

Paul's Second Arrest (AD 63)

By Ed Stevens -- Then and Now Podcast -- Jan. 27, 2013

INTRODUCTION:

A. Each podcast here on Covenant Key moves closer and closer to the "eve of destruction." We are looking at events which occurred in AD 63-64, just months before the Neronian persecution broke out, and only two years before war broke out in Judea. We may not be on the "eve of destruction" today, but they certainly were at that time in the first century.

B. If you would like to automatically receive the PDF as soon as it is ready, without having to request each one separately, simply email me and ask to be put on the **PDF list**. My email address is: <preterist1@preterist.org>

C. Let's ask God for His guidance in our study here --

Our Heavenly Father, we again ask for your guiding hand upon the leaders of this nation who have forsaken Your Ways. We pray that our fellow Americans will wake up and turn back to You in repentance before this nation plunges further into the abyss of unsustainable debt and tyranny. Use these historical studies to teach us the mistakes of the past, so we can avoid them in the future. We praise Your Holy Name for your servant Apostle Paul who literally gave his life to spread Your gospel in every nook and cranny of the Roman world in the first century. May all who listen to these podcasts be inspired to greater service in Your kingdom by looking at his amazing example of faithfulness in the midst of terrifying persecution and unspeakable hardship. It is in the Name of our precious Savior, and Your Glorious Son, that we pray. Amen.

D. If you have benefited from these studies, we would encourage you to become partners with us in this teaching and publishing ministry, in order to share in all the good fruit that comes from it. Those who contribute to International Preterist Association will receive some of our latest and greatest resources as our gift to you. Simply go to our website and click on the left sidebar button entitled "Make a Donation to IPA" where you can make a one-time donation or contribute monthly. Our website address is <www.preterist.org> You can also make a donation through PayPal. Our PayPal address is: <preterist1@preterist.org>

E. In our study last time, we began looking at the activities of Apostle Paul after his release from his first Roman imprisonment in the Spring of AD 63. We noticed last time that there are some real ambiguities and obscurities surrounding Paul's travels after his release, which we will try to sort out in this session.

Paul's Activity After His Release (AD 63-64)

Historical Reconstruction (i.e., educated guesswork): There are a lot of historical and geographical facts scattered through Paul's three pastoral epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), which we can use to reconstruct the sequence of events. To put all this together for you, I ransacked several chronological works on Paul. I had to use my maps, timelines, and a special Excel chart that I constructed which shows the locations and movements of Paul and his co-workers throughout his missionary journeys. I studied J. B. Lightfoot's essays on Paul's travels after the close of Acts, Arthur Ogden's chronology, Frank Viola's theories, as well as about a half dozen others, including two different harmonies of Paul's life and travels.

One of the prime reasons why Paul does not spell out all the details of his travel plans, is because it was not safe to do so. There were Jewish persecutors stalking him everywhere he went. That is why he sent his letters with couriers who could fill in the details verbally after they safely arrived at those churches.

There are simply too many unknowns to construct a *definite* itinerary here. All we can do is lay out the facts that Paul gives us and compose some *possible* theories that harmonize with those facts. I will give you what I have come up with so far, but I am definitely open to a better explanation if anyone can provide it.

Mar 63 – Paul's final travels after he was released from Roman imprisonment. We know from Paul's epistle to the Romans that he ultimately intended to do mission work in Spain (Rom 15:24, 28). It appears that he still had that plan after his release from his first Roman imprisonment. From his epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, it seems that he planned to visit them right after his release in order to raise funds for his trip to Spain the following Spring. In those prison epistles, Paul stated that he planned to go to Philippi (Macedonia) after his release, but we do not know if that was his first destination, or merely one of his stops along the way. From the tidbits of information that Paul gives us in his three pastoral epistles, it appears that Paul did not go to Macedonia first, but rather took a circular route through *Crete, Corinth, Miletus, Colossae, Ephesus, Troas, Philippi*, and then back to *Corinth, Miletus, and Asia*.

Apr 63 – Paul left Rome with Timothy and Titus and went to **Crete** where he left Titus to organize the churches there. Then Paul and Timothy moved on, probably to **Corinth** first to give them advance warning about his intentions to come back through there later to raise funds for his trip to Spain. Then they went to **Colossae** to stay with Philemon as Paul had originally planned. It seems most likely that Paul wrote the **Epistle to Titus** while he was in Corinth, before going to Colossae, but it could have been written from Colossae also. Paul wrote Titus about his plan to spend the winter at Nicopolis, in order to travel to Spain in the Spring. Evidently that winter in Nicopolis and the trip to Spain never materialized.

May 63 – After Paul and Timothy left Corinth, they went to **Colossae**, where they met up with Tychicus and Artemas, who had remained in Colossae preparing for Paul's arrival. It does not seem that Paul stayed in Colossae for very long (a few weeks at most). Then he headed back toward **Ephesus** to drop off Timothy, and then on up the western coast of Turkey toward Troas.

June 63 – After arriving at **Troas**, he left his cloak, books, and parchments with Carpus, and headed off to **Philippi in Macedonia**, intending to come back through Troas later and pick up his belongings before he headed to Nicopolis for the winter. The church at Philippi was always faithful. He could count on them to supply his needs for his upcoming trip to Spain, even though the churches in Asia evidently turned away from him. It was probably here in Philippi that Paul wrote his ***First Epistle to Timothy***.

July 63 – From Philippi and Macedonia, Paul traveled south to **Corinth**, evidently to receive the funds they had collected for his trip to Spain. While Paul was in Corinth would have been a great time to send Artemas to nearby Crete to replace Titus, so that Titus could travel with Paul onward from there to Nicopolis. However, when Paul was arrested, he then dispatched Titus to Dalmatia instead. Erastus had been traveling with Paul and stayed behind in Corinth after Paul went across to **Miletus** (2 Tim 4:10). Trophimus got sick on that boat trip from Corinth to Miletus, and Paul left him there in Miletus to recuperate.

Aug 63 – After coming to **Miletus**, but before he had returned to Troas to get his belongings and head toward Nicopolis, Paul evidently made one last pass through his **churches in Asia** on his way up to Troas. It was while Paul was there in **Asia**, that "all the churches in Asia turned away from him" (2 Tim 1:15).

Why did those churches back away from him? Paul does not tell us. We know it could not have been related to Mark's courier work through that region earlier, since Paul still had a good relationship with Mark to the very end (2 Tim 4:11). We know from Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders a few years earlier (Acts 20:17-28), from the book of Revelation (chs. 2-3), and from the epistles of Peter and Jude, that false teachers had arisen in Asia and were wreaking havoc among the churches. We also know that the persecution was heating up, and the Jewish Zealots were pushing all Diaspora Jews toward revolt. The turning away of that whole group of churches from Paul could have been related to the general persecution and apostasy that was starting to happen all over the Roman empire, especially in those areas of Turkey that had large Jewish communities like the province of Asia.

And I believe it was during Paul's travels among those churches in Asia, that he crossed paths with some Jews who wanted to eliminate him. This makes a lot of sense when we remember that it was "**the Jews from Asia**" who saw Paul in the temple in Jerusalem and stirred up the crowds to drag Paul out of the temple and beat him up (Acts 21:27-32). Paul mentioned these same "**Jews from Asia**" again in his trial before Felix (Acts 24:18-19; cf. 26:21). Perhaps those same Jews spotted him in Asia on their own home turf and decided to finish the job they started in Jerusalem five years before? I wonder if any of them were among the forty who vowed not to eat or drink until they killed Paul (Acts 23:12-21). They would have been

pretty hungry by this time! Paul had eluded their grasp five years before, but the Asian Jews were determined not to let him get away this time.

It seems likely that **Paul was arrested** during this trip through the Asian churches stretching from Miletus to Troas. He never made it to Troas. He was arrested and evidently condemned, and because he was a Roman citizen, he was **sent to Rome** to be appear in Nero's court again and be executed (beheaded).

Evidently Paul was arrested in the summer of AD 63, a year BEFORE the Neronic persecution broke out, at a time when it was still safe enough for his co-workers to travel and work among the churches, as we see described in 2 Tim 4:9-13. This kind of travel and missionary activity would not have been possible after the Neronic persecution broke out. This is why I place Paul's arrest in the summer of AD 63, instead of the summer of 64.

Sep 63 – Evidently Paul was sent to **Rome** swiftly after his arrest there in Asia. He wrote his **Second Epistle to Timothy** from Rome, in which he urges Timothy to retrieve his belongings (his cloak, and especially the books and parchments) from Carpus in Troas and bring them to him in Rome (2 Tim 4:13). He also instructed Timothy to "pick up **Mark** and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service" (2 Tim 4:11). It is interesting that Mark was already back in the region of Turkey at this time. He had probably already delivered the book of Hebrews to Peter in Jerusalem, and was now bringing **Peter's first epistle** back to those churches in Turkey (1 Pet 1:1). We might wonder what kind of "service" Paul wished for Mark to provide for him in Rome. The answer might be found two verses later when Paul urges Timothy to bring the "books and parchments" to Rome also. Since Mark was so adept at scribal and courier services, perhaps Paul was planning to entrust his collection of writings to Mark, for copying and distribution among the churches, or maybe to take them back to Peter in Jerusalem.

By the time Paul wrote to Timothy, he had evidently been in Rome long enough for Onesiphorus to come looking for him, and find him, and refresh him, and was "not ashamed of his chains" (2 Tim 1:16). Paul said he was suffering hardship while "imprisoned as a criminal" (2 Tim 2:9). It was probably Onesiphorus who brought this letter back to Timothy, in which he urged Timothy to "make every effort to come to him soon, before winter" (2 Tim 4:9, 21).

Well, that will do it for this session. Next time we will look at Peter's first epistle and the circumstances surrounding its composition and distribution among the churches in Turkey.

Thank you so much for listening. May all of you have a blessed week.