with me. I ask, then, that with me they may have a part in Your kingdom". And having thus spoken, he gave up the Spirit".

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<sup>636</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, "Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

“And immediately there appeared men glorious and strange in appearance. And they said, ‘We are here on account of the holy and chief Apostles from Jerusalem’. And they, along with Marcellus, an illustrious man, who left Simon and had believed in Peter’s words, took up his body secretly, and put it under the terebinth near the place for the exhibition of sea-fights in the place called the Vatican”.

“And the men, who had said that they came from Jerusalem, said to the people, ‘Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because you have been deemed worthy to have great champions. And know that Nero himself, after not many days, will be utterly destroyed, and his kingdom shall be given to another’. And after these things the people revolted against him. And when he knew of it, he fled into desert places; through hunger and cold he gave up the spirit, and his body became food for the wild beasts”.

“And some devout men of the regions of the East wished to carry off the relics of the saints, and immediately there was a great earthquake in the city; and those that dwelt in the city having become aware of it ran and seized the men, but they fled. But the Romans took the relics, put them in a place three miles from the city, and there they were guarded a year and seven months, until they had built the place in which they intended to put them. And after these things, all having assembled with glory and singing of praise, they put them in the place built for them. And the consummation of the holy glorious Apostles Peter and Paul was on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month of June”.

When Peter and Paul were executed, others were also beheaded with them. Included in these were Herodion and Olympas<sup>637</sup>, of the Seventy, who had come to Rome with the Apostle Peter.

### **Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9**

Usually at a Feast Day for a saint, there is an Epistle Reading and a Gospel Reading. For the Feast Day of Peter and Paul, the Epistle has to do with the Apostle Paul while the Gospel has to do with the Apostle Peter. This Epistle used for the Apostle Paul is used in the West either on the 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost or two Sundays before Lent. In the Orthodox lectionary, today’s Epistle lesson is also used for the 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

This Epistle focuses on some of the visions and revelations that the Apostle Paul experienced. These visions were great revelations, but Paul had kept silent about them for 14 years (2 Corinthians 12:2) until he wrote about them. Since 2 Corinthians was written in 55 AD, this places the time of the revelations in 41 AD, which would be about 7 years after Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. Thus, the visions occurred while Paul was in Tarsus (Acts 9:29-30) and about 4 years before Barnabas brought him to Antioch to help out with the Church there (Acts 11:25-26).

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<sup>637</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8, November 10. <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 8, November 10.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

The Apostle John experienced similar visions and revelations (Revelation 1:10-11, 17, Revelation 4:1-2), which occurred<sup>638</sup> on “the Lord’s Day” (Revelation 1:10) or Sunday. John did not say whether he was bodily translated to heaven (Revelation 4:1-2). Like Paul, he may not have known.

Why did Paul keep silent about these things so long? And why did he break silence at this time? He states that it is not profitable for him to boast of such things (2 Corinthians 12:1). However, the Corinthians had been putting up with others that had boasted (foolishly) of their own visions (2 Corinthians 11:18-20). While Paul was reluctant, he could also see that some of the flock in Corinth was in danger of perishing: those that had not repented from uncleanness, fornications and lewdness (2 Corinthians 12:31). He needed to get their attention regarding the things he had been saying and show them that the heretics they had been putting up with hadn’t seen what he had seen.

John Chrysostom adds<sup>639</sup> that Paul was caught up into Paradise -- at the beginning of his apostleship -- so that he might not be inferior to the rest of the apostles, or seem to be. They had accompanied Christ but Paul had not.

The third heaven, which Paul and John saw in their visions, is a term used by 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews to describe heavenly realms. For example, the sun is described as stopping in mid-heaven, or the second heaven, for Joshua (Joshua 10:13). Birds also fly in mid-heaven (Revelation 8:13; 19:17), where the boundaries between the heavens are undoubtedly somewhat blurred.

In order that Paul might not get too conceited concerning his visions, the Lord also gave him a “thorn in the flesh”, “a messenger, of Satan” to literally beat him up. (Greek: *kolaphizo* = to strike with the fist). Much speculation has been made concerning whether this was some physical problem or whether it refers to some people that Paul fought against. The text might imply a physical weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10); however, John Chrysostom states<sup>640</sup> that the thorn in the flesh was Alexander the Coppersmith and those with him.

“Alexander the coppersmith<sup>641</sup> did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works! You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words” (2 Timothy 4:14-15).

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<sup>638</sup> See Ignatius, Magnesians 9:1. Ignatius in 107 AD wrote that Christians no longer keep the Sabbath but live in accordance with the Lord’s Day.

<sup>639</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXVI, vv. 2-3.

<sup>640</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXVI, v 7.

<sup>641</sup> Alexander was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who helped to carry Jesus’ Cross (Mark 15:21). Together with his father and brother Rufus, who was one of the Seventy, Alexander helped to found the Church in Antioch (Acts 11:20). By the mid 60’s AD, Alexander had become a follower of Simon Magus, and Paul delivered him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh on account of his blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:20). A year or two later, Alexander was instrumental in affecting Paul’s martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:14-15). Regarding delivering him over to Satan, Compare 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. The intent was the eventual salvation of the individual through a greater recognition of whom it is that he’s in league with.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Paul's Missionary Journeys - Overview**

Paul has sometimes been characterized as fiercely independent. He (and seemingly, he alone) is portrayed as taking the message of the Gospel to the Gentiles while the other Apostles are often portrayed as content to preach only to the Jews in Judea. To underscore his independence, Galatians 2:11-15 is quoted as evidence of Paul's independence from Peter and the other Apostles. [This passage speaks of Paul confronting Peter in Antioch over eating kosher food with the Jews.]

Yet Longinus (the Centurion at the Cross) and the Apostles Peter, Philip and Andrew began evangelizing Asia and Greece before Paul; Peter, John and Mary Magdalene helped out during Paul's lifetime; and John and Mary Magdalene continued after Paul's death. And in the tables that follow, we see how more than 57 of the original Seventy (Luke 10:1-20) worked with Paul at some point during his missionary journeys, along with 8 others who were later added to the ranks of the Seventy.

From this, we can see that Peter, Paul and the other Apostles worked together to a far greater extent than is commonly taught. When Paul wrote about "one Lord, one Faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5), this was not just wishful thinking; it was real. When he wrote about the Lord giving some as apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, etc. (Ephesians 4:11), all these people had names and they were part of Paul's experience.

In celebrating the lives of Peter and Paul together, we recognize that the Gospel for the circumcised was committed to Peter and that for the uncircumcised to Paul (Galatians 2:7-9). Yet there was considerable overlap and working together of Peter and Paul, especially in Antioch in the late 40's and early 50's AD (Galatians 2:11-15). In addition, Paul's custom was to stop first at the Jewish Synagogue when he entered a city (Acts 17:1-2, 10). Only after they rejected him did he go to the Gentiles (Acts 13:42-49). Peter, on the other hand began by preaching to the Jews, but his later missionary journeys took him very far afield to places dominated by Gentiles such as Asia, Macedonia, Britain and Italy.

**Table 14**  
**The Seventy with Paul in Asia and Greece**

| <b>Member of Seventy</b> | <b>Native To</b> | <b>With Paul on Missionary Journey</b> | <b>Later Bishop of</b> | <b>Comments</b>       |
|--------------------------|------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Agabus                   |                  | 3                                      |                        |                       |
| Amplias                  |                  | 2, 3                                   | Lydda, Odessus         | Andrew sent to Rome   |
| Ananias                  |                  |  | Damascus               | Baptized Paul         |
| Andronicus & Junia       | Tarsus           | 1, 2, 3                                | Pannonia in Illyricum  | Prisoner with Paul    |
| Apelles                  | Smyrna           | 2, 3                                   | Smyrna                 | Acquaintance of Paul  |
| Apelles                  |                  |  | Heraclea               |                       |
| Apollos                  | Alexandria       | 2, 3, 5                                |                        |                       |
| Aristarchus              | Thessalonica     | 2, 3, 4, 5                             | Apamea                 |                       |
| Aristarchus              |                  |  |                        | Beheaded with Paul    |
| Aristobulus              | Cyprus           | 1, 2, 3                                | Sent to Britain        | Barnabas' brother     |
| Artemas                  |                  | 2, 5                                   | Lystra                 |                       |
| Asyncritus               |                  | 3                                      | Hyrkania (Persia)      | Acquaintance of Paul  |
| Barnabas                 | Cyprus           | 1                                      | Roving Apostle         | Leader of Group       |
| Caesar                   |                  | --                                     | Dyrrhachium            |                       |
| Carpus                   |                  | 2, 3, 5                                | Berea, Troas           |                       |
| Cephas                   |                  | 2, 3, 4                                | Iconium after Tertius  |                       |
| Clement of Sardis        |                  | 4                                      | Sardis                 |                       |
| Cleophas                 |                  | --                                     |                        | Died after Pentecost  |
| Crescens                 |                  | 5                                      | Carthage, Galatia      |                       |
| Epaenetus                | Achaia           | 2, 3                                   | Carthage, Spain        |                       |
| Epaphras                 |                  | 3, 4, 5                                | Colossae area          | Colossians 1:7, 4:12  |
| Epaphroditus             | Philippi         | 2, 3, 4                                | Colophon in Pamphylia  |                       |
| Erastus                  |                  | 3, 5                                   | Paneas                 | Expert at Finances    |
| Evodius                  |                  | 1, 2                                   | Antioch                |                       |
| Gaius                    | Derbe            | 1, 2, 3                                | Ephesus after Timothy  | Presbyter in Derbe    |
| Hermas                   |                  | 2, 3                                   | Philippi               | Wrote "Shepherd"      |
| Hermes                   |                  | 3                                      | Dalmatia               |                       |
| Herodion                 | Tarsus           | 1, 2, 3, 5                             | Neoparthia, Patras     | Martyred with Paul    |
| James, Lord's Brother    | Bethlehem        | 2, 4                                   | Jerusalem              | Council of Jerusalem  |
| Jason                    | Tarsus           | 1, 2, 3                                | Tarsus, Thessalonica   | Sent to Corfu         |
| Justus                   | Nazareth         | 2, 4                                   | Eleutheropolis         |                       |
| Linus                    |                  | 2, 3, 4, 5                             | Rome                   |                       |
| Lucius                   |                  | 3, 5                                   | Laodicea in Syria      | Kinsman of Paul       |
| Luke                     | Antioch          | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5                          | Roving Apostle         |                       |
| Mark, Barnabas' Cousin   | Cyprus           | 4, 5                                   | Appolonia              |                       |
| Mark, Evangelist         |                  | --                                     |                        |                       |
| Mark, John               |                  | 1                                      | Byblos                 |                       |
| Narcissus                |                  | 2, 3                                   | Athens after Dionysius | Acquaintance of Paul  |
| Nicanor                  |                  | --                                     |                        | Martyred with Stephen |
| Olympas                  |                  | 5                                      | --                     | Beheaded with Paul    |

|                         |            |               |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Onesiphorus             | Iconium    | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Colophon near Ephesus   | Housed Paul in Iconium  |
| Parmenas                |            |               |                         |                         |
| Patrobus                |            | 3             | Naples, Puteoli         |                         |
| Philemon                |            | 3, 4, 5       | Gaza, Colossae area     |                         |
| Philip                  | Samaria    | 3             | Caesarea                |                         |
| Philologus & Julia      |            | 3             | Sinope                  |                         |
| Phlegon                 |            | 2, 3          | Marathon (Thrace)       | Worked with Luke        |
| Prochorus               |            | --            |                         |                         |
| Pudens                  |            | 5             |                         | Martyred with Paul      |
| Quartus                 |            | 3             | Beirut                  |                         |
| Rhodion                 |            | --            |                         | Martyred with Peter     |
| Rufus                   | Cyrene     | 1, 2, 3       | Thebes in Greece        | In Antioch at sendoff   |
| Silas                   |            | 2, 3          | Corinth                 |                         |
| Silvanus                |            | 2             | Thessalonica            |                         |
| Sosipater               | Berea      | 1, 2, 3       | Iconium, Corfu          | Presbyter in Iconium    |
| Sosthenes               | Corinth    | 2, 3          | Caesarea                |                         |
| Stachys                 |            | 2, 3          | Byzantium               | Met Paul at Troas       |
| Stephen                 |            | --            | --                      | Martyred early          |
| Tertius                 |            | 2, 3          | Iconium after Sosipater |                         |
| Thaddaeus               |            | --            | Edessa                  |                         |
| Timon                   |            |               | Bostra                  |                         |
| Trophimus               |            | 3, 4, 5       | --                      | Beheaded with Paul      |
| Tychicus                | Asia Minor | 3, 4, 5       | Caesarea after Philip   |                         |
| Tychicus                |            | --            | Chalcedon               |                         |
| Urbanus                 | Tarsus     | 2, 3          | Tarsus, Macedonia       |                         |
| Zenas                   |            | 5             | Lydda in Palestine      | Mosaic Law Expert       |
|                         |            |               |                         |                         |
| <b>Added to Seventy</b> |            |               |                         |                         |
| Achaicus                |            | 3, 4          | --                      |                         |
| Aquila & Priscilla      | Pontus     | 2, 3, 4, 5    | Ephesus before Timothy  |                         |
| Archippus               |            | 3, 4, 5       | Colossae                |                         |
| Codratus                |            | --            | Athens, Magnesia        |                         |
| Crispus                 | Corinth    | 2, 3          | Aegina or Chalcedon     | Synagogue ruler         |
| Fortunatus              |            | 3             |                         | Carried Corinth Epistle |
| Onesimus                |            | 4             | Berea                   |                         |
| Simeon                  |            | --            | Jerusalem               | After death of James    |
| Timothy                 | Lystra     | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | Ephesus                 | Presbyter in Lystra     |
| Titus                   | Crete      | 1, 2, 3, 5    | Crete                   |                         |
|                         |            |               |                         |                         |
| <b>Apostatized</b>      |            |               |                         |                         |
| Demas                   |            | 3, 4, 5       | Priest for idols        |                         |
| Hermogenes              |            | 4, 5          | Megara in Thrace        | Problems in Ephesus     |
| Nicholas, Antioch       |            | --            | Samaria                 | Didn't work with Paul   |
| Phygellus               |            | 4, 5          | Ephesus                 | Removed by Timothy      |
|                         |            |               |                         |                         |
|                         |            |               |                         |                         |
|                         |            |               |                         |                         |



## APPENDIX B

### The Seventy and Other Apostles

**Achaicus:** Achaicus was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but some say he was added to the ranks of the Seventy later. Prior to Paul writing his second letter to Corinth, Fortunatus and Achaicus along with Deacon Stephanas brought a letter from Corinth to Paul which is now lost (1 Corinthians 16:15-17). Paul then answered this letter in his second letter (i.e. the one we know as 1 Corinthians). These three men probably returned to Corinth after delivering the letter. Achaicus is not recorded as serving as Bishop at any city.

**Agabus:** Agabus was<sup>642</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was a prophet in the Church of Jerusalem along with Joseph Barsabas and Silas (Acts 15:22-32). During the reign of Emperor Claudius (41-52 AD), and about the time that Paul first came to Antioch, Agabus predicted a great famine (Acts 11:27-30); Paul and Barnabas brought alms from Antioch to relieve the effects of the famine. Agabus also predicted the suffering of the Apostle Paul by the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14). He also preached<sup>643</sup> in many other lands and converted many pagans to Christ; he started in Jerusalem, then he prophesied in Antioch, then in other parts of the world.

**Amplias:** Amplias was<sup>644</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was a follower of Andrew of the Twelve Apostles. Since Paul refers to Amplias as being in Rome in c. 55 AD when he wrote his Epistle to Rome (Romans 16:8), there had to have been some contact between Paul and Andrew in sending Amplias<sup>645</sup>. Paul likely met Amplias on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey as he passed through Macedonia. Andrew ordained Amplias as Bishop of Odessos in

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<sup>642</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>643</sup> See <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

<sup>644</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 31.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>645</sup> Paul refers to Amplias rather warmly "my beloved in the Lord", suggesting that Paul worked with Amplias a while. Because Paul refers to him in such a warm, personal manner, it is very probable Paul worked with him prior to his arrival in Rome. If Paul didn't work with them in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) or Achaia (Athens and Corinth) on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, he must have done so on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey just prior to the drafting of the letter to the Romans. Most likely, however, would be that Paul worked with them in Macedonia, on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. On his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, there may have been a very good report concerning him as Paul passed through Macedonia heading for Corinth -- therefore the term "my beloved". While in Macedonia on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul must have sent him to Rome to join Aquila and Priscilla -- whom he sent to Rome from Ephesus.

Macedonia<sup>646</sup> and Amplias was later martyred there due to his preaching and his destruction of the idols. According to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church<sup>647</sup>, Amplias was already there serving as Bishop in 56 AD<sup>648</sup>. Odessos is today called Varna and is located in Bulgaria. It has also been called Odysopolis and Odysus. According to tradition, Amplias was also Bishop of Lydda<sup>649</sup> (also called Diospolis) at one time<sup>650</sup>.

**Ananias:** Ananias was<sup>651</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles, and he was the Bishop of Damascus at the time of the conversion of the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:10-18). At that time, Ananias had a vision from the Lord to go heal Paul's blindness, even though Ananias was greatly afraid of Paul. Ananias did as he was commanded; he healed and baptized Paul.

Later Ananias went to Eleutheropolis to preach the Gospel. He was arrested by Governor Lucian and tortured for a long time before being stoned to death.

**Andronicus and Junia:** Andronicus was one of the original Seventy Apostles. He and his wife Junia began traveling with Paul and Silas in c. 48 AD at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. To understand this, we need to look forward to c. 55 AD when Paul wrote to the Church of Rome from Corinth. There he addressed two of his "countrymen", Andronicus<sup>652</sup> and Herodion<sup>653</sup> (Romans 16:7, 11), who were both members of the original Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-20). Paul there referred to Andronicus (and his wife Junia) as his "fellow prisoner" (Romans 16:7). However, the only recorded prison time Paul spent between 48 and 55 AD was in Philippi (Acts 16:19-34), about 51 AD. Andronicus thus must have accompanied Paul and Silas as they headed for Macedonia (and Philippi) after Paul had visited Andronicus in Tarsus<sup>654</sup>. Andronicus must have been imprisoned along with Paul and Silas in Philippi, but not mentioned in Luke's account of Acts.

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<sup>646</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>647</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna>.

<sup>648</sup> This means that Amplias went to Macedonia right after he was no longer needed in Rome.

<sup>649</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lod>.

<sup>650</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2031).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>651</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 1.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 1](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%201).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 1.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>652</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17. See:

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20May%2017).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 28, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>653</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8, November 10. See:

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 8, November 10](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%208,%20November%2010).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>654</sup> Andronicus and Junia were native to Tarsus and were related to Paul. See Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17, July 30. See also:

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>.

As Paul and Silas passed through Philippi (and Macedonia) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Andronicus and his wife Junia probably also stayed behind with Luke<sup>655</sup>, since Andronicus has traditionally been referred to as the Bishop of Pannonia in Illyricum. During these 5 years, Luke got around to the whole area. Paul left Luke in Philippi c. 49-50 AD. By 55 AD when Paul wrote to the Romans, he said, “From Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:19). Paul is never recorded as going to Illyricum himself; but Luke could easily have been there during the five years that he was in Philippi.

After their tour of Rome, Andronicus and Junia traveled<sup>656</sup> widely, but they spent the rest of their lives living as brother-sister and not as husband-wife. They healed many pagans, and as they did, the pagans voluntarily tore down the temples that they used to use for idol worship. There are differing accounts of their deaths, but it was probably by martyrdom, since their bones were discovered many years later in Byzantium (then Constantinople).

**Apelles:** There are two members of the Seventy Apostles named Apelles; one was Bishop of Smyrna; the other was Bishop of Heraclea in Thrace. The one Paul refers to as being in Rome is the one associated with Smyrna<sup>657</sup>. When Paul referred to this Apelles as “Approved in Christ” (Romans 16:10), Paul used the same word<sup>658</sup> to refer to Apelles that he used to refer to Peter and James, except elsewhere this word is often translated that Peter and James “were of reputation” (Galatians 2:2, 6, 9). This suggests that Apelles was a presbyter in one of the Churches before being sent to Rome<sup>659</sup>. After his work in Rome, this Apelles was ordained by the Apostle Andrew as Bishop of Smyrna, became a light to the city of Smyrna and was martyred by the Jews and pagan Greeks for preaching the Gospel<sup>660</sup>. The other Apelles was Bishop of Heraclea in Thrace<sup>661</sup>. He was an outstanding orator and brought many people to Christ. This Apelles may have interacted with Paul when Paul passed through Troas.

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<sup>655</sup> For more details regarding this, see the section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey titled “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

<sup>656</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17>.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>657</sup> Hippolytus, On the Seventy Apostles, 28.

<sup>658</sup> That is the Greek word dokimos meaning “tested” or “approved”.

<sup>659</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, 28, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>660</sup> Smyrna is located on the western coast of Asia Minor about 70 miles NW of Ephesus.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 10>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 10

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>661</sup> While there are many cities named after the Greek Hero Heracles, this Heraclea is probably the one along the northern coast of the Sea of Marmara near Byzantium (later Constantinople), and was at one time the Metropolitan See for Constantinople. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perinthus>.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

The earliest accounts say that both men named Apelles were members of the original Seventy Apostles. Hippolytus (c. 230 AD) lists<sup>662</sup> Apelles, Bishop of Smyrna, and Dorotheus of Tyre (c. 320 AD) lists<sup>663</sup> Apelles, Bishop of Heraclea as being the original members. Both of these lists date to the 1<sup>st</sup> century, since they both also list the four members of the Seventy who apostatized<sup>664</sup>: Demas, Nicholas of Antioch, Hermogenes, and Phygellus, who were removed from the ranks of the Seventy in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and replaced with others. Since Smyrna and Heraclea are only 200 miles apart, it is to be expected that confusion might arise over the identity of these two Apostles.

Of the Apelles, the Bishop of Smyrna, John Chrysostom noted<sup>665</sup> that the praise that Paul passed on to Apelles is no small thing. Being “approved in Christ” means being blameless!

“There is no praise like this, being blameless, and giving no handle in the things of God. For when Paul says, ‘approved in Christ’, he includes the whole list of virtues. These praises are great, not mere titles of rank; they are of virtue. This same honor Paul paid to all of those mentioned, not just at random, or as addressing several of inferior virtue with the great ones. Since he is addressing one along with another in the same letter, he honors them all alike. By stating the praise particular to each, he sets before us the virtue peculiar to each. He neither gives birth to envy by honoring one and dishonoring another, nor makes them listless and confused, by giving them all the same dignity, though they did not deserve it.”

**Apollos:** Apollos was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was native to Alexandria. Since he knew only the Baptism of John when he came to Ephesus in c. 52 AD (Acts 18:24-28), he must have been away from Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost. Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and explained<sup>666</sup> the things that he had missed. John Chrysostom noted<sup>667</sup> how awakened Apollos was in the Spirit. Apollos was a very eloquent (Acts 18:24) and learned man<sup>668</sup> and vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:28). Gregory of Nyssa wrote<sup>669</sup> that Apollos very effectively watered what Paul had planted. Alexander Roberts wrote<sup>670</sup> that he attributed the great Alexandrian School to the Apostle

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<sup>662</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 10.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 31

<sup>663</sup> Dorotheus, “The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles”, in Lives of Orthodox Christian Saints, New Valaam Trading Company, 2008.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 10

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 10.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for September 10.

<sup>664</sup> For more details on why these four apostles apostatized, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

<sup>665</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 10.

<sup>666</sup> For more details, see the Section titled, “Paul Leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Charge in Ephesus”.

<sup>667</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, Recapitulation.

<sup>668</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, III, 7.

<sup>669</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius, II, 15.

<sup>670</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Elucidation 4”, in Archelaus, Disputations with Manes, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

Apollos. Alexander Roberts further stated<sup>671</sup> that it was Alexandria, not Rome, which was the center of the Christian world in the first three centuries, thanks in part to the foundation laid by the Apostle Apollos. Paul later sent Apollos back to Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:12), and again to Titus on Crete (Titus 3:13) to water some more.

**Aquila and Priscilla:** Aquila was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but was added to the ranks of the Seventy later. Paul first met Aquila and Priscilla<sup>672</sup> in Corinth on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Aquila and Priscilla had been expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius along with all the Jews in Rome (Acts 18:2). Aquila was a tent-maker like Paul, so Paul stayed with them for the year-and-a-half that he was in Corinth. When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla traveled with him, and Paul left them in Ephesus to teach the new Christians while he went back to Antioch. On Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, they were still there, and Paul sent them on ahead to Rome before he wrote his Epistle to the Romans in c. 55 AD. At that time, Claudius had died and Nero was then Emperor. In Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:19) as in Rome (Romans 16:3-5), the Church met in the home of Aquila and Priscilla.

Aquila and Priscilla were not in Rome in 62 AD (Colossians 4:7-18) when Paul was under house-arrest there, and they were in Ephesus in c. 66 AD working with Timothy (2 Timothy 4:19) in his battle against others of the Seventy Apostles who had apostatized.

**Archippus:** Archippus was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but was added to the ranks of the Seventy later. Paul was very close to three people who were from Colossae: Epaphras, Archippus, and Philemon (with his wife Apphia). Philemon and Epaphras were members of the original Seventy; Archippus was not. At the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 53 to 55 AD); the Church in Colossae was getting started, probably at the hands of Epaphras and Archippus was the Bishop there. Paul needed to encourage Archippus to fulfill the ministry which he received in the Lord (Colossians 4:17), indicating that Archippus was having some difficulty. Archippus may have been having so many problems with local heretics that he was considering quitting. Just a few years later, Archippus was martyred along with Philemon and Apphia. Archippus was the Bishop of Colossae and Philemon was the roving Bishop of that whole area. Later on, Epaphras took over for Philemon after Philemon was martyred.

**Aristarchus:** Aristarchus<sup>673</sup> was one of the original Seventy Apostles and traveled with the Apostle Paul extensively. Prior to traveling with Paul, Aristarchus was ordained as Bishop of Apamea, a city on the Orontes River in Syria, where he brought many people to knowledge of God. He was from Thessalonica of Macedonia (Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2).

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<sup>671</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, "Introductory Notice to Peter of Alexandria", in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995

<sup>672</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 14; 2004, February 13; 2003, January 4.  
Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 14.  
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for July 14.

<sup>673</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 14.  
Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15, September 27.  
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 15, September 27  
Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Aristarchus lived very much like John the Baptist<sup>674</sup>, wearing a garment of animal skin, a leather belt and eating locusts<sup>675</sup> and wild honey (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6). As a Bishop in Syria, he would have had easy contact with Paul during the break Paul had between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journeys (Acts 18:22-23), and he began accompanying Paul at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey. Aristarchus also accompanied Paul on the 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey to Rome (Acts 27:2), for which, Paul calls him “My fellow prisoner” (Colossians 4:10). Paul also refers to Aristarchus as “My fellow laborer” (Philemon 1:24).

There are two Apostles named Aristarchus, both mentioned by both Hippolytus and Dorotheus of Tyre as being members of the original Seventy Apostles. The other Aristarchus was beheaded<sup>676</sup> on the same day as Paul.

**Aristobulus:** Aristobulus was<sup>677</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles, and was also the brother of the Apostle Barnabas and the father-in-law of the Apostle Peter. He followed the Apostle Paul for a while (Romans 16:10), and was later consecrated as Bishop of Britain. Britain was a wild and savage people at that time and Aristobulus was at one time beaten and at another time dragged through the marketplace. Nevertheless, by means of these afflictions and no small trials, many of the islanders were influenced by his deeds and words, so that they came to believe in Christ. He consequently built churches, and ordained deacons and presbyters. The blessed apostle reposed in peace.

**Artemas:** Artemas was<sup>678</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles. When Timothy began traveling with Paul on Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul had to ordain someone else in his place. This would have had to have been Artemas, of the Seventy, who was later regarded as the Bishop of Lystra and who had been traveling with Paul and Silas at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Paul sent Artemas as a courier to Titus on Crete (Titus 3:12) c. 14 years later. Little is known about Artemas after the death of Peter and Paul in c. 67 AD except that he stayed in Lystra and he died in peace.

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<sup>674</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 14.

<sup>675</sup> The term “locusts” refers not to an insect, but to the bean of the “locust tree”, which was ground into flour. See [http://www.sierrapotomac.org/W\\_Needham/BlackLocust\\_060515.htm](http://www.sierrapotomac.org/W_Needham/BlackLocust_060515.htm). The “locust tree” is similar to a carob tree.

<sup>676</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15, September 27 both refer to the life of Aristarchus. One says that Aristarchus was beheaded with Paul, but the other doesn’t. Yet both have Aristarchus as Bishop of Apamea.

<sup>677</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 15; 2002, October 31.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, March 16, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for March 16, October 31.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>678</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 30.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

**Asyncritus:** Asyncritus was one<sup>679</sup> of the original Seventy Apostles and was later Bishop of Hyrcania, which was a province of the Persian Empire south of the Caspian Sea. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome. He was later tortured and martyred in Hyrcania by the Jews and Greeks.

**Barnabas:** Barsabas<sup>680</sup> was one<sup>681</sup> of the original Seventy Apostles and was also a long-time associate of the Apostle Paul, even from their youth. The Apostle Barnabas was born<sup>682</sup> in c. 14 BC on the island of Cyprus into the family of the tribe of Levi, and he was named Joseph (Acts 4:36). He received his education at Jerusalem<sup>683</sup>, being associated with his friend and fellow student Saul (the future Apostle Paul) under the renowned teacher of the Law, Gamaliel. Joseph was pious; he frequented the Temple; he strictly observed the fasts and avoided youthful distractions. Barnabas was a very well-known and well-liked member of the Apostles. He had a unique gift for encouraging the brethren, which showed up in the name “Barnabas” that the brethren gave him.

After the Ascension of the Lord to Heaven, Barnabas sold land belonging to him near Jerusalem and he brought the money to the feet of the Apostles, leaving nothing for himself (Acts 4:36-37). After the stoning of Stephen, it was Barnabas who was the leader of the Seventy Apostles, the first in preaching and chief spokesman of the Seventy.

After the scattering of the saints with the stoning of Stephen, and the beginning of the Church at Antioch, the Apostles “sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:22-24). Shortly after arriving in Antioch, “Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Paul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So, it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:25-26). About a year later, the Church in Antioch sent Barnabas and Paul out on their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, where they were also accompanied by others of the Seventy Apostles.

After Barnabas and Paul returned from the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, they went up to Jerusalem accompanied by Titus to meet with the Apostles over the issue of circumcision for the Gentiles. The Church in Jerusalem completely ratified what Barnabas and Paul had been teaching the Gentiles and sent a letter stating this to be read in all the Gentile Churches.

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<sup>679</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 8.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>680</sup> For more information on the Apostle Barnabas, see Mark Kern, The Feast Day of the Apostle Barnabas, St Athanasius Press, 2011.

<sup>681</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2007, June 11.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, June 11.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for June 11.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>682</sup> See <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=101691>. If Barnabas died in 62 AD at age 76, he had to have been born in c. 14 BC, and he was probably 15 to 20 years older than the Apostle Paul.

<sup>683</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, The Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, June 11.

After the Council in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul split up by mutual consent, where Barnabas took John Mark and went back to Cyprus, where he spent most of the rest of his life working with his countrymen. Finally, in c. 62 AD, the Jews on Cyprus got infuriated at Barnabas and incited the pagans against him. Barnabas was stoned to death, and later buried in a cave by John Mark.

**Caesar:** Caesar was one<sup>684</sup> of the original Seventy Apostles and was later a Bishop in the Peloponnese. However, there is no reference to him in the Scriptures and there is no reference regarding him working with the Apostle Paul.

**Carpus:** Carpus was one of the original Seventy Apostles and, according to tradition<sup>685</sup>, he was the first Bishop of Berea. He was ordained by Silas and Timothy after Paul had to leave town quickly in c. 50 AD; for Silas and Timothy to ordain a presbyter by themselves indicates that they had become mature Apostles and they were capable of embarking on their own missionary journeys at this time. In c. 67 AD, just before Paul's martyrdom in Rome, Carpus was in Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), directly across the Aegean Sea from Berea, working as an Apostle there.

**Cephas:** Cephas is one of the only members of the original Seventy Apostles who is not referred to in the Scripture. According to tradition, he was Bishop of Iconium<sup>686</sup>, but this must have been after the martyrdom of Tertius in Iconium. Tertius wrote down Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:22) in c. 55 AD from Corinth, where he was traveling with Paul and was then sent to Iconium as Bishop, where he spent the rest of his life. Probably by the 60's, Tertius was martyred in Iconium and Cephas took over for him as Bishop. Prior to taking over in Iconium, Cephas was probably traveling with Paul much of the time.

**Clement of Sardis:** Clement was one of the original Seventy Apostles<sup>687</sup>, and was later Bishop of Sardis in Western Asia Minor, but he is not to be confused with Clement the Bishop of

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<sup>684</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.  
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 8>.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>685</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 26.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 26>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 26.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>686</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for March 30, December 8>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, December 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>687</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 26.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 26>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 26.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.



Rome in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century. Sardis was one of the Churches that the Apostle John wrote to (Revelation 3:1-4) and was about 50 miles northwest of Ephesus.

Paul addressed Clement of Sardis when he was in Philippi in c. 62 AD (before he was sent to Sardis) asking him to help some of the women in Philippi who were having difficulty.

“I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life” (Philippians 4:2-3).

**Clement of Rome:** Clement of Rome was never considered one of the Seventy Apostles. His journey to Christianity was a very dramatic one and is documented in the “Recognitions of Clement”. Both his parents were related by blood to the emperors in Rome, but he was separated from his parents while still a young man. The “Recognitions” describe his journeys looking for his parents and how he encountered the Apostles Barnabas and Peter, and how they assisted him in recognizing his parents and his twin brothers. The prefect in Antioch heard of Clement’s reunion with his family and wrote about this remarkable reunion to the emperor in Rome. Clement’s father was then recalled to Rome by the emperor and restored to his previous position with honors and wealth. Clement was later ordained Bishop of Rome by Peter before Peter’s martyrdom.

Besides the “Recognitions”, Clement is credited with writing an Epistle to the Church of Corinth while he was Bishop of Rome. There are other documents that some people claim were written by Clement, but not all agree about this.

**Cleopas:** Cleopas, also called Alphaeus, was the father of the Apostles of the Twelve James and Matthew, and he was also one of the original Seventy Apostles. Most say that Cleopas died shortly after Pentecost; however, Dorotheus said<sup>688</sup> that he lived until the late 1<sup>st</sup> century and was crucified by Domitian (ruled 81 to 96 AD).

**Codratus:** Codratus (or Quadratus) was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but was added to the ranks of the Seventy later. As Bishop of Athens, he wrote a defense of Christianity and gave it to Emperor Hadrain; this defense was so strong that Hadrain decreed that Christians should not be persecuted without special cause. When he was stoned, beaten and driven out of Athens, he went to Magnesia where he was martyred.

**Crescens:** Crescens was one of the original Seventy Apostles, but did not work with the Apostle Paul very much. Crescens was ordained<sup>689</sup> as Bishop of Carthage, and later Paul sent him to Galatia (2 Timothy 4:10), where he eventually finished his life. Crescens later went to Gaul<sup>690</sup> but returned to Galatia after ordaining someone in his place there.

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<sup>688</sup> Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

<sup>689</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, July 30.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for January 4, July 30.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20January%204,%20July%2030)

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>690</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

**Crispus:** Crispus was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but may have been added to the ranks of the Seventy later. Paul first met Crispus when Crispus was the Synagogue Ruler in Corinth (Acts 18:5-8). Crispus was baptized by Paul in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14) on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey and faithfully followed Paul after that. Crispus was ordained<sup>691</sup> Bishop of the Greek island of Aegina.

**Demas:** Demas was one of the original Seventy Apostles<sup>692</sup>, but he apostatized in c. 67 AD just before Paul was beheaded (2 Timothy 4:10). He was working with Paul when Paul wrote his Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians in c. 62 AD (Philemon 1:24, Colossians 4:14) during the 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey. He was also with Paul on the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>693</sup>. He very likely also accompanied Paul on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journeys. According to Hippolytus<sup>694</sup>, he became a priest for the idols of Thessalonica after he abandoned Paul (2 Timothy 4:10).

**Dionysius:** Dionysius was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, and was never considered among the ranks of the Seventy. However, he played an important role in the Church in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Dionysius was converted along with his wife Damaris in Athens on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 17:34). At that time, Dionysius was<sup>695</sup> a member of the Areopagus Council (Athenian high court), and was an outstanding jurist on the 9-member council regarding justice for all. At that time Paul ordained Hierotheos as Bishop of Athens, where Dionysius had been a student of Hierotheos. When Hierotheos died in the mid 50's AD, Paul ordained Dionysius in his place. Whereas Hierotheos wrote many wonderful hymns for the Church, Dionysius composed many instructive books<sup>696</sup>.

Dionysius traveled to many places, including Jerusalem to meet the Virgin Mary, and to Rome to visit Paul just before he was beheaded. He also traveled to Gaul with two of the disciples of Bishop Clement of Rome. There he planted many seeds in Paris, Spain and Britain before being martyred<sup>697</sup> by Domitian at the age of 90 in c. 96 AD.

**Epaenetus:** Among the first Paul addressed in Rome was Epaenetus 'Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia to Christ' (Romans 16:5). Epaenetus (or Epenetus) was one of the original Seventy Apostles and he was probably native to Achaia (Corinth and

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<sup>691</sup> <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for January 4.

<sup>692</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 26.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for May 26.

*The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 26.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>693</sup> See the section titled: "The Church of Iconium in Galatia", and also see Holy Apostles Convent, *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, Holy Apostles Convent, 2002, September 24, pp. 589-593.

<sup>694</sup> Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

See also Mark Kern, *Simon Magus the Heresiarch*, St. Athanasius Press, 2004 at

<http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/e-books/>.

<sup>695</sup> *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 3.

Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 3.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 3.

<sup>696</sup> There is some controversy today over the author of these books attributed to Dionysius; some think that the author was a man of the same name who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>697</sup> Some think that the one who was martyred in 96 AD was another man named Dionysius.

Athens are part of Achaia). Since Paul was writing Romans from Corinth (Corinth is in Achaia!) on his second visit there, he must have run into Epaphroditus on his first visit (during his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey) either in Athens or Corinth. Since Epaphroditus was also Bishop of Carthage (in North Africa) by the time of Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, the "first fruits of Achaia to Christ" probably refers to Epaphroditus' conversion in Jerusalem when the Lord sent the Seventy out two by two (Luke 10:1-20). From Paul's affectionate greeting, however, there must have been some contact also on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. We can conclude that Epaphroditus was native to Achaia, and was visiting Jerusalem during Jesus' public ministry, when Jesus selected him as one of the Seventy. As Bishop of Carthage<sup>698</sup> for many years, Epaphroditus must have returned home to Achaia for a visit when he met Paul on Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey.

Since Paul was so affectionate with Epaphroditus in his letter to Rome, it is likely that it was Paul who sent him to Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:5) along with seventeen others of the Seventy (Romans 16:3-15) to counteract the heresy<sup>699</sup> that developed there. Following that Epaphroditus went back to Carthage and finished his life there.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>700</sup> that Paul's praise of Epaphroditus was no small one, and a proof of great excellence and faithfulness in him.

"It is worth learning from this how Paul distributes to each different praise. This praise is no slight one, but very great, and a proof of great excellence in Epaphroditus, that Paul should hold him beloved. Paul had no idea of loving by favor, but by cool judgment. Paul gives further praise: 'Who is the first-fruits of Achaia'. What Paul means is, either that he leaped forward before anyone else, and became a believer (this is no slight praise), or that he displayed more faithful behavior than any other. On this account after saying, 'who is the first-fruits of Achaia', Paul does not stop, but to prevent your suspecting it to be a glory of the world's, he added, 'unto Christ'. Now if in civil matters, he that is first seems to be great and honorable, much more so in these. Since they were probably common folks, Paul speaks of the true noble birth and preeminence, and gives Epaphroditus his honors from this. Paul says, that he 'is the first-fruits', not of Corinth only, but of the whole nation, as having become as it were a door, and an entrance to the rest. This reward is no small one! Such a one will reap much recompense also from the achievements of others, in that he too contributed much toward them by beginning."

**Epaphroditus:** Epaphroditus was one of the original Seventy Apostles, and he played an important role in the Church in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

During the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (c. 53 to 55 AD), it was probably Epaphroditus who founded the Church in Colossae, perhaps with the help of others. At the time that Paul wrote to the Colossians from Rome (c. 62 AD), Epaphroditus was then in Rome with Paul (Colossians 1:7, Colossians 4:12, Philemon 1:23) and Archippus, one of

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<sup>698</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 30.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2030)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>699</sup> For more information, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004.

<sup>700</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 5.

the original Seventy Apostles, was Bishop of Colossae. Epaphras was very active in teaching the Colossians as “a faithful deacon of Christ” (Colossians 1:7-8).

Paul mentioned a “great conflict” (Colossians 2:1) that he had for Colossae and Laodicea. From the text of Colossians, we can infer that Paul got word of what was happening in Colossae from Epaphras, who had journeyed to Rome to seek Paul’s help. Epaphras brought word to Paul about the inroads that the heresies of Simon Magus had been making in Colossae<sup>701</sup>. Evidently things were changing in Colossae and there were a number of heresies present that Epaphras brought to Paul’s attention. Paul answered many of these heresies in his Epistle.

Demetrius of Rostov stated<sup>702</sup> that Epaphras was later the Bishop of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis<sup>703</sup>. This is reasonable, since Archippus, Philemon and Apphia were martyred about the same time as Paul.

**Epaphroditus:** Epaphroditus<sup>704</sup> was one of the original Seventy Apostles. He was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). We first see him in Paul’s letters in c. 62 AD when Paul sent him to Philippi from Rome. Epaphroditus had been longing for the Philippians and was distressed because they were worried about him when he was sick (Philippians 2:26-30). This implies that he had been working with Paul for quite a while already. When Paul passed through Philippi on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Epaphroditus was probably there. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul left Luke behind in Macedonia<sup>705</sup> and Luke worked with several others of the Seventy in Macedonia. On Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, as he passed through Philippi again, Luke started traveling with Paul again. Probably Epaphroditus did so also and Hermas of the original Seventy was left behind in Philippi. Hermas thus became known as the first Bishop of Philippi.

Epaphroditus was later ordained as Bishop for Colophon in Pamphylia<sup>706</sup>.

**Erastus:** Erastus, the Steward of the Jerusalem Church and one of the original Seventy, was mentioned as one of Paul’s deacons (Greek *diaconos*, sometimes translated minister) along with Timothy while Paul was in Ephesus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey. Paul sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time” (Acts 19:21-22). He was also with Paul when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Romans 16:23). Probably Erastus joined Paul from Antioch. Erastus was at first<sup>707</sup> a deacon and treasurer of the Church of Jerusalem. Erastus,

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<sup>701</sup> For more details, see the section titled: “Paul Wrote to the Colossians”.

<sup>702</sup> Demetri of Rostov, “The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints”, tr. Fr. Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2002

<sup>703</sup> Hierapolis was about 15 miles North of Laodicea.

<sup>704</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for March 30, December 8.

*The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>705</sup> See the section of “Paul” on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey titled “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

<sup>706</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

*The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8

<sup>707</sup> <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for January 4.

being an expert in finances and stewardship<sup>708</sup>, went on to serve the Church of Jerusalem in the same capacity. Blessed Theophylact says<sup>709</sup> that he served as steward for the Church at Corinth also. Dorotheus stated<sup>710</sup> that Erastus was later Bishop of Paneas.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>711</sup> something about Gaius and Erastus<sup>712</sup>. By hosting Paul (Romans 16:23), Gaius exhibited the strictness of his life as agreeable to Paul. By referring to Erastus, Paul was quick to point out that the Gospel had reached more than just the poor folks, and that high office and riches are not an impediment to the Kingdom of God.

“Notice what a crown Paul framed for Gaius by bearing witness to such great hospitality in him, and brought in the entire Church into Gaius’ house! (Romans 16:23) When you hear that Gaius was Paul’s host, do not admire him for his generosity only, but also for his strictness of life. Unless he were worthy of Paul’s excellency, Paul would never have lodged there; Paul, who took pains to go beyond many of Christ’s commands, would never have trespassed against that law, which asks us be very particular about who receives us, and about lodging with ‘worthy’ persons (Matthew 10:11). ‘Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus a brother’ (Romans 16:23). There is a purpose in Paul’s adding ‘the treasurer of the city’. As he wrote, ‘All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household’ (Philippians 4:22), that he might show that the Gospel had taken a hold on great folk. Here too Paul mentions the title with a view to the same object; he shows that, to the man who pays attention, neither riches, the cares of government, nor anything else of the kind are a hindrance.”

**Evodius:** Evodius<sup>713</sup> (also spelled Evodus, Euodius, Euodus) was the 1<sup>st</sup> Bishop of Antioch, and it was he who coined the term “Christian” as the Bishop of Antioch (Acts 11:26). Evodius never accompanied Paul on any of his Missionary Journeys, but it was Evodius who Paul reported back to after each of his first two Missionary Journeys (Acts 14:26-28; 18:22-23). Evodius was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was martyred in c. 64 AD by Vespasian, just before the destruction of Jerusalem, and he was then replaced as Bishop by Ignatius.

Evodius wrote several works, but all have been destroyed during the persecution of the Church at various times. One of these works was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and described the circumstances where she gave birth to Christ at the age of fifteen. We know about these works because they were quoted by various others at different times.

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<sup>708</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

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<sup>710</sup> Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

<sup>711</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXII, v. 23.

<sup>712</sup> Erastus was native to Lystra. See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of the Apostles”, 10, in Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

<sup>713</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 7.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 8](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20September%208).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 7.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

**Fortunatus:** Fortunatus was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but may have been added to the ranks of the Seventy later<sup>714</sup>. He carried<sup>715</sup> a letter to Paul from Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:15-17) along with Paul's reply, which we know as "1 Corinthians". He was later beheaded for the Faith.

**Gaius:** Gaius<sup>716</sup> was one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles, yet Paul felt it necessary to baptize Gaius in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Gaius had also been ordained an elder for the Church in Derbe on Barnabas and Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. Gaius was still in Derbe when Paul and Silas returned on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Since Gaius was with Paul at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (Romans 16:23), Gaius must have started accompanying Paul and Silas as they began their 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Gaius then accompanied Paul on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 19:29).

Paul refers to the baptism of Gaius and Crispus (1 Corinthians 1:14) as being the only two he baptized in Corinth besides the household of Stephanas. Since Paul wrote this from Ephesus on his way back to Corinth on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, the baptism must have occurred on his first visit to Corinth on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey or at Derbe on the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. Gaius must have started to accompany Paul on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey such that we now see him traveling with Paul when Paul arrived in Ephesus on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 20:4). Gaius went on to become Bishop of Ephesus after Timothy.

Tertullian argued<sup>717</sup> that Paul's mission was not to baptize, but to preach; however, Paul did baptize when necessity called for it. This suggests that the baptism of Gaius was some exceptional circumstance.

Paul said, 'For Christ sent me not to baptize' (1 Corinthians 1:17), as if by this argument baptism were done away! For if so, why did he baptize Gaius, Crispus, and the house of Stephanas? However, even if Christ had not sent him to baptize, yet He had given other apostles the precept to baptize. But these words were written to the Corinthians with respect to the circumstances of that particular time; where schisms and dissensions were agitated among them, while one attributed everything to Paul, another everything to Apollos. The 'peace-making' Apostle Paul, for fear he should seem to claim all gifts for himself, said that he had been sent 'not to baptize, but to preach'. Preaching comes first; baptizing comes second. Therefore, I think baptizing was permitted to him to whom preaching was the norm.

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<sup>714</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, January 4.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for January 4.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20January%204)

Fortunatus is not listed as one of the Seventy by:

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>715</sup> For more details, see the section titled "Paul's Epistles to Corinth".

<sup>716</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for November 5.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20November%205)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>717</sup> Tertullian, On Baptism, III, ii, 14.

**Hermas:** Hermas was<sup>718</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later Bishop of the city of Philippi<sup>719</sup>, where he died as a martyr. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome; it may have been Luke who did so when Luke was in Macedonia. Hermas is best known for an instructive book he wrote called “The Shepherd”, which was very popular in the first few centuries, and was treated as Scripture by many until the canon of the Scripture was settled in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.

**Hermes:** Hermes was<sup>720</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later Bishop of Dalmatia<sup>721</sup>. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome.

**Hermogenes:** Hermogenes was<sup>722</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles, but he apostatized to follow the arch heretic Simon Magus. The Apostle Paul referred to Hermogenes:

“This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (2 Timothy 1:14-15).

Since Hermogenes had already apostatized before Paul was beheaded, his time in Ephesus must have been short-lived. When Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 56-58 AD), only the idolaters were in Ephesus<sup>723</sup>, not the heretics; similarly, when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians<sup>724</sup> (c. 62 AD). When Paul wrote his first Epistle to Timothy<sup>725</sup> (c. 64 AD), Paul asked Timothy to remain in Ephesus as Bishop, probably to counteract the teachings of Hermogenes and Phygellus<sup>726</sup>, who was Bishop there. Paul stated,

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<sup>718</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8, May 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for March 8, May 31.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>719</sup> There is some disagreement about this. Dorotheus says Dalmatia, which is near Philippi; the Prologue says Philippopolis instead of Philippi.

<sup>720</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 8; 2002, November 5.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for November 5.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>721</sup> Dorotheus said that Hermes was Bishop of Philippopolis and Hermas was Bishop of Dalmatia, exactly backward from what others said.

<sup>722</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

<sup>723</sup> See the sections titled:

“Paul’s Return to Ephesus”

“The Jewish Exorcists and the Magicians”

“The Controversy over the Temple of Diana”

“The Widespread Renown of the Apostle Paul”

“The Riot over the Temple of Diana”

“Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus”

<sup>724</sup> At this time Paul warned the Ephesians about the heresies of the followers of Simon Magus. Earlier Paul had warned the Ephesians that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29 ).

<sup>725</sup> Phygellus was apparently one of these wolves, and he appears to have been Bishop of Ephesus at this time.

<sup>726</sup> Phygellus was probably in league with Hermogenes, another member of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized also. Alexander and Philetus ( ), not Apostles, helped Phygellus also.

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach<sup>727</sup> no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

This was a formidable task for Timothy, since Phygellus and Hermogenes were members of the original Seventy Apostles, but Timothy was not; besides, Timothy was probably much younger. This was something akin to Timothy coming to Ephesus and defrocking two archbishops.

Siding with Phygellus and Hermogenes against Timothy and Paul were Alexander, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Alexander and Hymenaeus were so bad that Paul felt it necessary to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh in hope that they might be saved (1 Timothy 1:20). Paul stated to Timothy very strongly that he (Timothy) was involved in warfare against these heretics

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18).

Paul quoted Hymenaeus and Philetus as “straying concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:18). Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

Tertullian lumped together<sup>728</sup> Hymenaeus, Philetus, Hermogenes and Phygellus in speaking of those who deserted Paul and the things of God, and he compared them to Judas Iscariot.

“The Scripture says, ‘Your eyes are upon the ways of the children of men’ (Jeremiah 32:19 LXX). ‘Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart’ (1 Samuel 16:7 LXX). ‘The Lord knows those who are His’ (2 Timothy 2:19); and ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted’ (Matthew 15:13); and ‘So the last will be first, and the first last’ (Matthew 20:16); and He carries ‘His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor’ (Matthew 3:12). Let the chaff of a fickle faith fly off as much as it will at every blast of temptation, all the purer will be that heap of grain which shall be laid up in the granary of the Lord. Did not certain of the disciples turn back from the Lord Himself, when they were offended? Yet the rest did not therefore think that they must turn away from following Him, but because they knew that He was the Word of Life, and had come from God, they continued in His company to the very last, after He had gently inquired of them whether they also would go away (John 6:66-67). It is a comparatively small thing, that certain men, like Phygellus, Hermogenes, Philetus, and Hymenaeus, deserted Paul (2 Timothy 1:15, 2:17; 1 Timothy 1:20); the betrayer of Christ was himself one of the apostles. We are surprised at seeing His churches forsaken by some men, although the things which we suffer after the example of Christ Himself, show us to be Christians. ‘They went out from us, but

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<sup>727</sup> Those charged with “teaching” were usually the Bishops.

<sup>728</sup> Tertullian, The Prescription Against Heretics, II, I, 3.



they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us” (1 John 2:19).

**Herodion:** Herodion traveled with Paul on many of Paul’s missionary journeys<sup>729</sup> and Paul called him his kinsman (Romans 16:11) when Herodion was in Rome in c. 55 AD (at Peter’s and Paul’s request). He is often confused with another person called Rhodion, who some think is just a contraction of Herodion. But the consensus seems to be that they were two different persons.

Hippolytus refers<sup>730</sup> to Herodion as one of the original Seventy Apostles and the Bishop of Tarsus, but Herodion didn’t remain there long. Herodion was also referred to in some accounts as the Bishop of Neoparthia<sup>731</sup> and in others as the Bishop of New Patras<sup>732</sup>, where he was severely beaten and left for dead by the idolaters and the Jews. But he miraculously survived and continued to accompany the Apostles Paul and Peter. Finally, he was beheaded by Emperor Nero in c. 67 AD on the same day that Peter was crucified and Paul was beheaded. The most likely sequence of events is that Herodion was the Presbyter (later called Bishop) of Tarsus before or during Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey; then he accompanied Paul on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey and part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey. After that he was sent to Rome in c. 55 AD with the 17 other members of the Seventy Apostles who are addressed in Romans 16. After he completed his mission in Rome, he was assigned to help out in either Neoparthia or New Patras.

**James:** James was the step-brother of Jesus and one of the original Seventy Apostles. That is, he was the natural son of Joseph, the Virgin Mary’s husband, from before he married the Virgin. After Pentecost, this James<sup>733</sup> was chosen by Peter, James and John (the sons of Zebedee) as the first Bishop of Jerusalem. After Paul’s conversion, James was there in Jerusalem to receive Paul and also to hustle him out of town to avoid a murder plot (Galatians 1:18-19; Acts 9:28-30). James asked Paul specifically to remember the poor in Jerusalem (Galatians 2:10), who were being persecuted by the confiscation of all their property.

When Paul returned to Jerusalem after the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, it was James the Lord’s brother who presided over the Council of Jerusalem regarding circumcision. It was he who insisted on drafting a letter to all the Gentile Churches stating that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised (Acts 15:1-30).

When Paul returned to Jerusalem after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, James insisted that Paul be purified by the Mosaic Law rituals (Acts 21:18-26) to show everyone that Paul kept the Law<sup>734</sup> (which Paul had been doing). James pointed out to Paul at this time how many thousands of his brethren had left the idolatry of the Pharisees and Sadducees to become Christians (Acts 21:20).

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<sup>729</sup> <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 8.

<sup>730</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>731</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

<sup>732</sup> *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, March 28.

<sup>733</sup> Note that James the Lord’s brother (Galatians 1:19) is not the same person as James, the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13). James the Lord’s brother remained in Jerusalem the rest of his life and was murdered in front of the Temple in c. 62 AD. James the son of Alphaeus spent most of the rest of his life after Pentecost in Egypt and was crucified there.

<sup>734</sup> For more details on what James was doing by insisting on this, see the section titled: “What Was Bishop James’ Methodology in Jerusalem?”

During Paul's two years in prison in Caesarea, while he was waiting for his appeal to Caesar in Rome to be processed, James sent a number of the brethren from Jerusalem to visit Paul since Paul was allowed free access to visitors (Acts 24:23-24).

After Paul was sent to Rome, comfortably out of the reach of the Jewish Zealots in Jerusalem, they took out their anger and frustration on Bishop James and murdered him<sup>735</sup> right in front of the Temple in c. 62 AD.

**Jason:** Jason was<sup>736</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles. Jason was a native of Tarsus and had been Bishop of Tarsus during Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey. According to tradition<sup>737</sup>, Jason was still Bishop of Tarsus when Paul started his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>738</sup> and began traveling with Paul on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Jason evidently had a real vision for the impact that Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey would have on the world and wanted to join Paul. After leaving Philippi, Paul, Silas and Timothy visited Thessalonica, and stayed with Jason (Acts 17:7), who was now living in Thessalonica. Knowing that he would come to Thessalonica, Paul must have sent Jason ahead to obtain a house where everyone could stay when they got there. Again, Paul's preaching created an uproar, but Jason put up Paul's bail, and the brethren sent them away by night to Berea, which was also in Macedonia (Acts 17:10-12). Jason was worthy to be admired in how he put himself in danger for Paul's sake (Acts 17:5-9). We might note that just as Paul and Silas took a beating for the sake of the Christians in Philippi<sup>739</sup> on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, so Jason did in Thessalonica a few months later. Jason was imitating Paul; he was probably traveling with Paul and Silas and saw what happened in Philippi. Jason could see the benefit to others in taking a beating on their behalf (1 Thessalonians 2:1-2). Jason later joined up with Paul in Corinth (Romans 16:21) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, probably leaving Silvanus behind in Thessalonica as Bishop. On Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, when he wrote Romans, Paul was staying in Corinth; with him in Corinth were Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (Romans 16:21), all members of the original Seventy and now doing Apostolic work with Paul. Jason later went on his own missionary journey to establish the Church on the Island of Corfu in the Peloponnesus (West coast of Greece), along with the Apostle of the Seventy, Sosipater<sup>740</sup>.

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<sup>735</sup> For more details on the death of James, the Lord's brother, see the section titled: "The Murder of James the Lord's Brother in Jerusalem".

<sup>736</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 29.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 28](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%2028).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>737</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 28

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>738</sup> Jason is traditionally known as the Bishop of Tarsus, but he also was a key helper of Paul on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9). After Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Jason teamed up with Sosipater to evangelize the island of Corfu. The only time he could have been Bishop of Tarsus is prior to Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey.

<sup>739</sup> For more details, see the section titled: "Paul and Silas Took a Beating for the Philippian Christians".

<sup>740</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 28](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%2028).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 29.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

**Justus:** Justus, also known as Joseph, Barsabas, Judas (Acts 1:23, 15:22) and Jesus (Colossians 4:11), was Jesus' older step-brother (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3), one of the leading men in the Jerusalem Church, and himself a prophet (Acts 15:32). He was one of the original Seventy Apostles<sup>741</sup> and he was one of two put forward to replace Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve Apostles (Acts 1:15-26). Justus and Silas were sent to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas after the Council of Jerusalem to confirm the judgment of the Council that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised (Acts 15:22-23). Silas continued with Paul on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, but Justus returned to Jerusalem (Acts 15:32-34). Later Justus worked with Paul when Paul was under house-arrest in Rome (Colossians 4:11). Justus continued to be Bishop of Eleutheropolis<sup>742</sup> and died there as a martyr. He is also credited<sup>743</sup> with writing a book called "Divine Peace".

**Linus:** The only time we encounter Linus in the Scriptures is in c. 67 AD when Paul wrote to Timothy just before his death in Rome. Linus was Bishop of Rome at that time, but he died<sup>744</sup> soon afterward in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Emperor Vespasian (i.e. 70 AD) after having been Bishop of Rome for 12 years. Yet Linus was one of the original Seventy Apostles<sup>745</sup> appointed by the Lord Jesus (Luke 10). From tradition<sup>746</sup>, Linus was the first Bishop of Rome (starting in c. 58 AD) and was ordained by Peter before Peter had to leave Rome. We note that this fits well with Romans 16; since Linus isn't mentioned by Paul, he had to have been ordained after 55 AD<sup>747</sup>. This means that Linus was Bishop of Rome before the death of Peter<sup>748</sup>. Ignatius of Antioch referred<sup>749</sup> to Linus as having been a deacon to the Apostle Paul at one time, just as

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<sup>741</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.

[http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for October 30](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20October%2030).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>742</sup> Eleutheropolis was located just to the West of the Dead Sea.

<sup>743</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

<sup>744</sup> From Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 13, Linus died in the second year of Emperor Vespasian or about 70 AD.

<sup>745</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, November 5.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

[http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for November 5](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20November%205).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>746</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, III, iii, 3.

Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, V, 6.

Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men, 15.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17.

[http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for May 17](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20May%2017).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>747</sup> That is, Paul wrote Romans in c. 55 AD.

From Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 13, Linus was Bishop of Rome for 12 years

<sup>748</sup> There are some opinions that Linus, Anencletus and Clement were all co-presbyters in Rome for a while. See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "Introductory Note to the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians", in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Hendrickson Publications, Peabody, MA, 1995.

<sup>749</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Trallians, 7.

Stephen was to James in Jerusalem. This must have occurred prior to 55 AD. From this we can conclude that Linus traveled with Paul during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey and possible the latter part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Linus was martyred in Rome after Peter and Paul, and Clement became Bishop of Rome after that. It is quite possible<sup>750</sup> that Linus and Clement were co-presbyters for a while in Rome and that Clement, who was related to the Emperors, took over for Linus after Linus' death.

**Lucius:** Lucius<sup>751</sup> was Bishop of Laodicea in Northern Syria<sup>752</sup>. When Paul wrote Romans, he was in the middle of his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey and was staying in Corinth at the time. With him in Corinth were Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (Romans 16:21), all members of the original Seventy and now doing Apostolic work with Paul; they were also kinsmen of Paul (Romans 16:21).

**Luke:** Luke the Evangelist was<sup>753</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles, was native to Antioch and was trained as a physician (Colossians 4:14). In writing his Gospel, Luke addressed it to Theophilus (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1), who was then governor of Antioch. Luke's writing style included more attention to details than the other Gospel writers.

Luke did not travel with Barnabas and Paul on the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>754</sup>. We can see this from the text of Acts, where Luke describes the events of that time in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person<sup>755</sup> (they did this; they did that). On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Luke switches to the 1<sup>st</sup> person (we did this; we did that), indicating that Luke had joined Paul and Silas in Philippi on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Living in Antioch, Luke had become well-acquainted with Paul from the account that Paul brought back after the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey.

In the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, after Paul and Silas left Philippi, Luke was left behind with several others of the original Seventy Apostles to care for the Church that was established there. We can see this again from the text of Acts, where Luke switches back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (Acts 17:1) to describe the events of the remainder of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>756</sup>. As Paul passed through Macedonia on the 3<sup>rd</sup>

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<sup>750</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "Introductory Note to the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians", in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Hendrickson Publications, Peabody, MA, 1995.

<sup>751</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 10.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 10>.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 10.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>752</sup> This is not the same Laodicea that was near Ephesus, and which was addressed by the Apostle John (Revelation 3:14-22).

<sup>753</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 18.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 18.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 18, January 4>.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>754</sup> For more details, see the section: "Barnabas and Paul Take Their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey".

<sup>755</sup> Compare Acts 14:1-3, 16:4, 7 (they did this or that) with Acts 16:11, 16 (we did this or that). Luke stayed in Philippi (Acts 17:1), where we notice that Luke switches back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (they passed through..).

<sup>756</sup> For more details, see the section:

"The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi"

"Others of the Seventy Worked with Luke in Macedonia"

"Paul Picks Up Luke in Macedonia"

"Epaphroditus Also Joins Paul in Philippi"

Missionary Journey about 5 years later, Luke then rejoined Paul (Acts 20:5-6), where Paul left others behind in Macedonia to fill in for Luke. During those 5 years, Luke had done an admirable job working as an Apostle.

On the first part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey, that is the Journey to Rome in chains, Luke and Aristarchus accompanied Paul on the ship that was lost at sea. We can ascertain this also from Luke's use of the 1<sup>st</sup> person to describe these events<sup>757</sup>.

On the second part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey, that is, the two years of house-arrest in Rome, Luke's account ends<sup>758</sup> before Paul was released from house-arrest. Most of those years, Luke was with Paul in his travels and in his house-arrest. As Paul was writing Epistles from Rome to Philemon, the Colossians, the Philippians, the Hebrews and the Ephesians, Luke was drafting his account of the Acts of the Apostles, with Paul reviewing it<sup>759</sup>. According to Dorotheus<sup>760</sup>, it was the Apostle Peter who had asked Luke to write the Acts of the Apostles.

After the death of Paul, Luke continued his work as an Apostle for almost 20 years, traveling from place to place: Italy, Dalmatia, Gaul and especially Macedonia, where he had spent 5 years earlier. When he was quite elderly, Luke traveled to Egypt and Libya, where he ordained as Bishop Abilius as successor to Annas, who had been ordained by the Evangelist Mark.

Luke returned to Greece and raised up a number of Churches, where the newly enlightened believers destroyed all the pagan shrines. At the age of 84, Luke was crucified on an olive tree in Achaia.

The Memoirs of Edessa state<sup>761</sup> that Luke placed his record of the Acts of the Apostles in the hands of Priscilla and Aquila for safekeeping, and that they accompanied him after the death of Paul.

“Luke the evangelist had such diligence that he wrote the exploits of the Acts of the Apostles, and the ordinances and laws of the ministry of their priesthood, and where each one of them went. By his diligence, Luke wrote these things, and he placed them in the hand of Priscilla and Aquila, his disciples. They accompanied Luke up to the day of his death, just as Timothy and Erastus of Lystra, and Menaeus, the first disciples of the Apostles, accompanied Paul until he was taken up to the city of Rome because he had withstood Tertullus the orator” (Acts 24:1-21).

During his life, Luke created many icons, mostly of the Virgin Mary holding her young son, Jesus. He brought two of these to the Virgin Mary for her approval. Many of Luke's original icons still exist.

**Mark the Evangelist:** Mark the Evangelist was<sup>762</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was a follower of the Apostle Peter, who sent him as Bishop to Alexandria<sup>763</sup>. Mark the

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<sup>757</sup> For more details, see the section titled “The Beginning of the Journey to Rome”.

<sup>758</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, Recapitulation.

<sup>759</sup> For example, see Philemon 1:22-24, Colossians 4:14-15.

<sup>760</sup> Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles

<sup>761</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of the Apostles”, 8-10, in Memoirs of Edessa, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

<sup>762</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 25.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 25.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 25>.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Evangelist was native to Cyrene of Pentapolis, which is near Libya, and never had any contact with the Apostle Paul.

**Mark the Cousin of Barnabas:** This Mark was<sup>764</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later the Bishop of Apollonia in Samaria, just north of Joppa on the Mediterranean coast. Since Barnabas was native to Cyprus (Acts 4:36), Mark, his cousin, probably was also native to Cyprus. We don't hear from this man named Mark until c. 62 AD when Paul is under house-arrest in Rome; then Mark, Barnabas' cousin is there with Paul.

“I am sending Tychicus to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here. Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me” (Colossians 4:8-11).

Since Mark, the cousin of Barnabas was with Paul during the time of house-arrest, and since Paul wrote to the Colossians and to Philemon at about this time, Paul's reference to Mark in his Epistle to Philemon probably also refers to Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (Philemon 1:23-24).

About five years later, Paul was back in Rome under hard arrest, where he knew that he would not escape this time. Demas of the original Seventy had just apostatized and only Luke was with Paul at this time. Paul asked Timothy to get Mark and bring him to Rome when he comes himself. This Mark is probably Barnabas' cousin also.

“Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica -- Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus” (2 Timothy 4:9-12).

**John surnamed Mark:** John Mark was<sup>765</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles, and was later Bishop of Byblos in Phoenicia just north of Beirut on the Mediterranean coast. Since Byblos is just 140 miles north of Apollonia, it is easy to see how accounts of John Mark and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas could have gotten confused.

The family of John surnamed Mark lived in the Jerusalem area, which means that John Mark was probably native to the Jerusalem area. When an angel broke Peter out of prison, Peter

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<sup>763</sup> For a detailed study of the life of Mark the Evangelist, see Mark Kern, The Feast Day of Mark the Evangelist, St. Athanasius Press, April 25, 2011.

<sup>764</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.

[http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for October 30](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20October%2030).

<sup>765</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 27.

[http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for September 27](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20September%2027).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 27.

first came to the house of John Mark's mother to let them know that he was out (Acts 12:12-16), before he left town.

John, surnamed Mark, accompanied Barnabas and Paul on the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, but he abandoned the Apostles<sup>766</sup> when the first hardship came up as they started climbing the mountains toward Antioch of Pisidia. When it came time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul didn't. So, Barnabas took John Mark and headed to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas and headed overland to the Churches that he and Barnabas had established on the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>767</sup>.

Later in his life John Mark attained great boldness before God, so that his very shadow healed the sick<sup>768</sup>, just like Peter's shadow had in earlier years (Acts 5:15).

**Narcissus:** Narcissus was<sup>769</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was sent to Rome by either the Apostle Andrew or Philip in c. 55 AD. Paul greeted him in Rome, but Paul may not have known Narcissus very well or he may not have worked with him very much since Paul didn't have much to say about him (Romans 16:11). Narcissus was made Bishop of Athens by either the Apostle Andrew or Philip, but this was quite a bit after 55 AD. Hierotheos was the first Bishop of Athens and died shortly after 55 AD, after which Paul consecrated Dionysius the Areopagite as Bishop of Athens. Narcissus must have followed Dionysius. He was later tortured and martyred in Athens.

**Nicholas of Antioch:** Nicholas was<sup>770</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and also one of the first seven "deacons" (Acts 6:5). After Philip of the Seventy evangelized Samaria, Nicholas was sent<sup>771</sup> to Samaria as Bishop. There he came under the corrupting influence of Simon Magus and began to deviate from the teachings of the Twelve Apostles in favor of Simon's teachings.

Nicholas never had any contact with the Apostle Paul, but his (and Simon's) teachings caused considerable trouble for the Apostle Paul and the Early Church. Each of Paul's Epistles deals<sup>772</sup> with some aspect of the teachings of Simon (and Nicholas).

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<sup>766</sup> For details, see the section: "John Mark Abandons His Apostleship in Pamphylia".

<sup>767</sup> For details, see the section: "Visiting the Churches from the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey".

<sup>768</sup> [http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for September 27](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20September%2027).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 27.

<sup>769</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31; 2002, November 14. The reference included in the history of the Apostle Philip on November 14 could be another man named Narcissus.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

[http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for March 16, October 31](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20March%2016,%20October%2031).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>770</sup> Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>771</sup> For considerably more details on the life of Nicholas of Antioch, see Mark Kern, The First Seven Deacons, St. Athanasius Press, 2007.

<sup>772</sup> For example, see the sections:

"Paul Wrote to the Colossians"

"Paul Wrote to the Philippians"

"Paul Probably Wrote to the Hebrews at This Time"

"Paul Wrote to the Ephesians"

"Paul Wrote to Timothy the First Time"

"Paul Wrote to Titus"

"Paul Wrote to Timothy Again"

**Olympas:** Olympas was one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles and a follower of the Apostle Peter<sup>773</sup>. Olympas traveled continuously with Peter and never got a chance to settle down as Bishop of any city. In c. 67 AD, when Peter was crucified and Paul was beheaded, Olympas was beheaded at Nero's command also.

**Onesimus:** Onesimus was<sup>774</sup> probably not one of the original members of the Seventy, but he may have been added later. He was originally a slave of Philemon, who stole something of Philemon's and headed to Rome. In Rome, he met<sup>775</sup> the Apostle Paul, who was still under house-arrest, and Paul converted him and baptized him (Philemon 1:10). After serving Paul in Rome for a while, Paul sent Onesimus to Colossae, along with Tychicus, to deliver his Epistle to the Colossians, and after that to deliver his Epistle to Philemon (Colossians 4:7-9). Paul asked for Philemon's blessing to free Onesimus, which Philemon did, and Onesimus continued to travel with Paul when Paul was released from house-arrest.

After the death of Paul, Onesimus was made Bishop of Berea<sup>776</sup>. As an old man during the reign of Trajan (98 AD to 117 AD), Onesimus was arrested, taken to Rome, tortured for many days, and finally martyred in Puteoli according to Dorotheus<sup>777</sup>.

**Onesiphorus:** Onesiphorus was<sup>778</sup> one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles and Paul and Silas stayed at his house<sup>779</sup> while they were in Iconium on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Onesiphorus had a wife and some children<sup>780</sup>, but they were not recorded as traveling with him; perhaps the children were too young. Onesiphorus was very helpful<sup>781</sup> to Paul in Ephesus on Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, and he probably began traveling with Paul beginning with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. Onesiphorus was still in Ephesus, now helping Timothy, when Paul was about to be executed (2 Timothy 4:19).

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See also Mark Kern, *Simon Magus the Heresiarch*, St. Athanasius Press, 2004 at <http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/bible-study-downloads/>.

<sup>773</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10. [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for November 10](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20November%2010).

*The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>774</sup> *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, February 15.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, February 15.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for February 15](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20February%2015).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>775</sup> For details, see the section titled: "Paul Met Onesimus in Rome".

<sup>776</sup> Some think that this Onesimus was Bishop of Ephesus after Timothy. This is probably not the case. See the section titled: "Paul Met Onesimus in Rome".

<sup>777</sup> Dorotheus of Tyre, *The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles*.

<sup>778</sup> *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 7.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 7.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 7](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20September%207).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>779</sup> For details, see the section titled: "The Church of Iconium in Galatia".

<sup>780</sup> *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 24.

<sup>781</sup> For details, see the section titled: "Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus".



After Paul's death in c. 67 AD, Onesiphorus was Bishop of Colophon, which is located between Ephesus and Smyrna. He was martyred there by being drawn and quartered<sup>782</sup>. Dorotheus stated<sup>783</sup> that at one time he was also Bishop of Cyrene.

**Parmenas:** Parmenas was<sup>784</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and also one of the first Seven Deacons. Parmenas was ordained Bishop of the city of Soli on Cyprus, but he became sick shortly afterward and died in Jerusalem in front of the Apostles. Others say<sup>785</sup> that Parmenas' sickness came much later during the reign of Trajan (98 – 117 AD).

**Patrobus:** Patrobus (also spelled Patrobulus) was<sup>786</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later Bishop of Naples and Puteoli in Italy. When he was sent to Rome in c. 55 AD, he didn't have very far to go. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome.

**Philemon & Apphia:** Philemon was<sup>787</sup> one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles and Apphia was his wife and helper in everything he did. Philemon and Apphia were very wealthy and were also very close to the Apostle Paul along with Epaphras and Archippus in Colossae. While Archippus was the Bishop of Colossae, Philemon was a roving Bishop in charge of Colossae and neighboring towns – possibly like an archbishop today. As Philemon traveled around to various towns near Colossae, Apphia worked with the local poor and prepared her house in Colossae for the Church to meet in. At the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 53 to 55 AD); the Church in Colossae was getting started, probably at the hands of Epaphras.

When Paul wrote his Epistle to Philemon, the primary issue he addressed was the status of Philemon's former slave Onesimus. Onesimus had stolen something of Philemon's and headed to Rome. In Rome, Onesimus met<sup>788</sup> the Apostle Paul, who was still under house-arrest, and Paul converted him and baptized him (Philemon 1:10). After serving Paul in Rome for a while, Paul sent Onesimus to Colossae, along with Tychicus, to deliver his Epistle to Philemon

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<sup>782</sup> That is, he was bound behind four wild horses, and the horses were chased off in four directions. In most cases, both arms and one leg would be ripped off, and his body would be dragged along by one of the horses. Centuries later, this kind of execution came to be called "Drawn and quartering". Betting may have also occurred regarding which of the four horses dragged his body.

<sup>783</sup> Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

<sup>784</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 28.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>785</sup> [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 28](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2028)

<sup>786</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for November 5](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20November%205).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>787</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 22.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, February 19.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for February 19, November 22](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20February%2019,%20November%2022).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>788</sup> For details, see the section titled: "Paul Met Onesimus in Rome".

(Colossians 4:7-9). Paul asked for Philemon's blessing to free Onesimus, which Philemon did, and Onesimus continued to travel with Paul when Paul was released from house-arrest. At the same time that Paul wrote about Onesimus, he also asked Philemon to prepare a guest-room for him for when he visits Colossae next, since Paul had either never been to Colossae, or had been there only briefly.

Philemon, Apphia and Archippus were martyred<sup>789</sup> by the pagans of that area about the same time as the Apostle Paul during the last years of Emperor Nero. During a pagan festival, some of the rioters stormed into the Church that met in Philemon's and Apphia's house and they dragged off Philemon, Apphia and Archippus to the local magistrate. Archippus was stabbed to death en route, while Philemon and Apphia were later buried up to their waist and stoned to death.

**Philip:** Philip<sup>790</sup> was a Samaritan, born in Caesarea and one of the original Seventy Apostles<sup>791</sup>; he was Bishop of the city of Caesarea, where he lived with his four virgin daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:8-9). We need to distinguish this Philip from the Philip who was one of the Twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:14). Philip of the Seventy was also chosen as one of the first "deacons" along with Stephen (Acts 6:5). Philip of the Seventy worked a great deal of wonders such that he astonished the magician Simon Magus in Samaria (Acts 8:13). When Peter and John came to Samaria, Simon tried to purchase the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18) so that he could do what they were doing. Peter told Simon in effect, "Take your money and go to hell" (Acts 8:20). After Philip left Samaria, the Apostles in Jerusalem sent Nicholas of Antioch to Samaria as Bishop, but Nicholas was corrupted by Simon and he later apostatized to follow Simon's teachings.

In the meantime, Philip was called by the Holy Spirit to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza (Acts 8:26-38). Philip did so and thus he sent the message of the Resurrection to Ethiopia. Shortly after this, Matthew and Matthias of the Twelve Apostles went to Ethiopia themselves.

After the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized, Philip was caught up by the Holy Spirit and was teleported to Azotus – about 40 miles away (Acts 8:39-40).

We don't hear from Philip of the Seventy for over 25 years, and by then he was Bishop of Caesarea. Paul passed through Caesarea at that time on his way to Jerusalem and four years of captivity. Paul stayed at the house of Philip (Acts 21:8-10), where we notice that Philip has four virgin daughters who are prophetesses. Philip's daughters would be in their early 30's at this time.

Philip went on to become Bishop of the city of Tralles in Asia Minor, where he converted many pagans, and eventually died of old age.

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<sup>789</sup> <http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> for February 19, November 22.

<sup>790</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 11.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 11.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> for October 11.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>791</sup> For many more details about the life of the Deacon Philip, see Mark Kern, The First Seven Deacons, St. Athanasius Press, 2011.

**Philologus and Julia:** Philologus (with his wife Julia) was<sup>792</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later ordained by the Apostle Andrew as Bishop of Sinope (near the Black Sea). When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:15), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is probably Andrew of the Twelve Apostles, who sent him to Rome.

**Phlegon:** Phlegon<sup>793</sup> was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was Bishop of the city of Marathon in Thrace, where he was martyred. When Luke spent about 5 years in Macedonia, Phlegon probably worked with Luke. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome.

**Phygellus:** Phygellus was<sup>794</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles, but he apostatized to follow the arch heretic Simon Magus. The Apostle Paul referred to Phygellus:

“This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (2 Timothy 1:14-15).

Hippolytus referred to Phygellus as the Bishop of Ephesus<sup>795</sup>, yet this is not recorded in any of Paul’s letters. Since Phygellus had already apostatized before Paul was beheaded, Phygellus’ time as Bishop of Ephesus must have been short-lived. When Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 56-58 AD), only the idolaters were prominent in Ephesus<sup>796</sup>, not the heretics; similarly, when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians<sup>797</sup> (c. 62 AD). When Paul wrote his first Epistle to Timothy<sup>798</sup> (c. 64 AD), Paul asked Timothy to remain in Ephesus as Bishop, probably to counteract the teachings of Phygellus<sup>799</sup> who was Bishop there. Paul stated,

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<sup>792</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.  
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for November 5.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>793</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.  
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 8.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>794</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5  
Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

<sup>795</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>796</sup> See the sections titled:

“Paul’s Return to Ephesus”

“The Jewish Exorcists and the Magicians”

“The Controversy over the Temple of Diana”

“The Widespread Renown of the Apostle Paul”

“The Riot over the Temple of Diana”

“Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus”

<sup>797</sup> At this time Paul warned the Ephesians about the heresies of the followers of Simon Magus. Earlier Paul had warned the Ephesians that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29 ).

<sup>798</sup> Phygellus was apparently one of these wolves, and he appears to have been Bishop of Ephesus at this time.

<sup>799</sup> Phygellus was probably in league with Hermogenes, another member of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized also. Alexander and Philetus ( ), not Apostles, helped Phygellus also.

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach<sup>800</sup> no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

This was a formidable task for Timothy, since Phygellus was a member of the original Seventy Apostles, but Timothy was not; besides, Timothy was probably much younger.

Siding with Phygellus and against Timothy and Paul were Hermogenes<sup>801</sup>, Alexander, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Alexander and Hymenaeus were so bad that Paul felt it necessary to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh in hope that they might be saved (1 Timothy 1:20). Paul stated to Timothy very strongly that he (Timothy) was involved in warfare against these heretics

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18).

Paul quoted Hymenaeus and Philetus as “straying concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:18). Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

Tertullian lumped together<sup>802</sup> Hymenaeus, Philetus, Hermogenes and Phygellus in speaking of those who deserted Paul and the things of God, and he compared them to Judas Iscariot.

“The Scripture says, ‘Your eyes are upon the ways of the children of men’ (Jeremiah 32:19 LXX). ‘Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart’ (1 Samuel 16:7 LXX). ‘The Lord knows those who are His’ (2 Timothy 2:19); and ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted’ (Matthew 15:13); and ‘So the last will be first, and the first last’ (Matthew 20:16); and He carries ‘His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor’ (Matthew 3:12). Let the chaff of a fickle faith fly off as much as it will at every blast of temptation, all the purer will be that heap of grain which shall be laid up in the granary of the Lord. Did not certain of the disciples turn back from the Lord Himself, when they were offended? Yet the rest did not therefore think that they must turn away from following Him, but because they knew that He was the Word of Life, and had come from God, they continued in His company to the very last, after He had gently inquired of them whether they also would go away (John 6:66-67). It is a comparatively small thing, that certain men, like Phygellus, Hermogenes, Philetus, and Hymenaeus, deserted Paul (2 Timothy 1:15, 2:17; 1 Timothy 1:20); the betrayer of Christ was himself one of the apostles. We are surprised at seeing His churches forsaken by some men, although the things which we suffer after the example of Christ Himself, show us to be Christians. ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us’” (1 John 2:19).

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<sup>800</sup> Those charged with “teaching” were usually the Bishops.

<sup>801</sup> Hermogenes was also one of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized.

<sup>802</sup> Tertullian, The Prescription Against Heretics, II, I, 3.

**Prochorus:** Prochorus was<sup>803</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and was also one of the first seven deacons. For most of his life he was a follower of the Apostle John, and John dictated his Gospel, his Epistles and the Book of Revelation to Prochorus.

At first, Prochorus was a follower of the Apostle Peter; but after the dormition of the Virgin Mary in the mid 50's AD, Prochorus became a companion of the Apostle John. Prochorus suffered along with John on the Island of Patmos, and he wrote down the words John dictated in composing the Book of Revelation.

After the death of the Apostle John, Prochorus was appointed Bishop of Nicomedia in Asia Minor which is about 50 miles from Byzantium.

**Pudens:** Pudens<sup>804</sup> was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was a Roman Senator at one time. He never served as a Bishop, like most of the rest of the Seventy. Pudens' home in Rome served as a Church where Peter himself served as priest. Just before Paul's death, we notice that Pudens was with Paul in Rome. Pudens was martyred in Rome by Emperor Nero shortly after Peter and Paul.

**Quartus:** Quartus is only mentioned as being with Paul in Corinth on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:23). Quartus was known<sup>805</sup> as the Bishop of Beirut, and he probably joined Paul before the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey when Paul was in Jerusalem. Quartus later returned to Beirut, probably when Paul returned to Jerusalem at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey. He converting many Greek pagans to the Lord in Beirut, and then reposed in peace.

**Rhodium:** Rhodium (or Rodion) is listed as one of the original Seventy Apostles by both Hippolytus<sup>806</sup> and Dorotheus of Tyre<sup>807</sup> as a separate individual than Herodion, who was also one of the original Seventy Apostles. Later lists of the Seventy Apostles refer to Rhodium and Herodion as the same person. Dorotheus stated<sup>808</sup> that it was Rhodium and not Herodion who was martyred with the Apostle Peter in Rome in c. 67 AD.

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<sup>803</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 28.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for July 28.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>804</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 14.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 15.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>805</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for November 10.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>806</sup> Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>807</sup> Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles. For the significance of Hippolytus' and Dorotheus' list of the Seventy Apostles, see Appendix C.

<sup>808</sup> Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

**Rufus:** Rufus<sup>809</sup> was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who carried Jesus' cross for Him (Mark 15:21), and was probably among those from Cyprus and Cyrene who founded the Church in Antioch<sup>810</sup> (Acts 11:20). Rufus traveled with Paul to some extent and Paul greeted Rufus warmly, along with Rufus' mother in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:13). Rufus was ordained Bishop of the Greek city of Thebes (30 miles northwest of Athens) and died there as a martyr for Christ. Rufus was especially noted<sup>811</sup> for his godliness.

John Chrysostom paid complements<sup>812</sup> to Rufus and his mother, who was in Rome with her son. This does not mean that Paul and Rufus were brothers; it just means that Rufus' mother was a special lady.

“Paul wrote to Rome, ‘Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine’ (Romans 16:13). Here again the good things are without any drawback, since the son and the mother are each of such a character, the house is full of blessing, and the root agrees with the fruit. Paul would not have simply said, ‘his mother and mine’, unless he had been bearing testimony to the woman for great virtue.”

**Silas:** Silas<sup>813</sup> was one of the original Seventy Apostles; he was also one of the leading men in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22) and a prophet (Acts 15:32). We first hear about Silas when Bishop James of Jerusalem sent him to Antioch along with the letter drafted by the Council in Jerusalem. Silas and Justus Barsabas, Jesus' step-brother, were assigned to confirm the contents of the letter among the Gentiles. After doing this, Justus returned to Jerusalem, but Silas stayed in Antioch and accompanied Paul on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey.

Since the Apostle Silas was present at the Council of Jerusalem, he saw the results of the work of Paul first hand. Being a prophet in the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:32), Silas understood the significance of what Paul was doing and the work of the Holy Spirit in Paul. And Silas greatly desired to be part of this work.

As Paul left on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey with Silas, Silas served to further confirm this letter from the Church in Jerusalem to the Gentiles everywhere Paul went. The result of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians<sup>814</sup> followed by the visit of Paul and Silas with the letter from the Church in Jerusalem was an authoritative rebuke for everyone who had been trying to push circumcision on the Galatians.

From the text of Luke's account in Acts, Silas was with Paul when they arrived in Corinth (Acts 18:5), but he did not accompany Paul when Paul left Corinth (Acts 18:18).

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<sup>809</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 8](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%208).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>810</sup> See Mark Kern, The Apostle Paul, St. Athanasius Press, 2014, the section titled, “The Scattering of the Saints after the Death of Stephen”.

<sup>811</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 36.

<sup>812</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 12.

<sup>813</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 30](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2030).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>814</sup> For a summary of the effect of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, where Paul referred to those pushing circumcision as “accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9), see the section titled “Paul Probably Wrote to the Galatians at this Time”.

According to tradition, Silas was the first Bishop of Corinth. Silas thus became the Bishop who was presiding at Corinth when Corinth developed the factions favoring Paul, Cephas, Apollo and Christ. Silas was still in Corinth when Paul passed through on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.

Silas remained in Corinth for the rest of his life and died there in peace.

**Silvanus:** Silvanus<sup>815</sup> was one of the original Seventy Apostles and he is sometimes confused with Silas even though both were members of the original Seventy Apostles. Silvanus probably began traveling with the Apostle Paul early on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. When Paul got to Thessalonica, Silvanus stayed behind<sup>816</sup> with Jason, who had put up Paul's bail. Silvanus later became known as the Bishop of Thessalonica.

When Paul was in Corinth on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Silvanus joined Paul for a while as Paul wrote two Epistles to the Church in Thessalonica. Silvanus was there with Paul when Paul wrote both these Epistles (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:19).

Silvanus also worked briefly with the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:12), where Silvanus apparently carried Peter's first Epistle around to various Churches.

Silvanus, according to tradition<sup>817</sup>, was an older man and he ended his life in Thessalonica.

**Sosipater:** Sosipater, Paul's kinsman (Romans 16:21), and originally from Berea (Acts 20:4) and had been ordained elder (that is, presbyter) of Iconium on Barnabas' and Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey<sup>818</sup>. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, he left Iconium and began traveling with Paul and Silas, where he was replaced in Iconium by Tertius, also of the Seventy. He continued to travel with Paul on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey and he was with Paul in Corinth in c. 55 AD when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:21-22). When the Jews plotted against Paul as he was about to sail to Syria, Paul decided to return through Macedonia. Sosipater of Berea accompanied him to Asia -- also Aristarchus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus. These men, going ahead, waited at Troas. Paul sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where they stayed seven days (Acts 20:1-6). Sosipater later went on his own missionary journey to establish the Church on the Island of Corfu, along with the Apostle of the Seventy, Jason<sup>819</sup>.

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<sup>815</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for July 30.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>816</sup> For more details, see the sections titled:

"The Church in Thessalonica"

"The Reaction of the Jews"

<sup>817</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

<sup>818</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10, April 28. See: <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 30, November 10.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>819</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 28.

**Sosthenes:** We know Sosthenes as the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth who replaced Crispus when Crispus started following Paul. But Sosthenes was<sup>820</sup> also one of the original Seventy Apostles. We also need to ask why Sosthenes would backslide from his calling as an Apostle to become synagogue ruler. Why didn't he believe before Paul came? This was now over 20 years after the Crucifixion, and some people may have changed. There was some backsliding among Jesus' disciples earlier. For example, in John 6:66, some of Jesus' disciples walked with Him no more after He said if we don't eat His body and drink His blood (the Lord's Supper), we have no life in us (John 6:54). Another factor with the Seventy was the possibility that they were in Jerusalem only for Passover and then left shortly afterward. So, after they returned from being sent out two by two, they may have gone home to their native country and weren't present for the Resurrection and Pentecost.

After a year and a half of Paul's stay in Corinth, the Jews couldn't take it any longer and hauled Paul to the judgment seat of the proconsul for Achaia named Gallio. Gallio wouldn't even listen to the Jews' complaint so the Jews instead vented their wrath against Sosthenes, beating him in front of the judgment seat. Sosthenes was probably just trying to be the peacemaker and win over his fellow Jews like James was doing in Jerusalem. About three years later, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus (on his way to Corinth), Sosthenes was now traveling<sup>821</sup> with Paul as an Apostle (1 Corinthians 1:1).

On Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey when he was at Ephesus, Paul sent Sosthenes to Corinth to find out what was going on. Sosthenes came back to Ephesus at the direction of Silas to seek Paul out with a report on what was going on. Following Paul's letter-writing (i.e. after Paul's 4<sup>th</sup> letter to Corinth), Sosthenes probably traveled back to Corinth with Paul.

Sosthenes went on to become Bishop of Colophon in Asia Minor, between Ephesus and Smyrna, perhaps after Onesiphorus was martyred there; Sosthenes died in peace in Colophon.

**Stachys:** Stachys was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was made Bishop of Byzantium<sup>822</sup> by the Apostle Andrew. Stachys built a Church at Argyropolis, (near Byzantium) and more than 2000 people gathered there to hear him preach. He was a good shepherd to his flock, tirelessly laboring for their salvation and died in peace after being there 16 years. Argyropolis means "silver city" in Greek and there are several cities by that name, making the exact location hard to identify. Stachys was sent to Rome in c. 55 AD by the Apostle Andrew (Romans 16:9), along with seventeen others of the Seventy (Romans 16:3-15) to counteract

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The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 29.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>820</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 8.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%208)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, December 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>821</sup> For more details of Sosthenes' journey back as an Apostle, see the sections titled:

"Silas and Timothy Arrive from Macedonia"

"The Jews Create a Disturbance Again"

<sup>822</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2031)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, October 31.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.



heresy<sup>823</sup> that developed there. Since Paul greeted Stachys as “my beloved”, this implies that Paul had worked with him to some extent prior to 55 AD<sup>824</sup>. Paul is not recorded as having been to Byzantium, but Troas is about 150 miles from Byzantium; it is quite possible that Paul met Stachys at Troas as he was passing back and forth between Ephesus and Philippi. Stachys was ordained bishop of Byzantium<sup>825</sup> by Andrew probably in the late 50’s AD.

John Chrysostom noted<sup>826</sup> how Paul heaped praise on some of those he worked with such as Amplias, Urbanus and Stachys. This says a great deal about the character of these men.

“Paul stated, ‘Greet Amplias my beloved, Urbanus, my helper in the Lord and Stachys, my beloved’ (Romans 16:8-9). Paul passes praise upon their persons by his love. The love of Paul was for God, carrying countless blessings with it. If being loved by the king is a great thing, what a great praise must it be to be beloved by Paul? If they had not acquired great virtue, they would not have attracted his love. Those who live in vice and transgressions Paul is accustomed not only to abstain from loving them, but even to anathematize them. He says, ‘If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed’ (1 Corinthians 16:22); and, ‘If any man preaches any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed’” (Galatians 1:8).

**Stephen:** Stephen was<sup>827</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and also one of the first seven Deacons. He was stoned to death by the Jewish Zealots after he challenged their concept of the work of God (Acts 6:8-7:60). In speaking with Stephen, the Zealots were not able to “resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke” (Acts 6:10). Just like they did later with the Apostle Paul<sup>828</sup>, they misrepresented Stephen’s views and accused him of blasphemy before the Sanhedrin. False witnesses were brought in to accuse him of speaking against Moses, the Temple and the Law, just as had been done against Christ (Matthew 24:1-2, 26:61, 27:40 Mark 13:1-2, 14:58, 15:29).

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<sup>823</sup> For more information, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004.

<sup>824</sup> Because Paul refers to him in such a warm, personal manner, it is very probable Paul worked with him prior to his arrival in Rome. If Paul didn’t work with them in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) or Achaia (Athens and Corinth) on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, he must have done so on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey just prior to the drafting of the letter to the Romans. Most likely, however, would be that Paul worked with them in Macedonia, on his 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey. On his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, there may have been a very good report concerning him as Paul passed through Macedonia heading for Corinth -- therefore the term “my beloved”.

<sup>825</sup> Stachys as Bishop of Byzantium became controversial centuries later. The Bishop of the Church of Rome was regarded throughout Christendom as the spokesman, or “first among equals”, for the Church, since Rome was where the emperor lived. But when Constantine moved the center of government to Constantinople (former Byzantium), the question arose whether the Bishop of Constantinople should now be the first among equals. One of the arguments against the Bishop of Constantinople stated that Constantinople didn’t even have an Apostolic origin. While this is not the case, the Church of Byzantium was not an important center of Christianity prior to Constantine.

<sup>826</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXI, vv. 8-9.

<sup>827</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 27.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 27.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%2027)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 27.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>828</sup> See for example the sections titled:

“The Accusation of the Jewish Zealots against Paul”, and

“Paul’s Response to the Accusations”

When Stephen was permitted to defend himself, he spoke of Old Testament prophecies just as Paul later did<sup>829</sup>. Stephen concluded with, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God! (Acts 7:56) “Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul” (Acts 7:57-58). Just before Stephen died, he said, just as Christ had said, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin” (Acts 7:60).

The Zealots left Stephen’s body for the dogs to eat; however, Gamaliel, a secret follower of Christ, came two days later and took Stephen’s body to Caphargamala and buried it in a cave on his own land. Gamaliel was later buried in the same place when he died.

**Tertius:** Sosipater, originally from Berea (Acts 20:4), served well as Presbyter in Iconium and was later replaced by Tertius<sup>830</sup>, also one of the Seventy, who wrote down Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:22). Sosipater and Tertius were both with Paul in Corinth in c. 55 AD when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:21-22). Sosipater later accompanied Paul to Asia (Acts 20:4) in c. 57 AD, and Tertius was probably in Iconium by that time, taking over for Sosipater as Bishop of Iconium, where he spent the rest of his life and died as a martyr.

**Thaddaeus:** Thaddaeus was born in Edessa and was<sup>831</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles; he is credited with bringing the Gospel to the city of Edessa.

Just before Jesus’ Crucifixion, some Gentiles came to see Jesus from Edessa (John 12:21). These Gentiles were from King Abgar of Edessa, and they came to invite Jesus to Edessa to heal their king. Jesus knew that he was going to the Cross, and he couldn’t go with them. But he instructed them in the ways of God by telling them about the grain of wheat, loving their own life, and serving Him (John 12:24-26). To let them know that this was for real, Jesus then said, “Father, glorify Your name” (John 12:28).

“Then a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again’. Therefore, the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to Him’. Jesus answered and said, ‘This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake’” (John 12:28-30).

Thus, Jesus assured the Gentiles from Edessa that their desires had been heard, and God the Father witnessed to this from heaven. In the event that Jesus could not come, Abgar had sent a painter along with the group, who had been instructed to paint an image of Jesus, which Abgar had faith would heal his leprosy. Anticipating this, Jesus took a piece of linen cloth, and pressed his face against it, forming an image of his face in the cloth. When the emissaries returned to

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<sup>829</sup> See for example the sections titled:  
“Paul Addresses the Rioters”

<sup>830</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10, October 30.  
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30, November 10.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030,%20November%2010)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>831</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 21.  
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for August 21.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20August%2021)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2009, August 21.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

Edessa, the “Holy Napkin” healed most of King Abgar’s leprosy. After Pentecost, Thaddaeus returned to his homeland and healed Abgar of the rest of his disease. The “Holy Napkin” became one of the most famous icons of all time, and today the “Holy Napkin”, otherwise known as The Mandylion, has its own Feast Day<sup>832</sup>.

King Abgar was catechized along with the entire city and the surrounding area. The idol worshippers in Edessa also tore down their altars and were baptized. Thaddaeus established many priests and deacons to serve the many new Churches in the Edessa area. Word spread to neighboring Assyria, which was utterly astonished by what was happening in Edessa, and many Churches sprang up in secret in Assyria. After this Thaddaeus traveled to Beirut, where he died in peace in the year 44 AD.

**Timon:** Timon was<sup>833</sup> one of the original Seventy Apostles and served as Bishop of Bostra in Arabia. Bostra was one of the cities of the Decapolis where Jesus sent the Gadarene demoniacs after they were healed (Mark 5:20). It is also close to the place where Paul went after he was converted (Galatians 1:17), and Paul may have worked with Timon during his three years in Arabia.

Timon served well in Arabia and was later persecuted by the Jews and the pagans. When he was an old man, they threw him into a furnace to kill him. Some traditions say that he survived the furnace, only to be subsequently crucified. Others say that he died in the furnace.

**Timothy:** Timothy was not one of the original Seventy Apostles<sup>834</sup>, but he was added to the ranks of the Seventy later and he is commemorated with the Seventy today. Paul first met Timothy<sup>835</sup> in Lystra (2 Timothy 3:11, Acts 16:1-2) on his 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey and Barnabas and Paul ordained Timothy as an elder (or presbyter) for Lystra as they went back through the Churches<sup>836</sup> on their return to Antioch (Acts 14:23). As Paul and Silas passed through these same Churches on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey, Timothy joined them<sup>837</sup> in Lystra and continued to travel with them, where Artemas replaced Timothy in Lystra. Since Paul had to leave Thessalonica on short notice due to envy of the Jews, he sent Timothy back<sup>838</sup> to Thessalonica from Athens to see how things were going with Jason and Silvanus, who was the new presbyter in Thessalonica. In the meantime, Timothy and Silas went with Paul to Berea. When Paul had to leave Berea on short notice also, Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Berea (Acts 17:14) to

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<sup>832</sup> The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2009, August 16.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 16.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for August 16.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20August%2016)

<sup>833</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 30, July 28.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 30, July 28.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%2030,%20July%2028)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 28.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>834</sup> Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>835</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, January 22.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for January 22.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20January%2022)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, January 22.

<sup>836</sup> See the section in this document titled: “Ordaining Elders and the Report Back to Antioch of Syria”.

<sup>837</sup> See the section in this document titled: “Visiting the Churches from the First Missionary Journey”.

<sup>838</sup> See the section in this document titled: “The Reaction of the Jews”.

ordain elders<sup>839</sup> for Berea. Shortly after Paul arrived in Athens from Berea, he sent some of the Apostles who were traveling with him to go back to Berea to get Silas and Timothy. By the time Silas and Timothy joined Paul, Paul was in Corinth. As soon as Silas and Timothy arrived in Corinth from Berea, Paul became much bolder in his testimony in the synagogue of Corinth (Acts 18:5). Timothy then accompanied Paul for the rest of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey and continued on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.

**Titus:** Titus<sup>840</sup> was with Barnabas and Paul on their 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, but he was not one of the original Seventy Apostles<sup>841</sup>; he was later added to the ranks of the Seventy and today he is commemorated with the Seventy.

When Paul and Barnabas returned and reported their results to the Church at Jerusalem, Titus was with them as a 3<sup>rd</sup> witness to the events, even though he was uncircumcised. The Apostles in Jerusalem accepted Titus as he was and did not compel him to be circumcised (Galatians 2:3). On the 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, Titus was just accompanying Barnabas and Paul; on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Titus played a much more prominent role in adjudicating the problems in Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:6-7, 2:12-13). Since Paul mentioned that Titus was his partner and fellow-worker (2 Corinthians 8:23), Titus probably accompanied Paul from the outset of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey.

After Paul's death, Titus spent the remainder of his life on Crete and died peacefully<sup>842</sup> at the age of 97.

**Trophimus:** Trophimus was one of the original Seventy Apostles and we first encounter Trophimus<sup>843</sup> toward the end of Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 20:4). He had obviously been following Paul for a while by then; since he was from Ephesus, we may presume that he began following Paul during the two years that Paul spent in Ephesus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey. He continued to accompany Paul to Jerusalem, and he was so close to Paul that some of the Jews mistakenly assumed that Paul had brought him into the Temple (Acts 21:29). Almost 10 years later in c. 67 AD, Paul had to leave Trophimus in Miletus (near Ephesus) because he was very sick.

Trophimus never had the occasion to be Bishop of any city, since he was beheaded under Emperor Nero shortly after Paul was.

**Tychicus of Asia:** Tychicus<sup>844</sup> was a native of Asia Minor<sup>845</sup> (Acts 20:4). Since he was one of the original Seventy Apostles, he must have heard about Paul when Paul spent two years

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<sup>839</sup> See the section in this document titled: "The Church in Berea".

<sup>840</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 25.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for August 25.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, August 25.

<sup>841</sup> Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>842</sup> <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for August 25.

<sup>843</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 15.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 14.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>844</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for December 8.

in Ephesus on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, and he began following him after that. We see him following Paul toward the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey in c. 57 AD (Acts 20:4) and again being sent to Ephesus by Paul when Paul was still under house arrest in c. 62 AD (Ephesians 6:21). Besides going to Ephesus, Tychicus also went to nearby Colossae (Colossians 4:7) on that same trip. In c. 64 AD, after Paul was released from house arrest, Paul sent either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete to fill in for Titus so that Titus could travel to consult with Paul in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). At the end of Paul's life in c. 67 AD, Paul sent Tychicus on a mission to Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:12).

After Paul's death, most say<sup>846</sup> that Tychicus went on to be Bishop of Caesarea. Philip of the Seventy had been Bishop of Caesarea, but later in his life, Philip went on to become Bishop of the city of Tralles in Asia Minor, where he converted many pagans, and eventually died of old age. Tychicus must have become Bishop of Caesarea after Philip.

There is another Tychicus who was one of the original Seventy Apostles, and who was later Bishop of Chalcedon, but he never seems to have had any interaction with Paul.

**Urbanus:** Urbanus is remembered as the Bishop of Macedonia who was ordained by the Apostle Andrew<sup>847</sup>. He served for a long time there and was eventually tortured to death by the Jews and the pagans for his zeal in preaching the Gospel. In the Scriptures, we see Urbanus only in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:9). Before this, Luke had been left behind in charge in Macedonia<sup>848</sup> during the middle of Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (c. 50 AD), and this continued for about 4 years until Paul passed through Macedonia again on his 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (c. 54 AD). Similarly, Urbanus had been left behind in Tarsus so that Jason could continue on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey with Paul. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Urbanus started traveling with Paul, and someone else took his place in Tarsus. If Urbanus was in Rome in 55 AD, he had to have been sent there along with the other 17 of the Seventy Apostles who had been sent there. Most likely Urbanus was in Macedonia with Luke from 50 to 54 AD and had proven himself in the work there with his zeal for the Faith. When Paul came through Macedonia on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul sent Urbanus to Rome to help the others with dealing with the Heresiarch Simon Magus<sup>849</sup>. A few years later Urbanus returned to Macedonia. Urbanus was later tortured to death in Macedonia.

Others helping out in Macedonia were Epaphroditus and Hermas, where both were of the original Seventy Apostles. Epaphroditus was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an

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The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>845</sup> Ephesus was also in Asia Minor.

<sup>846</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for December 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

<sup>847</sup> Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 31.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

<sup>848</sup> For more details regarding this, see the section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey titled "The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi".

<sup>849</sup> For more details regarding Simon Magus, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004. See <http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/e-books/>.

Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). Hermas was later Bishop of the city of Philippi, where he died as a martyr

**Zenas:** Zenas<sup>850</sup> was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was an expert on the Mosaic Law. We only encounter Zenas in the Scriptures following Paul's 4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey when he wrote to Titus on Crete. Paul sent two Apostles to help out on Crete with questions over the Mosaic Law: Zenas the lawyer and Apollos. Zenas was an expert on the Mosaic Law, not civil law; Apollos was very good at showing from the (Old Testament) Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:24-28). Apollos by himself had a tremendous impact in Corinth; combined with Zenas, these two Apostles had to have had the effect of "stopping the mouths of the circumcision" (Titus 1:11). Zenas isn't recorded as working with Paul earlier than this. This was all happening about a year before the beginning of the First Jewish-Roman War that occurred from 66 AD to 70 AD.

Afterwards, Zenas became bishop of the city of Diospolis or Lydda in Palestine; this would have been after the destruction of Jerusalem<sup>851</sup> by the Romans.

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<sup>850</sup> Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 27.  
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 27.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20September%2027)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 27.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

<sup>851</sup> For a summary of the chronology of the destruction of Jerusalem, see  
<http://www.josephus.org/warChronologyIntro.htm>.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Source Data on the Identity of the Seventy Apostles**

There is a difference between the original Seventy Apostles and those who are today commemorated as the Seventy Apostles. Similarly, there is a difference between the original Twelve Apostles and those who are commemorated as the Twelve Apostles today. With the Twelve, the Scriptures make it quite clear that Judas was rejected and Matthias was substituted in his place (Acts 1:15-26). Some people say that the Apostles made a mistake in selecting Matthias, and that they should have waited for Paul's conversion. But that is not what the Scriptures say. It says that Matthias "was numbered with the Eleven Apostles" (Acts 1:26). A similar problem occurred with the Seventy Apostles, where four of the Seventy apostatized (these are shown in red type at the end) and were replaced with others before the death of the Apostle Paul. Others such as Timothy and Titus, who were so prominent working with Paul, were added to the ranks of the Seventy later. These are shown at the end in blue.

In the following table are listed ten sources of the list of the Seventy Apostles. The first two (Hippolytus and Dorotheus) include the original Seventy before the four Apostles apostatized, while the other eight include just those whom we commemorate today as the Seventy. Thus, the first two sources have to be dated to around the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, before any of the Seventy apostatized. The other eight represent lists that were put together after the 1<sup>st</sup> century, where these other eight are organized left to right in the approximate order of their date of origin.

The impact of Table 15 is that there is very good agreement regarding who most of the Seventy were and who the original Seventy were. A few of the Seventy are not as well-known and there is a lack of 100% consensus on their identity. On these few I have attempted to include those who the majority of sources say were of the Seventy.

**Table 15**  
**The Original Seventy Apostles versus Those Added Later**

| <b>Apostle</b>          | <b>Number</b> | <b>Hippolytus</b> | <b>Dorotheus of Tyre</b> | <b>Prologue of Ochrid</b> | <b>Great Synaxaristes</b> | <b>Byzantine Manaion</b> | <b>Greek Manaion</b> | <b>Russian Manaion</b> | <b>OCA Web Site Data</b> | <b>Demetrius of Rostov</b> | <b>Dionysius of Fourna</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Original Seventy</b> |               |                   |                          |                           |                           |                          |                      |                        |                          |                            |                            |
| Agabus                  | 1             | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Amplias                 | 2             | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Ananias                 | 3             | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Andronicus              | 4             | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Apelles of Heraclea     | 5             |                   | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          |                            |
| Apelles of Smyrna       | 6             | o                 |                          |                           | c                         |                          | c                    |                        | c                        |                            | c                          |
| Apollos                 | 7             | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Aristarchus             | 8             | o                 | o                        |                           |                           | c                        | c                    | c                      |                          |                            |                            |
| Aristarchus, Apamea     | 9             | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Aristobulus             | 10            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Artemas                 | 11            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Asyncritus              | 12            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Barnabas                | 13            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Caesar                  | 14            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        |                            | c                          |
| Carpus                  | 15            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Cephas                  | 16            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        |                            |                            |
| Clement                 | 17            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Cleopas                 | 18            | o                 |                          | c                         |                           | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Crescens                | 19            | o                 |                          | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    |                        | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Epaenetus               | 20            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Epaphras                | 21            |                   | o                        |                           |                           |                          |                      |                        |                          | c                          |                            |
| Epaphroditus            | 22            | o                 |                          | c                         | c                         |                          | c                    |                        | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Erastus                 | 23            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Euodus                  | 24            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Gaius                   | 25            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Hermas                  | 26            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Hermes                  | 27            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         |                          | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Herodion                | 28            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| James, Lord's Brother   | 29            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Jason                   | 30            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Justus                  | 31            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Linus                   | 32            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Lucius                  | 33            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Luke                    | 34            | o                 | o                        | c                         | 12                        | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | 12                         |
| Mark Evangelist         | 35            | o                 | o                        | c                         | 12                        | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | 12                         |
| Mark, Barnabas' Cousin  | 36            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         |                          |                      | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| John Mark               | 37            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         |                          | c?                   | c                      | c                        | c                          |                            |
| Narcissus               | 38            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Nicanor                 | 39            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Olympas                 | 40            | o                 |                          | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Onesiphorus             | 41            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Parmenas                | 42            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         |                          | c                    |                        | c                        | c                          | c                          |
| Patrobus                | 43            | o                 | o                        | c                         | c                         | c                        | c                    | c                      | c                        | c                          | c                          |



|                             |    |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------|----|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Philemon & Apphia           | 44 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Philip                      | 45 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Philologus & Julia          | 46 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Phlegon                     | 47 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |   |
| Prochorus                   | 48 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Pudens                      | 49 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Quartus                     | 50 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |   |
| Rhodion                     | 51 | O | O |  |   |   | C | C | C |   |   | C |
| Rufus                       | 52 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Silas                       | 53 | O | O |  | C | C |   | C | C | C | C | C |
| Silvanus                    | 54 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Sosipater                   | 55 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Sosthenes                   | 56 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Stachys                     | 57 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |   |
| Stephen                     | 58 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Tertius                     | 59 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Thaddaeus                   | 60 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Timon                       | 61 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Trophimus                   | 62 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Tychicus of Asia            | 63 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Tychicus of Chalcedon       | 64 | O | O |  |   |   | C | C | C |   |   |   |
| Urban                       | 65 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Zenas                       | 66 | O | O |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Demas                       | 67 | O | O |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Hermogenes                  | 68 | O | O |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Nicholas                    | 69 | O | O |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Phygellas                   | 70 | O | O |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                             |    |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Apostles Added Later</b> |    |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Achaicus                    | 1  |   |   |  |   | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Aquila                      | 2  |   |   |  | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Archippus                   | 3  |   |   |  | C | C |   |   |   | C | C |   |
| Codratus                    | 4  |   |   |  | C | C |   |   |   | C | C | C |
| Fortunatus                  | 5  |   |   |  |   | C | C | C | C | C | C | C |
| Onesimus                    | 6  |   | O |  | C | C |   |   |   | C | C |   |
| Simeon                      | 7  |   |   |  | C | C |   |   |   | C | C | C |
| Timothy                     | 8  |   |   |  | C | C |   |   |   | C | C |   |
| Titus                       | 9  |   |   |  | C | C | C | C |   | C | C | C |
| Crispus                     |    |   |   |  |   |   |   |   | C |   | C |   |
| Mathias                     |    |   |   |  |   |   | C | C | C |   |   |   |
| Apollos (Another)           |    |   |   |  |   |   | C |   |   |   |   |   |
| Luke (Another)              |    |   |   |  |   |   | C |   |   |   |   |   |