



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

### **New Testament Survey**

## **Lesson 32 – Paul’s Voyage to Rome and Two Letters (Acts 27-28; Colossians; Philemon)**

Read each of the sections below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

### Acts 27:1 – 28:31: The Long Voyage to Rome

Paul made this journey to Rome as a prisoner of the Roman government. Luke and Aristarchus accompanied Paul. Luke, the author of Acts, was an eyewitness of the storm at sea and the shipwreck that followed. Three ships were involved in Paul’s journey from Caesarea to Rome in the years 58-59 AD.

### Caesarea – leaving on ship #1, a ship of Adramyttium

Paul, together with other prisoners, is placed into the custody of Julius, a Roman centurion.

### Sidon – Paul was permitted to leave the ship and visit friends.

### Cyprus – The ship sailed north of the island. Contrary winds slowed them down.

### Myra in Lycia – The prisoners were transferred to ship #2, a ship of Alexandria in Egypt.

### Cnidus – Contrary winds continued to slow them down.

### Salmone in Crete

### Fair Havens near Lasea in Crete – By this time they were way behind schedule.

Paul’s advice: **“This voyage will end with disaster and much loss”** (v. 27:10). That is: Stay here.

But the owner of the ship wanted them to sail to Phoenix in Crete, a better harbor.

A strong northeasterly wind (**“Euroclydon”**) drove them far out to sea.

### Clauda and beyond – a small island and then the depths of the Mediterranean Sea

They brought the skiff on board and undergirded the ship with cables.

The next day: They threw some of the contents overboard to lighten the tempest-tossed ship.

The next day: The ship’s passengers threw the ship’s tackle overboard.

Many days later: No stars or sun appeared. They gave up hope of being saved.

An angel of God to Paul: **“Do not be afraid; you must be brought before Caesar”** (v. 27:24).

Paul: **“There will be no loss of life among you, ... but only of the ship”** (v. 27:22).

Near the island of Malta – after fourteen days at sea

When they neared land, the sailors lowered the skiff into the sea in an attempt to escape, but Paul intervened.

Paul urged the 276 passengers to eat, and then they threw the remaining cargo overboard.

As the ship ran aground, the soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, but Julius intervened.

All got safely to land, either by swimming or by finding planks or ship furniture to float in on.

Malta – an island south of Italy

The natives of the island were kind and welcomed the passengers with a fire to warm them.

Since the bite of a poisonous snake did not harm Paul, they thought he must be a god.

A citizen named Publius took care of them for three days.

Paul was given power to heal Publius’ father and many other islanders.

After three months they headed for Rome in ship #3 (Twin Brothers), another ship of Alexandria.

Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Appii Forum, and Three Inns

There were Christians in Puteoli; they stayed seven days.

Some Christians from Rome came to Appii Forum and Three Inns to welcome them.

Rome – where Paul remained a prisoner for two more years, awaiting trial before Caesar.

Paul was permitted to live in a house in Rome, constantly guarded by a Roman soldier.

Paul invited the Jewish leaders in Rome to visit him and discuss the cause of his imprisonment.

**“He explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening”** (v. 28:23).

Some believed in Jesus through Paul’s testimony, but others did not believe.

Paul warned those who did not believe him that they were rejecting the God of Israel.

Paul: **“The salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”** (v. 28:28).

The book of Acts began with Gospel preaching in Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish world.

The book of Acts concludes with Gospel preaching in Rome, the center of the Gentile world.

### **The Four Letters of Prisoner Paul**

During Paul's two-year stay in Rome, Paul wrote four letters which we have in our New Testament: **COLOSSIANS; PHILEMON; EPHESIANS; PHILIPPIANS**. We consider two of these letters in this lesson. We will consider the remaining two in the next lesson.

#### **Paul's Letter to the Colossians** – the letter that exalts Christ.

Colosse was a city in Asia Minor about 125 miles east of Ephesus. Paul himself had never met the Colossians. They had become Christians through the preaching of Epaphras, Paul's assistant. The congregation at Colosse was probably founded when Paul was in Ephesus on his third mission journey, for at that time **"all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks"** (Acts 19:10). While Paul was a prisoner in Rome, Epaphras visited him and informed him of the situation in Colosse.

The problem that brought Epaphras to Rome was a false teaching that had gained influence in Colosse. This false teaching had three elements:

1. It claimed to be a more profound teaching about God, containing secrets of the universe and the angels.
2. It stressed Jewish ceremonies: sabbaths, new moons.
3. It insisted on abstaining from certain foods and activities altogether.

Paul responded to this false teaching by showing that Christ gives us true wisdom. There is nothing better or more profound than Christ. The Old Testament ceremonies were only pictures of the reality in Christ.

Paul's letter to the Colossians was delivered to them by his assistant Tychicus and Philemon's slave, Onesimus.

#### **Colossians 1:1-14: Introduction: Greetings, Thanksgiving, Prayer**

**"We do not cease to pray for you ... that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"** (vv. 9-10).

**"In (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins"** (v. 14).

#### **Colossians 1:15-23: The Full Glory of Christ, the Son of God**

**"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation"** (v. 15).

**"By Him all things were created, ... visible and invisible"** (v. 16).

**"In Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church"** (vv. 17-18).

**“It pleased the Father ... by Him to reconcile all things to Himself” (vv. 19-20).**

**Colossians 1:24 – 2:5: The Full Glory of the Gospel of Christ**

The mystery hidden from former ages is that the Jewish Messiah is Savior of the Gentiles also.

**“Him we preach ... that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (v. 1:28).**

**“In (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (v. 2:3).**

**Colossians 2:6-23: The Glory of Christ Refutes the False Teaching in Colosse**

**“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit” (v. 8).**

**“In Him (Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily ... you are complete in Him” (vv. 9-10).**

**“Sabbaths ... are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (vv. 16-17).**

Do not **“subject yourselves to regulations ... according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (vv. 20, 22).**

**Colossians 3:1 – 4:6: Live a New Life by Faith in Christ**

**“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (v. 3:2).**

**“You have put off the old man with his deeds” (v. 3:9).**

(fornication, idolatry, anger, blasphemy, filthy language, lying, covetousness)

You **“have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge” (v. 3:10).**

(tender mercies, kindness, humility, forgiving, love **“as the elect of God” [v. 3:12].**)

**“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (v. 3:16).**

**“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (v. 3:17).**

There are instructions for wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters.

**“Praying also for us, that God would open us a door for the word” (v. 4:3).**

**Colossians 4:7-18: Conclusion** Names: Tychicus, Onesimys, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, Demas.

**Paul's Letter to Philemon** – the letter about a runaway slave

Philemon was a member of the Colossian congregation who owned slaves. The church met in his home. Philemon's slave, Onesimus (“Useful”), had run away to Rome and had taken some of his master's goods with him. While he was in Rome, he met Paul and became a Christian. He also became Paul's helper. Paul sends Onesimus back to his master with this letter. He pleads with Philemon to welcome back his slave with kindness and to consider his slave as fellow-Christian. Paul himself promises to make good whatever Onesimus has stolen. Paul even hints that Philemon might want to set him free. Onesimus himself delivered this letter to Philemon.

**“That you might receive him forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave – a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (v. 15-16).**

### **Questions**

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1. What advice did Paul give while they were sailing near Crete?
2. How did Paul know that they would lose no lives on this voyage?
3. How did both the soldiers and sailors attempt to save themselves while hurting the others?
4. What led the citizens of Malta to think that Paul was a god?
5. What opportunities did Paul have in Rome to preach the Gospel?
6. How had the people of Colosse learned about the Lord Jesus Christ?
7. What led Paul to write a letter to these Colossians?
8. What false teachings in Colosse did Paul attempt to correct?
9. List some of the terms Paul used to describe Jesus.
10. How does Paul give us a new understanding of the Third Commandment?
11. What does it mean to put off the old man and put on the new man?
12. Why did Paul write his letter to Philemon?
13. What does the Bible teach about the institution of slavery?