

Week beginning Monday 8th February 2021

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Acts 25. Roman Justice under weak leadership.

Festus, the new Governor of Judea, is confronted with the dilemma of dispensing justice or pleasing his influential subjects. Pray for leaders with power and authority. Instead of consenting to have his case heard by the Jews in Jerusalem, Paul opts for his right as a Roman citizen to appear before Caesar in Rome. Paul was planning to go to Rome, see: 19:21 & 23:11. But not as a prisoner! Agrippa, [son of Herod Agrippa1 - see Acts12:1 & 20-22] comes to show his respects to Festus who explains he has no charge to bring against Paul when he goes on trial in Rome.

Acts 26. Paul tells his story to King Agrippa.

Agrippa, a Jew, knew all the teaching and traditions but failed to practice them. Paul tells his story in even more detail; vv 9-11 the havoc he caused to the believers. vv 12-11 his conversion and the task he was given. Paul, uses every opportunity to teach about Jesus, even on trial v 22. For his Roman readers, Luke again stresses Paul's innocence. vv 30-32.

Acts 27. At last on the way to Rome. A disastrous journey by sea.

They travel by coastal merchant ships to Myra. There the Roman Centurion, Julius, transferred the prisoners to a large Greek ship transporting grain from Egypt to Rome. Continuing the journey too late in the season leads to a shipwreck; a hopeless situation, described in elaborate detail. Paul receives a divine message, reassuring him he would survive to stand trial in Rome and no passengers would be lost. With this assurance, he encourages and instructs those in charge. Aristarchus v2 is a fellow Christian see 19:29 & 20:4.

Acts 28. Welcomed in both Malta and Rome.

In Malta there was a warm welcome from rich and poor, enabling Paul to demonstrate the power and love of God. They continued their journey by sea, then on foot along the Appian Way. Roman Christians, to whom Paul had already written, come out to meet him. Under house arrest, Paul invites the Jewish leaders to explain his situation and his message. They haven't heard from the Jerusalem leaders but regard Christianity with suspicion. Initially, they come to hear more. Although under house arrest, Paul continues his work of proclaiming "Jesus is Lord".

Is that the end? What happened next? We don't know!

What happened to Paul? Was he tried and executed, did he die of old age, or was he acquitted and continued his plan to preach in Spain? We don't know!

It has been suggested that Luke wrote his Gospel and The Acts of the Apostles to explain the origins and progress of Christianity to the Roman elite, [remember Theophilus in Act 1:1] an account possibly to be used in Paul's defence before Caesar.

What we do know is that between 30 and 60 AD Christianity made its way from Jerusalem to Rome and before 500 AD Christianity had already spread to Wales.

That's Mission for you!