



Acts

A New Spirit and a New World

Week 8

Part Three: The Final Journey (cont.)

25:13 – 28:31

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Defense before Agrippa (25:13 – 26:32)

- ❖ Festus considers sending Paul to Jerusalem as a favor to the Jewish leadership, who have prepared another ambush. Paul defends himself – again – and, in the end, appeals to the Emperor (Nero), as a Roman citizen was entitled to do.
- ❖ After filling in Agrippa (son of Herod Agrippa I who died in 44AD, Acts 12) on what had happened, Felix asks Agrippa to get involved. Felix must send an explanatory note to the Emperor and doesn't know what this is all about!
- ❖ Paul tells his story yet again. Note the much longer version of Jesus' commissioning of Paul. Again, Paul throws himself upon Scripture. He is saying nothing but what Moses and the prophets said would happen.
- ❖ Festus thinks Paul is nuts. Agrippa senses that Paul seeks even Agrippa's conversion. Agrippa finds for Paul, saying that Paul could be set free if he had not already appealed to the Emperor!
 - What an ironic path to Rome, God has set forth for Paul.

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This salvation of God (28:17-29)

- ❖ When Paul gets to Rome, what does he do first – call together the Jewish leaders. Paul persists in his mission.
 - “It is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”
 - The leaders haven’t heard much about Paul. They want to learn more from Paul. They know that Jews everywhere are speaking against the Way.
- ❖ So Jews comes to see Paul all the time. He explains. They listens. Some are convinced. Others are not.
 - There is simply no place in Christianity for anti-Semitism. It is one of the great tragedies of the church that so many self-professing Christians would persecute Jews over the centuries.
- ❖ Frustrated (?), Paul cites Isaiah 6:9-10. This is a very important passage in the NT, including the Gospels.
 - The Jews may not hear, but the Gentiles will.

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Preaching & teaching unhindered (28:30-31)

- ❖ Acts ends with Paul living in Rome, awaiting trial, living under some sort of house arrest at his own expense. Paul is able to welcome all who come and it seems to be many.
- ❖ Paul continues preaching and teaching – boldly.
- ❖ And after this . . .
 - Some hold that this was the end for Paul, that he was tried and executed at the end of this imprisonment. But,
 - Others, including myself, hold that Paul was released and continued with his work and travels, only to be re-imprisoned and executed in Rome around 68AD. Never in Acts is Paul found guilty of any crime by Rome. Even Agrippa found him to be innocent. Most likely is that after two years in Rome, Paul was tried and found not guilty.
 - 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus could only have been written by Paul if he was released. They recount travels, places, people, and events that must have come after 62AD.

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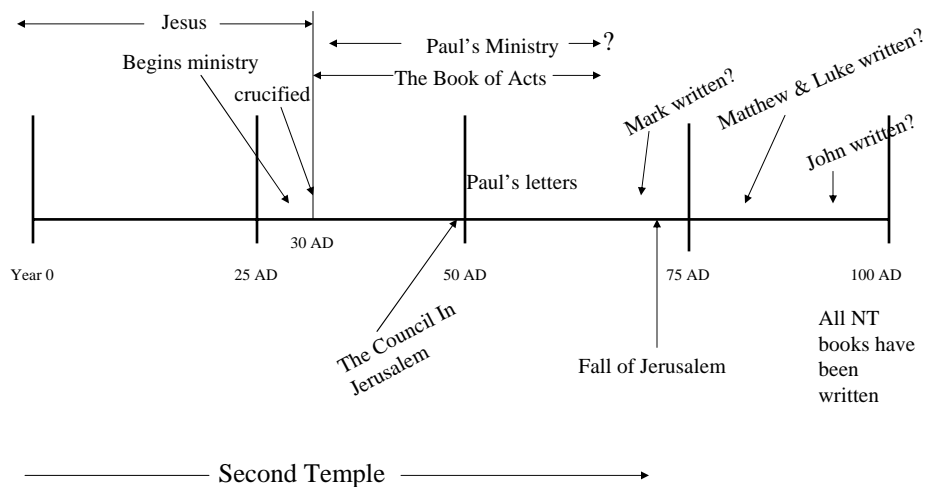
Reflections on the book of Acts

- ❖ Pay attention to the speeches.
 - Jesus is the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures. He is the climax of the story of God's covenant relationship with the people of God. The story of Jesus makes sense only within that Jewish story. Jesus is not some free-floating savior disconnected from the specifics of history.
- ❖ Hang on to the disciples' many prayers for boldness. Are we bold? Are we confident? Do we take seriously Jesus' commission to carry the Good News across the globe?
- ❖ God's purposes will not be denied. God can use those who deny him.
- ❖ The proclamation of the Good News is a universal message – for all peoples in all places, though their responses will vary.
- ❖ We are part of this story!!

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New Testament Timeline



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