

New Testament Foundation 6

Paul's Journey to Rome

Paul's third journey to the Roman province of Asia began in AD 53. After three years in Ephesus Paul felt it was time to return to his home church in Antioch, Syria, visiting the churches he had planted along the way. Before leaving these churches Paul had asked them to set aside a contribution for the poor saints in Jerusalem. (1 Cor. 16:1-4) Now he would collect those contributions along with a representative from each church that would travel with Paul to Jerusalem. But this journey had a rocky start because of some Jews in Ephesus who wanted to stop Paul from preaching the Gospel. Just before boarding the ship a plot was discovered against Paul. (Acts 20:3) So while Paul's companions boarded, Paul chose to walk to Troas where he would again meet up with them.

Paul retraced his route through Macedonia and upon reaching Philippi spent Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread with author, Dr. Luke. (Acts 20:6) Following the festival, Paul and Luke traveled to Troas where they met the rest of the team. Acts 20:4 lists Paul's traveling companions from all three journeys by name and city: Gaius (Derbe) and Timothy (Lystra) from journey one, Sopater (Berea), Aristarchus and Secundus (Thessalonica) from journey two with Tychicus and Trophimus (Ephesus) representing journey three.

At Troas - Acts 20:1-12

Dr. Luke recorded one particular event that took place in Troas. On Sunday evening, Paul had the opportunity to speak with a group of believers who had gathered in a large room on the third floor of an *insula* (household). As the conversation continued past midnight, a young man named Eutychus fell asleep while he was sitting in an open window.

1. What happened to Eutychus? (Acts 20:9)
2. How did Paul respond to the situation? (Acts 20:10)
3. How did this story end? (Acts 20:11, 12)

On to Jerusalem - Acts 20:13 - 21:16

4. The next morning the team boarded a ship while Paul once again chose to walk the 20 miles to Assos. From Assos the whole team sailed to Miletus, a port 30 miles from Ephesus. Why did Luke say Paul chose a ship that stopped at Miletus rather than Ephesus? (Acts 20:16)

5. Paul sent word of his arrival to the elders at Ephesus. When they arrived, what did Paul say to them regarding the Holy Spirit's direction?
 - Acts 20:22
 - Acts 20:23
6. Knowing that truth, what was Paul's attitude about continuing on to Jerusalem? (Acts 20:24)
7. In his farewell to the Ephesians, what did Paul say that caused them much grief? (Acts 20:38a)
8. From Miletus they sailed on to Tyre in Syria where they stayed with the believers for seven days. What did Dr. Luke say happened at Tyre? (Acts 21:4b)
9. The team continued their journey by sea until they arrived at Caesarea. Once on land, they stayed with Philip the evangelist. Several days into the visit, a prophet named Agabus arrived from Judea. What was significant about that visit? (Acts 21:10, 11)
10. As you look closely at the text, note that Agabus gave a prophecy from the Holy Spirit, but not instructions.
 - What was the reaction of Dr. Luke and the others to this prophecy? (Acts 21:12)
 - What was Paul's response? (Acts 21:13-14a)

"After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem." Acts 21:15

Arrival at Jerusalem - Acts 21:17-26a

Paul said he was being compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem. So even though the Holy Spirit had confirmed through others that he would suffer and be arrested, Paul continued on. It was important to Paul that there was a show of unity between the Gentile believers from his journeys and the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. So as soon as he arrived in the city, Paul met with James and the elders in Jerusalem.

11. What did James tell Paul that was being said about him in Jerusalem? (Acts 21:20b, 21)

To show that was not true, James suggested that Paul participate in Temple purification rites and accompany several believers who had taken Nazarite vows. James thought that if Paul paid for their expenses it would prove he was not against observance of the law. Paul agreed. (Acts 21:23-26a)

Trouble - Acts 21:26b-26:32

12. When Paul and these men were ritually clean and worshipping in the Temple courts, who did Dr. Luke say started trouble? (Acts 21:27a)
13. What did they accuse Paul of doing? (Acts 21:28)
14. Did others at the Temple believe what these men were saying? (Acts 21:30a)
15. As you read these verses, try to imagine the tension. Thousands of Jews in Diaspora (those dispersed throughout the Roman Empire) had gathered at the Temple in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. What did Luke say this crowd did and wanted to do? (Acts 21:30b - 31)
16. When the crowd began to riot, the Roman soldiers assigned to keep guard over the festivities took notice. Seeing Paul at the center of the commotion, they grabbed him and took him next door to the Roman fortress called the Antonia. Describe the scene using Acts 21:33-36.
17. The Commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks, but speaking to him in Greek, Paul asked the Commander for permission to speak to the crowd. His request was granted and from the steps of the Antonia Paul spoke to the crowd in Aramaic. (Paul's testimony is recorded in Acts 22:1-21.) The Jews listened quietly until Paul said, "The Lord said to me, I will send you far away to the Gentiles." (Acts 22:21) What was the crowd's reaction when Paul mentioned the Gentiles? (Acts 22:22, 23)

18. The Commander did not understand Aramaic and wanted to know what Paul had said to enflame the crowd. He ordered Paul to be flogged (interrogated). As the Centurion in charge was having Paul stretched out, what did Paul ask? (Acts 22:25)
19. Word quickly reached the Commander who immediately stopped the process. At this point the Commander had no idea what the charges were against Paul, only that they had something to do with Jewish Law. Hoping to learn the truth, he ordered the Sanhedrin (Jewish High Court) to convene and question Paul. Once again Paul was to give testimony of Christ, this time before the Jewish religious leaders. According to the following verses, how did that go?
- Acts 23:6-8
 - Acts 23:9
 - Acts 23:10
20. Paul was safely back in the barracks, but the Commander still had no idea as to Paul's crime. When Paul had told the crowd at the Antonia that the Lord had sent him to the Gentiles, hatred so filled some listening that they immediately formed a conspiracy to kill Paul. Their plan was to have the High Priest ask for Paul to be brought to the Sanhedrin the next morning for further clarification of the charges. 40 men lay in ambush to kill Paul before he arrived. (Acts 23:12-15) But that was not the Lord's plan and the plot became known to the Commander who had to act quickly if he was to protect his prisoner. The Commander called together his men and had Paul escorted out of Jerusalem under cover of night. How many soldiers did the Commander send to protect Paul? (Acts 23:23)
- _____ Centurions
- _____ Soldiers
- _____ Horsemen
- _____ Spearmen
- _____ Total number of men sent to protect Paul

21. "So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night..." (Acts 23:31a) Paul was taken to the Roman city of Caesarea. When he arrived, where was Paul held? (Acts 23:35b)
22. Paul remained in custody for two years under the Roman governor Felix, yet without any charges. Acts 24:27b states that Felix held Paul "as a favor to the Jews." When Felix was replaced by Governor Festus, Paul was asked if he would return to Jerusalem to stand before the Sanhedrin. At this point Paul realized that Festus only wanted to please the Jews and that he would have to take matters into his own hands if he wanted a fair trial. How did Paul get his case out of Jewish control? (Acts 25:10, 11)
23. A few days later King Agrippa (II) came to visit the new Governor. Festus had accepted Paul's appeal and was about to send Paul to Rome. What did Festus say to King Agrippa regarding Paul's situation? (Acts 25:24-27)
24. Acts 26 is a record of Paul's testimony before King Agrippa II. After listening to Paul, what was the King's assessment? (Acts 26:32)

The Journey to Rome - Acts 27, 28

25. Governor Festus made the arrangement for Paul to be escorted to Rome and Acts 27:1 begins, "When it was decided that we would sail for Italy..." The addition of "we" lets the reader know that Dr. Luke is with Paul on the journey to Rome. Who else was traveling with Paul and Luke? (Acts 27:1)

Sea travel was very difficult in ancient times. Ships usually put out to sea in the morning and went back into port before nightfall. By autumn, the weather became unpredictable so during the months of September and October only a very few ships set sail. By November 10th the sea was too dangerous; most ships had found suitable ports for the winter. Paul's ship got as far as Fair Havens on the island of Crete before they had to make a decision regarding the winter. In spite of its name "Fair Haven," it was not a suitable port for such a large ship. A decision was made to try to make it to Phoenix, a more protected port 36 miles to the north. (Acts 27:12) With a gentle breeze blowing, the ship headed out to sea but soon was caught up in a northeaster. Unable to maintain control, the ship was being driven by the storm. (Acts 27:13-15)

26. How long did the storm drive them in the open sea? (Acts 27:27)
27. Their journey finally ended 475 nautical miles southwest from Fair Haven and not as smoothly as hoped. With land in sight "they saw a bay with a sandy beach where they decided to run the ship aground if they could." (Acts 27:39) How did Dr. Luke describe the landing in the following verses?
- Acts 27:41
 - Acts 27:42
 - Acts 27:43a
 - Acts 27:43b-44a
 - Acts 27:44b
28. The island where the ship had run ashore was called Malta. The passengers spent the winter months on the island and when it was safe to travel, they set out to sea on another ship that had wintered at Malta. (Acts 28:11) "And so we came to Rome." (Acts 28:14b) What were Paul's accommodations like in Rome? (Acts 28:16)
29. What information did Dr. Luke give about Paul's restrictions while he waited for his trial? (Acts 28:30, 31)

Dr. Luke ended his second volume "Luke-Acts" with the picture of Paul still in chains but the Gospel was unchained. Jesus' commission to his disciples given in Acts 1:8 was to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. For those living in the first century Roman Empire, Rome was the ends of the earth. From there the Gospel would eventually reach every part of the world.