

## Paul after Acts 28

- In 62-63 AD Paul appeared before Nero some time during his house arrest in Rome. (God had promised Paul in a vision in Acts 23:11 & 27:24 that he would go to Rome and stand before Caesar.)
- Paul was released by Nero. (You see Paul expecting to be released in Philemon 22, and perhaps in Philippians 1:19–26. The early church historian Eusebius writing about AD 325 supported this with his claim that Paul's martyrdom was *not* during the period described in the book of Acts)
- Paul had planned to visit Philemon (Philemon 22). But since Colossae was the opposite direction from Spain, and since we have some reason to believe that Paul traveled to Spain right after Rome, my guess is that Paul decided to forgo the visit to Philemon until after he completed his mission to Spain.
- So, Paul traveled to Spain. Such a ministry trip had been part of his original plan way back when he wrote Romans five or more years before (Romans 15:22–29).
- Clement, writing around AD 95 *in Rome*, tells us that after Paul “had preached in the East and in the West, he won the genuine glory for his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world and having reached the farthest limits of the West” (see 1 Clement 5.5–7).
- The “farthest limits of the West” in the mind of a Roman could occasionally refer to Gaul or Britain, but *usually* meant Spain.

- Would a church leader *in Rome*, writing only 30 years after Paul's martyrdom *in Rome* have made a historical mistake about Paul traveling to Spain?
- We cannot know for certain, but based upon Paul's former plans (Romans 15:22–29), as well as because of the distance of Spain from Rome (4–10? days by ship), Paul probably stayed some time in Spain preaching and teaching.
- Perhaps on his return from Spain, Paul sailed to the island of Crete where he engaged in ministry alongside Titus. When Paul departed Crete, he left Titus to appoint elders in the cities that held believing communities, some of which were probably planted by Paul and Titus (Titus 1:5).
- The order of events after this gets increasingly difficult. I would suggest that after Crete, Paul traveled to Ephesus where Timothy was serving. During Paul's time in Ephesus, the following events occurred: 1) Paul encountered strong opposition from someone named Alexander the coppersmith (2 Tim 4:14), 2) he faced a large-scale falling out with believers in Asia, including Phygelus and Hermogenes (2 Timothy 1:15), 3) he received help and encouragement from Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:18), and 4) he urged Timothy to remain in Ephesus to correct false doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3).
- It may be that Paul also followed through on his previously stated intention to visit Philemon in Colossae (Philemon 22). On this last point, there is no way to know.

- After this, I think everything else may have happened in fairly rapid succession without any long stays anywhere.
- Paul left Ephesus with the intention of traveling to Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3). But before Paul traveled to Macedonia, he wanted to visit Miletus for some reason, and so he (walked? took a ship?) south with Trophimus to the nearby port of Miletus. Trophimus unfortunately became too sick to travel any further (2 Timothy 4:20—at the time he wrote these words, Paul apparently still didn't know what had become of Trophimus). Paul thus left Trophimus behind in Miletus when he booked passage (I'm assuming he traveled by sea) on a ship heading north toward Macedonia. The ship would have stopped at Troas, so Paul left some things there with Carpus, including his cloak and books (2 Timothy 4:13). Since Paul left his cloak, we may infer that it was summer or nearing summer.
- We know almost nothing about his time in Macedonia, but, as with his previous visit there at the end of his third missionary journey, he likely worked his way through Macedonia, ministering and visiting with believers in places such as Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and eventually made his way down to Corinth. Somewhere along the journey either in Macedonia or Achaia, he started planning his winter months in the warmer city of Nicopolis on the west coast of Achaia (Titus 3:12). Paul wrote a letter to Titus (Titus 3:12), and perhaps his first letter to Timothy, while making plans to winter in Nicopolis.
- Corinth would have been the ideal place from which to send a letter to Crete (Titus) and a letter to Ephesus (1 Timothy), so my guess is that these letters were sent from Corinth. Paul sent Artemas or Tychicus to relieve Titus on Crete, an action Paul was hoping would make a way for Titus to

join him during the winter months in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12).

- Paul left Erastus in Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20; Erastus was anyway from Corinth, see Romans 16:23) and headed north and west toward Nicopolis, where he hoped Titus would join him.
- Now, we really don't have any idea where Paul was arrested. If the order of events after Crete are moved around on the timeline above (and even the placement of Crete on the timeline is not certain), Paul could have been arrested in any of the following: Ephesus, Troas, one of the cities of Macedonia, or Nicopolis.
- My suggestion is Nicopolis, since it comes at the end of all the other pieces of information I have tried to piece together. If he was, in fact, arrested soon after he arrived at Nicopolis as winter was setting in, this would explain how Paul found himself in prison in winter in Rome (2 Timothy 4:13, 21).

Thus ends Paul's *fourth* missionary journey. Included in the journey is a mission to Spain, ministry on the island of Crete, ministry in Ephesus, stops at Miletus, Troas, various cities in Macedonia, Corinth, and probably Nicopolis.

What about *after* Paul's final arrest?

After Paul's arrest, he was taken to Rome and imprisoned, not in a house as during his former internment, but probably in the notorious and cold (2 Timothy 4:13, 21) Mamertine Prison around the time that Nero started to unleash a horrific wave of persecution against Christians in Rome.

**During his time in prison, Paul was visited by Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16–17), abandoned by many Christians as he faced trial (2 Timothy 4:16), deserted by Demas (2 Timothy 4:10), but still somehow found a way to write a second letter to Timothy (2 Timothy).**

**Paul was aided by the physician Luke, who sought to attend to his needs (2 Timothy 4:11).**

**Paul is believed to have been beheaded—rather than thrown to the wild beasts or killed in some other inhumane way—because he was a Roman citizen.**

**What a life saved, redeemed, sanctified and glorifying Christ!**