

The Most Important Events of the World

Part 8: The Last Trip of the Apostle Paul to Rome

Dora Beck

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Call of Hope. First edition. 1992. SPB 9048 ENG. *English title: The Last Journey of Paul the Apostle to Rome (Booklet 8).* *German title: Die Letzte Reise des Apostels Paulus nach Rom (Heft 8).* Call of Hope. P.O.Box 10 08 27 70007 Stuttgart Germany <[e-mail: info@call-of-hope.com](mailto:info@call-of-hope.com)>
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The Last Trip of the Apostle Paul to Rome



The Apostle Paul returned to his homeland, Jerusalem, having been gone a long time. His Christian brothers and sisters received him joyfully, praising God, because many pagans had come to believe in God through his evangelism. The clearest example of Paul's successful ministry was seen in Trophimus, a pagan from Ephesus, who believed in Jesus Christ; he accompanied Paul to Jerusalem, to meet with the church members there. James, the most effective leading member of Jerusalem's

church, was concerned about Paul and said to him: Those who came from Asia Minor to Jerusalem said that you did not follow the law of Moses and that you encouraged the Gentiles to act contrary to the Old Testament.

James gave Paul some advice: Go to the temple and say that you are still following the law closely, so that everybody may know that there is no truth in these reports about you. Paul followed this suggestion.

The people of Jerusalem saw Trophimus, the Ephesian, together with the Apostle Paul in the city. A few days later, Paul visited the temple, and some of the strict Jews from the province of Asia thought that he had brought along the Ephesian pagan. This was a serious violation of the law of Moses, so they shouted: Help, help! Here's the man who teaches everyone to go against the law of Moses and the temple. And now he has brought an unclean pagan and defiled this holy place!



The whole city was in an uproar. People came running from all directions toward Paul. They dragged him out of the temple, screaming: If he said anything bad about the temple, he should be put to death. But one of the eyewitnesses told the officer of the Roman squadron about the commotion. The officer hurried with his soldiers through the crowd and arrested Paul.

The commander asked the roaring mob: Who is this man? What has he done? There was so much yelling and disorder that he could hardly understand anything. When the mob sensed that Paul - the cause of all the turmoil - was about to escape, they attacked him once again. The soldiers had to carry Paul away immediately, while the crowd followed, shouting, Away with him! Beat him to death!



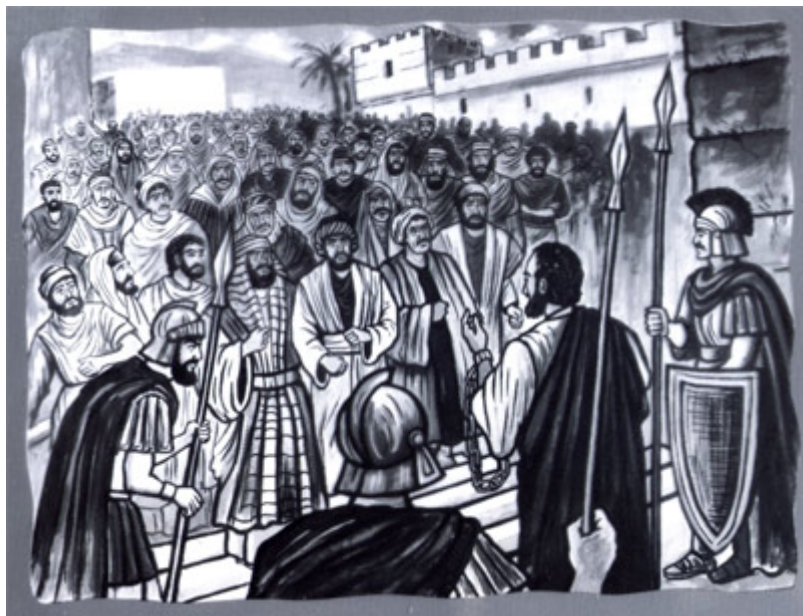
This is also what the crowds shouted when they demanded Jesus' crucifixion: Away with this man! Jesus had told His disciples: Remember what I said to you: No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you too; if they obeyed My teaching, they will obey yours also. A disciple follows his master path of suffering.

The Roman soldiers carried Paul up the stairs to the tower of the barracks. The mob gathered by the stairs but dared not go up. Before Paul was taken away, he asked the commander if he could say something to the people. He received permission.



Paul, surrounded by soldiers, stood at the top of the stairs and mentioned that the crowd should be silent. This was the last chance Paul had to give them his personal testimony: I was born in Tarsus, but was brought up in Jerusalem. I learned under the famous scholar, Gamaliel. I was just as zealous for the law of God as any of you are today. But as I came near Damascus, the living Lord Jesus Christ met me and ordered me to go to other countries to preach about the salvation all can find in Him.

When the people heard Paul's words, they became disorderly again because he had hurt their pride. They were angry that God had provided salvation for Gentiles and not only for them, the descendants of Abraham.



The people grew more and more violent, tore their clothes, threw dirt, and cried: Away with him! He's not fit to live! The Roman commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He said, I have to hear what this man says, to find out why the people are so angry with him.

After discussing the situation with many officers and priests, the commander decided that Paul was not guilty of any crime. He wondered what he should do with the prisoner. Paul wondered, what will happen to me now?

The following night, the Lord appeared to Paul and said: Paul, take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.



Meanwhile, a plan had been thought up by more than forty Jewish men from the town: None of them would eat or drink until they were sure that Paul had been killed. But when the son of Paul's sister heard the plot, he went into the barracks and told both Paul and the commander.

The commander transferred Paul out of Jerusalem secretly. He commanded two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to escort Paul to the city of Caesarea, near the sea. Here the Roman governor had lived in a great palace, and Paul spent many years in custody at the palace prison. During this time, Paul was repeatedly questioned. As an apostle of Christ, Paul seized

the opportunity to preach to those present about His Lord Jesus.



Eventually, Festus, the governor, gave orders that Paul and the other prisoners should go to Italy under the supervision of the Roman centurion, Julius. It didn't take very long for Julius to notice that Paul was very different from the other prisoners. He allowed Paul to walk around freely on the ship as soon as the group was all aboard. Paul was not alone on the journey; he was accompanied by Luke, the physician, and Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. They decided to share suffering as well as joy with Paul. They were true friends.

When the ship dropped anchor at Sidon, Julius allowed Paul to visit some believers there. the fellowship with the believers encouraged Paul and his companions.



When they set sail once again, they faced tremendous difficulties. Because of dangerous westerly winds, the ship had to sail around the eastern coast of the island of Cyprus. Then they sailed across the open sea. After much effort, they reached Myra. The ship had to be replaced, for it had become weakened during their travels. The centurion found an Egyptian ship bound for Italy. It was carrying a huge shipment of wheat, as well as 276 people. He put all the prisoners aboard. For many days they sailed against strong winds, trying unsuccessfully to reach Cnidus. As the wind continued, they had no choice but to stop at the island of Crete.



It was October. Bad weather and rough seas were sure to be a serious threat to all on board. It was too dangerous to continue sailing, so the ship was anchored at a place called Fair Havens. Because much time would be lost, Julius asked the captain of the ship: What are we to do? We can't spend the winter here! The captain suggested that they should move on to Phoenix Harbour in Cyprus where they could spend the winter comfortably.

But Paul warned the officers, saying: Sirs, it is better that we stay here; otherwise, the voyage will be disastrous. It will mean big losses, not only of ship but also of life. The crew did not listen to Paul's warning, and they set sail as soon as a southerly breeze began to blow.



At first the ship sailed smoothly. After a while, however, the winds grew fierce, and the ship was tossed about violently. The captain shouted, Go against the wind, but his crew replied, We can't get the ship under control! The captain ordered, Sail with the winds and let the ship be driven along. The men strengthened the ship by wrapping strong cables around it and lowered the sail so that the ship could drift. The ship was now fully in the grip of the storm. The crew was panic-stricken and went without food or sleep for a long time as the storm howled on. All were despairing of life. Losing heart, the captain said, We can see neither the sun nor the stars to help us know where we are. Yet the storm howled on for several days.



Paul approached the terrified captain and said to him in an assuring voice: Don't lose heart. No one will perish. But the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the Lord I serve stood before me and said, 'Don't be afraid Paul, you have to go to Rome and appear before the emperor. God will save all who are sailing with you.' I trust He will do as the angel told me, though we will have to anchor the ship near an island.

The fourteenth night came, and the ship was still drifting aimlessly on a dark, stormy sea. In the middle of the night, one of the sailors cried out, Land ahoy! Fearing that they might be dashed against some rocks near the shore, the crew dropped four anchors from the back of the boat and waited for daylight to come.



Early the next morning, Paul encouraged all the people aboard to eat something. Then he took some bread, thanked God in front of them all, and ate. Everyone was relieved and took some food too. Afterward, they began to lighten the ship by tossing wheat overboard. Then they struck a sandbar, and the ship was run aground. The front of the ship was stuck, and the continuous beating of the waves began wrecking the entire vessel.

The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners, so that none could escape by swimming away. But their

commander, Julius, ordered all who could swim to jump overboard and make for the shore. Those who couldn't swim were to hang on to the floating pieces of the ship. Julius gave this order to save Paul in particular. Everyone made it to shore safely on the island called Malta.



The natives of the island rushed to help their shipwrecked visitors. They started a big fire, since the passengers were soaked and chilled from the sea. When Paul had gathered a bunch of sticks to help light the fire, a poisonous snake slithered out from the bundle and bit his hand. When the natives saw what had happened, they asked one another, Will this man die? But God protected Paul from the poison of the snake, and nothing happened to him.



The crew and passenger of the ship spent three months on that island. Paul healed the sick in the name of Christ, and preached to them all about Jesus. Then they sailed once again on an Egyptian ship to Italy. Finally, they came to Rome where Paul was greeted heartily by the Roman believers. They cared for him during the two years he spent in prison there. He witnessed boldly about Christ in front of everyone.

Dear reader, have you understood the significance of this story? The devil wanted to stop the spread of the Gospel, but God accomplished His goal through Paul, despite all the difficulties. When the hardships of life seem to overwhelm us, we should realise that God is always near, guiding us to a

sure and certain destination. He wants His Gospel to reach us, despite all that may come in the way. You can also experience God's guidance in your life, if you submit yourself to Jesus.

Quiz

We hope you have enjoyed reading this story. Below are some questions about it. When you have answered them, mail them to us.

1. Why was Paul imprisoned?
2. What were the words of God to Paul about where he would go?
3. What was the task with which God entrusted Paul and which the people of Jerusalem rejected?
4. Why was Paul accompanied by Luke, the Physician, and Aristarchus?
5. What was Paul's goal as he visited the different groups of believers?
6. What comfort did Paul offer to people when they grew fearful in the face of danger?
7. How did the inhabitants of Malta realise that Paul was God's messenger?
8. Who can give you peace in your heart - even in times of danger?

Do not forget to print your full name and address clearly on your answer sheet as well as on the envelope. Our address is:

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