

THE INTERIM PERIOD OF PAUL



*-The Time Between His First
and Second Imprisonment*



I. Opening statements

A. Paul was apparently converted in 32 A.D. This date comes from information given in the NT and information gained from secular history of the day.

B. Most authorities place his execution in Rome around 67 or 68 A.D. In an excellent commentary, Hogg and Vine place Paul's death in Rome at 67 A.D. –The Epistle to the Thessalonians, Kregel Publications, 1914, pg. 17.



A. Paul's first imprisonment in Rome is recorded in Acts 28:16-31.

Hogg and Vine give the date for this imprisonment as Feb., 60-Feb., 62-Ditto.

John Mark was with Paul during this imprisonment-see Colossians 4:10.

B. At the imprisonment alluded to by Paul in II Timothy, John Mark was not present with him-see II Timothy 4:11.

These 2 points prove Paul was imprisoned in Rome twice!

C. If these dates are correct, Paul's ministry lasted about 35 years.

D. This would also mean that the interim period between the 2 imprisonments covered about 5 years.

II. Intentions and things done by Paul during this interim period.

A. Paul intended to go to Spain after he visited the brethren in Rome-Romans 15:23 & 24.

“But now having no more place in these parts, and having great desire these many years to come unto you:

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.”

It’s important for us to note that the specifics of this plan were changed due to his imprisonment in Jerusalem per the record in Acts, chapter 21. The NT does not tell whether or not Paul ever made it to Spain.

B. After release from his first imprisonment at Rome, Paul intended to visit the brethren at Philippi-Philippians 2:23 & 24.

“Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.”

The congregation in Philippi was very special to Paul.

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you”-Philippians 1:3.

“Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity”-Philippians 4:15 & 16.

C. Paul intended after his first imprisonment in Rome to visit Philemon, who was a member of the church in Colossae.

“But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given to you” -Philemon, verse 22.

“With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you”-Colossians 4:9.

D. Apparently, at some point after his first imprisonment, Paul went to Ephesus and left Timothy there while he went to Macedonia.

“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men that they teach no other doctrine”-I Timothy 1:3.

We learn from the record in Acts 20:31, that Paul spent three years in Ephesus, so he would have had great concern for the brethren there.

As far as the NT record is concerned, Paul spent a longer time in Ephesus than in any other place.

Apparently, while Paul was there in Ephesus, he led in the spread of the gospel throughout all Asia.

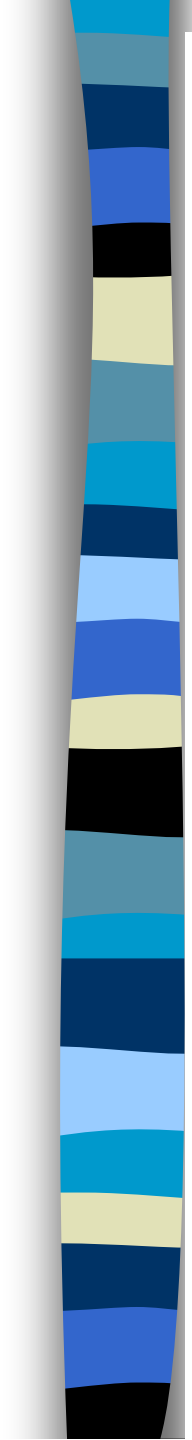
“And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” -Acts 19:10.



E. According to his message to Titus, Paul visited the island of Crete and left Titus there.

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee”-Titus 1:5.

It is possible to draw the conclusion that some of the Cretians were converted on the day of Pentecost and returned to the island of Crete and established the church there -see Acts 2:11.



Paul apparently wrote to Titus from Nicopolis, where he had intended to spend the winter-Titus 3:12. It is assumed that this Nicopolis was in Macedonia.

F. Paul did visit Troas in the interim period, where he had left his cloak and some books-II Timothy 4:13.

Earlier in his career, Paul had resurrected a young man in Troas named Eutychus-see Acts 20:6-10.

G. Paul was also in Miletus where he left Trophimus-II Timothy 4:20. Earlier, towards the end of his third missionary journey, Paul had met the Ephesian elders in Miletus-see Acts 20:17.

H. Apparently, Paul's life was near the end when he penned II Timothy.

“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 to all them also that love his appearing”-II Timothy 4:6-8.

1. Paul made an urgent appeal for Timothy to come to him shortly and bring John Mark with him -II Timothy 4:9 & 11.

2. Demas had forsaken Paul-II Timothy 4:10.

3. Only Luke was with Paul-II Timothy 4:11.

4. Paul made another urgent plea for Timothy and John Mark to come soon, *“Come before winter”*-II Timothy 4:21.

5. Paul’s last words to Timothy and John Mark were: *“The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen”*-II Timothy 4:22.

III. Closing comments

A. The word for “offered” in II Timothy 4:6, is “spendomai.”

The verb is present tense and in the passive voice, which would be indicative of the process already going on, and would indicate that Nero had already set Paul’s execution time!

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering”-ESV.

B. The word for “departure” is “analuseos.” Zodhiates says of this word, “The ancient Greeks used the word to indicate loosing the anchor of a ship in order to sail from a port. In the NT, to depart by loosing anchor, as it were, and setting sail to a better and a more blessed world”-The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament, pg. 154. Death for the faithful Christian is the loosing of the spirit from the old, earthly body to “set sail” for the Lord in heaven. It is used by Paul again in Philippians 1:23.

DEATH FOR THE FAITHFUL CHILD OF GOD IS THE BEGINNING OF ETERNITY IN HEAVEN!!

C. One of the great lessons we learn from “the interim period of Paul” is the extreme value of planning!

Paul planned to start the Christian life, continue it, and to finish it!