

After Acts

“The Rest of the Story”

The Continuing Life of Paul

- The Book of Acts closes sometime around A.D. 63
- Tradition states that Paul was beheaded under Nero, maybe around A.D. 67-68
 - Paul was possibly about 60-65 years old at his death.
 - As a Roman citizen, he would be exempt from crucifixion
- It is possible that Paul remained a prisoner in Rome during this time
- Paul could have been released (maybe around A.D. 63)
 - Was he found innocent in his appeal to Caesar? - II Timothy 4:17

What Did Paul Do From A.D. 63-67?

- There are places that he is said to have visited that do not fit the narrative in Acts
- Crete - Titus 1:5
- Nicopolis, Macedonia - Titus 3:12
- Spain - Romans 15:28
 - Clement of Rome wrote around 90 A.D. in a letter to Corinthians: "By reason of jealousy and strife Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world and having reached the farthest bounds of the West; and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance."
- There are many unreliable traditions about other places, including Britain.

A Proposed Itinerary

- 63-66 A.D.
 - Stops in Crete, Miletus, Colosse, Troas, Philippi, Corinth, Nicopolis, and Spain
- Paul's Second Imprisonment - 67-68 A.D.
 - Possibly arrested in Troas (II Timothy 4:13) or Corinth
 - Taken back to Rome to face trial again before Nero
 - Kept in chains in the Mamertine Prison
 - Writes his "farewell letter" - II Timothy
 - Paul is sentenced to death and executed
 - Tradition says that Paul was taken 1 1/2 miles south of Rome on the Ostian Way and was beheaded near a place called Aquae Salviae.

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

II Timothy 4:6-8

My Theory on Why Paul Was Executed

- Factor #1 - The Great Fire of Rome
 - Began on July 19, 64, and raged for six days.
 - 10 of the 14 districts in Rome were affected, three were completely destroyed
 - Nero, perhaps to deflect scrutiny, blamed the Christians for starting the fire.
 - The Roman Historian Tacitus wrote in A.D. 116:
 - "As a consequence, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but, even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. In accordance, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not as much of the crime of firing the city as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired." (Annals XV.38)
 - If this persecution lasted, Paul would be targeted as a leader of the Christians
- Factor #2 - The Jewish Revolt (66-73 A.D.)
 - Began over religious tensions and tax protests
 - Rome conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple in 70
 - Jews were extremely unpopular in the Empire because of the Revolt
 - Paul, as a Jew, could be targeted or at least discriminated against.
- The changing political and social climate would not bode well for Paul. If he had been cleared before in his appeal to Caesar, he probably would not be so fortunate at a later date.

Paul's Legacy

- Apostle of the Gentiles
- Took Gospel throughout the Roman world
- Wrote 13 books of the Bible (and possibly Hebrews)

Fate of Other Prominent Figures in Acts (according to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*)

- James - stoned by the Jews in Jerusalem in 62
- John Mark - dragged to pieces in Alexandria, Egypt, in 68
- Peter - crucified upside-down in Rome* in 67
- Luke - hanged on an olive tree in Greece in 84
- John - died of natural causes at age 94 in 100 at Ephesus

The Church at the Close of Acts

- Christians were still a vast minority in the populace
- Came to be seen as a separate movement, not as a Jewish sect
- Continued to grow and spread
- Remain fairly unified until the second century