



Acts: The Power of the Gospel





	Week	Topic
1	6/07/2026	Introduction to Acts/Review Chapters 1-14 Chapter 15: Jerusalem Council
2	6/14/2026	Chapter 16: 2 nd Missionary Journey: Philippi
3	6/21/2026	Chapter 17: Thessalonica, Athens
4	6/28/2026	Chapter 18: Corinth, Returning to Antioch
5	7/05/2026	July 4 th Weekend
6	7/12/2026	Chapter 19: 3 rd Missionary: Paul at Ephesus Chapter 20: Journey to Greece
7	7/19/2026	Chapter 21: Paul returns to Jerusalem
8	7/26/2026	Chapter 22: Paul Addresses Jerusalem Mob
9	8/02/2026	Chapter 23: Plot against Paul
10	8/09/2026	Chapter 24: Paul accused of Seditious
11	8/16/2026	Chapter 25: Paul appeals to Ceasar
12	8/23/2026	Chapter 26: Paul testimony before Agrippa II
13	8/30/2026	Chapter 27: Paul sent to Rome Chapter 28: Paul's ministry on Malta and Rome

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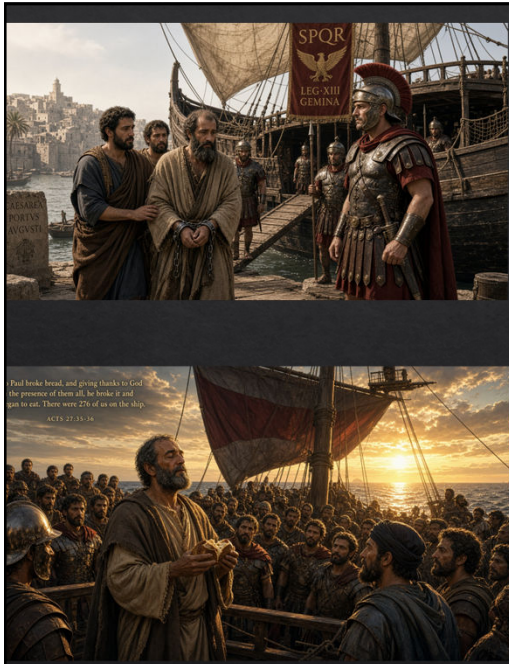
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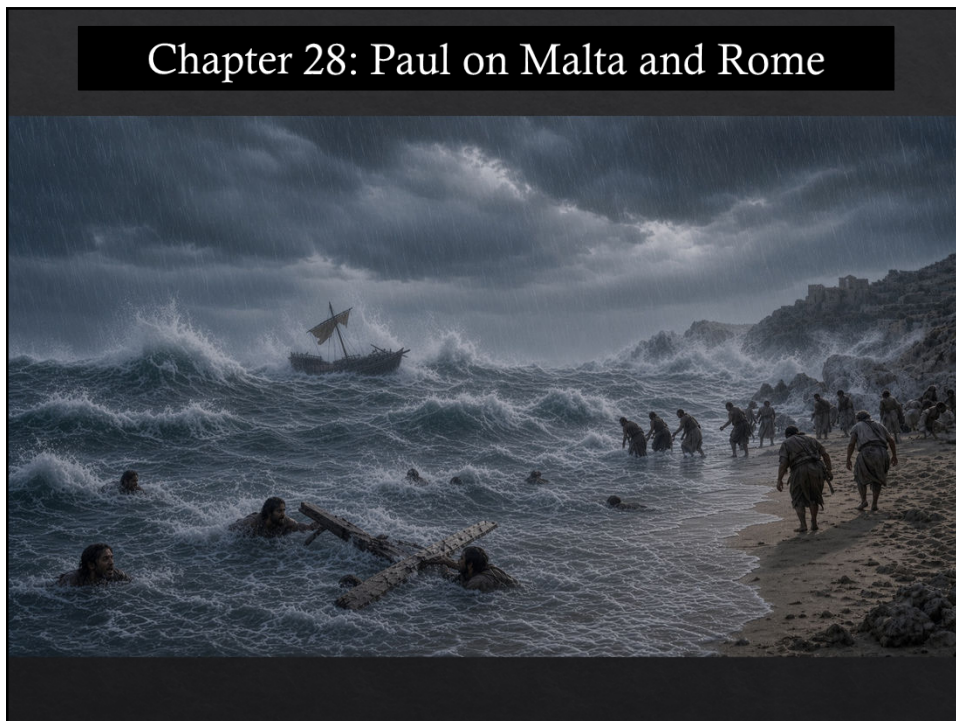
2



Review of Acts 27

- Paul is loaded on a vessel; to Rome
- In Myra, they changed ships to an Alexandrian Cargo ship
- Stopping in Crete, they tried to winter in Phoenix
- Blown of course by a Noreaster, they lost hope of being saved.
- An angel appears to Paul, he reassures him, saying God grants him the life of all 276 men on the ship
- After 14 days, Paul breaks bread. Thanking God. The ship crashes on Malta

3



4



5



6



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Acts 28:1-2

1 After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta.

2 The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold.



276 Men Shipwrecked on the Island of Malta
Acts 27-28

The natives showed us unusual kindness and kindled a fire to keep us warm.

7



8

What is Malta

THE MALTESE ARCHIPELAGO
MAP OF MALTA, GOZO & COMINO

Ethnic Maltese: The overwhelming majority of the population consists of ethnic Maltese, who are descendants of ancient **Phoenicians**, **Carthaginians**, Italians/Sicilians, and various other Mediterranean and European powers that ruled the islands over the centuries.

Foreign Residents & Minorities: Recent national census data shows that foreign nationals and expatriates make up a significant and growing portion of the population (roughly 20% to 25% overall), driven by non-Maltese workers and residents from other European Union countries, the UK, South Asia (such as India and Nepal), and parts of East Africa and the Middle East. Roughly 90% of the total population identifies as Caucasian.

Malta has two official languages:

Maltese: The national and co-official language, spoken natively by over 95% of the population. Interestingly, Maltese is a Semitic language (derived historically from Siculo-Arabic), but it is uniquely written in the Latin alphabet and heavily influenced by Sicilian, Italian, and English vocabulary.

English

Total Population: ~588,200

Citizenship Breakdown: 68.9% Maltese citizens and 31.1% non-Maltese foreign nationals. The substantial foreign population is primarily driven by economic migration, with non-EU nationals making up the large majority of net migrants.

9

Stopping the Advance of Islam

Phoenician, Carthaginian, and Roman Rule
(c. 700 BCE – 870 CE)

Punic & Roman Integration: Phoenicians and Carthaginians utilized Malta as a crucial trading outpost before Rome annexed the islands during the Second Punic War (218 BCE).

The Shipwreck of St. Paul (60 CE): According to the *Acts of the Apostles*, St. Paul was shipwrecked on the Maltese coast while en route to Rome. This event introduced Christianity to the islands, establishing one of the oldest Christian communities in the world.

Arab Period and Norman Conquest (870–1090 CE)

Islamic Influence: Aghlabid Arabs captured Malta in 870 CE, fundamentally transforming the local culture, agricultural practices (introducing irrigation and citrus), and profoundly shaping the **Maltese language**, which retains a Semitic base to this day.

The Norman Turn (1090 CE): Count Roger I of Sicily conquered Malta, re-aligning the islands politically, culturally, and religiously with Western Europe and Sicily.

10

Stopping the Advance of Islam



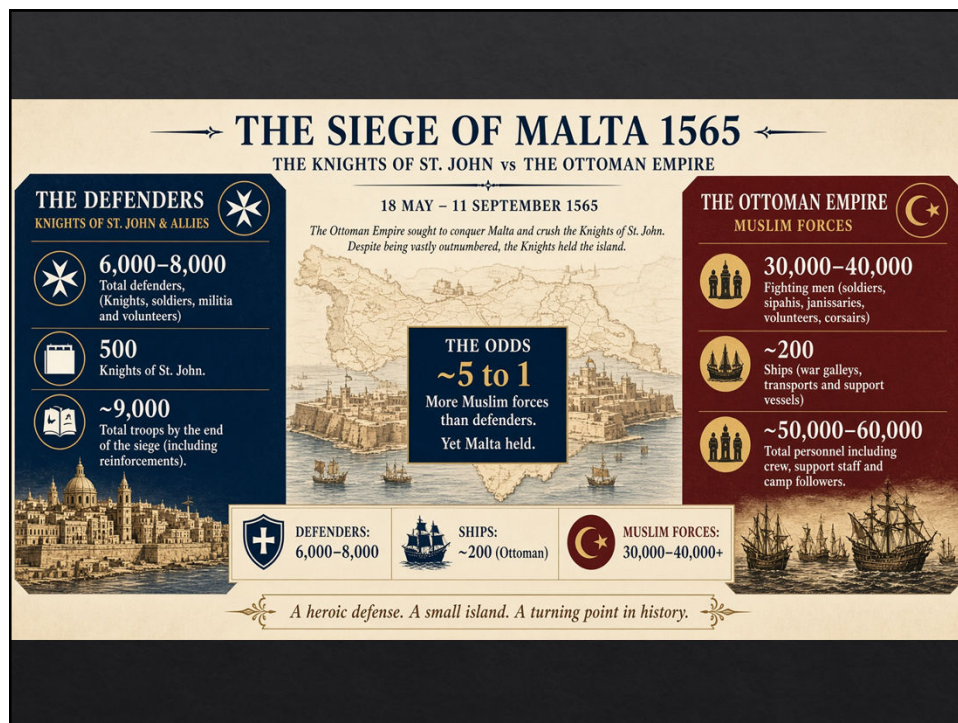
The Knights of St. John and the Great Siege (1530–1565)

Arrival of the Hospitallers: Emperor Charles V granted Malta to the **Knights Hospitaller** (Order of St. John) in 1530 to defend the Mediterranean against the expanding Ottoman Empire.

The Great Siege of 1565: One of history's most famous and brutal sieges. A massive Ottoman force sent by Suleiman the Magnificent attempted to capture the islands. Outnumbered heavily, the Knights, led by Grand Master **Jean Parisot de Valette**, successfully held out until reinforcements arrived, halting Ottoman expansion in the Western Mediterranean. Following the victory, the fortified city of **Valletta** was founded.



11



12



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Acts 28:3-4

3 When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand.

4 When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.”



13



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Acts 28:5-6

5 He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.

6 They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.



14



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Acts 28:7-8

7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, **named Publius**, who received us and entertained us hospitably **for three days**.

8 It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and **putting his hands on him**, healed him.

15



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According to Christian tradition, Publius—who was the "chief man" or Roman governor of Malta when St. Paul was shipwrecked there (as recorded in Acts 28)—experienced a profound transformation and continued a life of notable ecclesiastical service and martyrdom:

Conversion and First Bishop of Malta: After Paul healed Publius's father of a fever and dysentery, tradition holds that Publius converted to Christianity. He was baptized and subsequently consecrated as the **first Bishop of Malta**, effectively establishing the Christian church on the island.

Bishop of Athens: Tradition dictates that after leading the church in Malta for roughly three decades, Publius was transferred around 90 AD to become the **Bishop of Athens** (succeeding Dionysius the Areopagite).

Martyrdom: He ultimately suffered martyrdom for his faith. While exact dates vary slightly by historical tradition—some sources place it around 125 AD under the persecution of Emperor Hadrian, while others link it to the era of Marcus Aurelius—he was executed for refusing to renounce Christianity.

Today, Saint Publius is venerated as Malta's first canonized saint and is honored as one of the country's primary patron saints.

16



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Acts 28:9-10

9 And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured.

10 They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.

17



18



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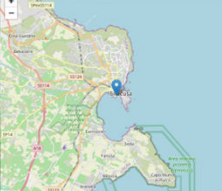




Acts 28:11-12

11 After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, **a ship of Alexandria**, with the **twin gods** as a **figurehead**.

12 Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.

Syracusa, Sicily

19

Alexandrian Grain Ship (as described in Acts 28)

A ship of Alexandria, laden with wheat, whose sign (figurehead) was Castor and Polix.

"And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the island, whose sign was Castor and Polix."
Acts 28:11

Alexandrian Grain Ships

- Large cargo vessels transporting wheat from Egypt to Rome
- Typically 25–35 meters long, with a single large square sail
- Known for their strength and reliability on the grain route across the Mediterranean
- Often decorated with the Dioscuri—Castor and Pollux—as protectors of sailors





In **Greek and Roman mythology**, the Gemini twins are **Castor and Pollux** (also known as the **Dioscuri**, meaning "**sons of Zeus**"), who embody the zodiac sign Gemini

Patron Deities: Ancient sailors prayed to them for fair winds, believing that the electrical weather phenomenon St. Elmo's fire was the physical sign of the twins watching over ships.

20

ROMAN GRAIN SHIP FROM ALEXANDRIA

IN PAUL'S DAY (ACTS 27)

A reconstruction of a 1st-century AD Alexandrian grain ship



SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT (ACTS 27)
Paul was transported from Caesarea to Rome on an Alexandrian grain ship (v. 6). The ship carried wheat from Egypt and 276 people (v. 37). After a storm, it was shipwrecked on Malta (v. 39-44).
*Reconstruction based on historical, archaeological, and textual evidence.

SIZE (APPROXIMATE)
Length: 40–45 m (130–150 ft)
Beam: 12–14 m (39–46 ft)
Depth (hold): 5–6 m (16–20 ft)
*Typical of large 1st-century grain ships (navis oneraria) plying the Egypt–Italy route.

CAPACITY
Cargo: 250–350 tonnes of wheat (enough to feed ~1,000 people for a year)
Passengers & Crew: Up to 300+ (276 passengers/crew in Acts 27:37)
Tonnage: ~1,000–1,500 tons burden (ancient measure)

FEATURES

- Grain cargo stored in bulk in the hold, loaded at Alexandria's harbor.
- Raised stern with cabins for the captain, officers, and important passengers.
- Single large square sail (artemon) with a smaller topsail for long-distance voyaging.
- Strong hull with mortise-and-tenon planking, reinforced for heavy cargo.
- Steered with two large side rudders (one visible here on the starboard side).

TYPICAL ROUTE
ITALY
Rome
Puteoli (main port)
Mediterranean Sea
EGYPT
Alexandria
Alexandria → Puteoli (near Rome)
~2,000 nautical miles (3,700 km)
Voyage time: 30–60+ days depending on winds.
These ships were the lifeline of Rome's grain supply from Egypt.

DIMENSIONS VISUAL GUIDE
~40–45 m (130–150 ft)
~12–14 m (39–46 ft)
~5–6 m (16–20 ft)

CARGO & PASSENGERS
Primarily wheat from Egypt for Rome's annona (grain dole).
Passengers included soldiers, prisoners, merchants, and travelers.
In Acts 27, the ship carried 276 people when it left Fair Havens.


21



22



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THE STRAIT OF MASINA
FROM THE PORT OF RHEGIUM

The Strait of Masina separates the island of Sicily from the mainland of Italy. From the ancient port of Rhegium, one looks north across these narrow waters toward the coast of Bruttium.

STRAIT OF MASINA
(FRETUM MASINENSE)
~ 3-6 nautical miles wide

LEGEND
 ⚓ Port of Rhegium (Rhegium Indus)
 ● Viewpoint from the harbor
 — Scale (approx.)
 0 5 10 nautical miles

Acts 28:13-14

13 And from there we made a circuit and arrived at **Rhegium**. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to **Puteoli**.

14 There we found **brothers** and were **invited to stay with them for seven days**. And so we came to Rome.



23



24



The Grain Supply: Alongside Ostia, Puteoli was the primary destination for the vital **grain fleets from Alexandria, Egypt**, feeding the urban populace of Rome.

The "Puteoli Pilae" (Concrete Piers): Roman engineers constructed the harbor using massive underwater concrete piers (*pilae*) made with volcanic pozzolana ash. This hydraulic concrete set underwater, creating artificial breakwaters that tamed the waves and allowed massive commercial ships to dock securely.

Commercial Hub: The port housed large foreign merchant communities, including active trading stations (*stationes*) for merchants from Tyre, Berytus (Beirut), and Alexandria, making it a bustling melting pot of Mediterranean trade and culture.

St. Paul's Arrival: In the New Testament (*Acts 28:13-14*), the Apostle Paul landed at Puteoli on his journey as a prisoner to Rome, where he spent a week meeting local Christian believers before walking the final stretch along the Via Appia.



25



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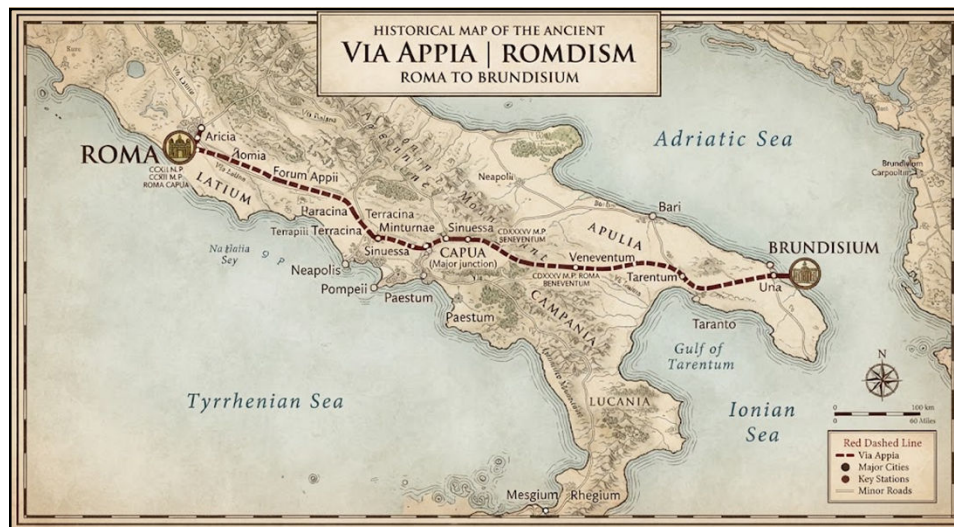
Acts 28:15-16

15 And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the **Forum of Appius** and **Three Taverns** to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God **and took courage.**

PORT OF PUTEOLI
— ITALY —
where Paul stayed 7 days, according to Acts 28.

And landing at Syracusa, we stayed three days. After setting sail from there, we arrived at Puteoli, where we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for 7 days. — Acts 28:12-14

26



1. The Forum of Appius (Appii Forum)

Location: A small town or marketplace situated about 40 to 43 Roman miles south of Rome.

2. The Three Taverns (*Tres Tabernae*)

Location: Another roadside station located closer to Rome, approximately 33 miles south of the city (about 10 miles north of the Forum of Appius).

27



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Acts 28:16

16 And when we came into Rome, **Paul was allowed to stay by himself**, with the soldier who guarded him.

28



Acts: The Power of the Gospel



Acts 28:17-18

17 After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

18 When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case.

29



Acts: The Power of the Gospel



The Hope of Israel;
The Messiah of Israel
The Redeemer of the World

Acts 28:19-20

19 But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation.

20 For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.”

30



Acts: The Power of the Gospel



Acts 28:21-22

21 And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you.

22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for **with regard to this sect we know that everywhere** it is spoken against.”

31



Acts: The Power of the Gospel



Acts 28:23-24

23 When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. **From morning till evening** he expounded to them, testifying to **the kingdom of God** and trying to **convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.**

24 And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.

Morning till Evening:

- The Kingdom of God
- Jesus is the Messiah: From the Torah and Prophets

32



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Isaiah 6:9-10

9 And he said, "Go, and say to this people:
 "Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
 keep on seeing, but do not perceive."
 10 Make the heart of this people dull, and
 their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest
 they see with their eyes, and hear with their
 ears, and understand with their hearts, and
 turn and be healed."

Acts 28:25-26

25 And disagreeing
 among themselves, they
 departed after **Paul had
 made one statement**: "The
 Holy Spirit was right in
 saying to your fathers
 through Isaiah the
 prophet:

26 "**Go to this people,
 and say, "You will indeed
 hear but never understand,
 and you will indeed see
 but never perceive."**

33



Acts: The Power of the Gospel



Romans 11:1-2

1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By
 no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a
 descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe
 of Benjamin.
 2 **God has not rejected his people whom he
 foreknew.** Do you not know what the Scripture
 says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against
 Israel?

Acts 28:27-28

27 For this people's heart
 has grown dull, and with
 their ears they can barely
 hear, and their eyes they
 have closed; lest they
 should see with their eyes
 and hear with their ears
 and understand with their
 heart and turn, and I
 would heal them.'

28 Therefore let it be
 known to you that this
salvation of God has been
sent to the Gentiles; they
 will listen."

34



Acts: The Power of the Gospel





Romans 11:1-2
1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.
2 **God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.** Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?

Romans 11:25-27
11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.
25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, **until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.**
26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;

35



THE NERO FAMILY LINE



◇ FROM JULIUS CAESAR TO NERO CLAUDIUS CAESAR AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS ◇

A line of blood, adoption, and imperial power through the Julio-Claudian dynasty.



JULIUS CAESAR
(100–44 BC)
DICTATOR PERPETUO
(Progenitor through Julia)



TIBERIUS CLAUDIUS NERO
(c. 85–33 BC)
Praetor, Senator,
Married Livia Drusilla



DRUSUS I
(38–9 BC)
Nero Claudius Drusus,
Military Commander



GERMANICUS
(15 BC–19 AD)
Adopted by Tiberius,
Popular General



AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER
(15–59 AD)
Daughter of Germanicus,
Married Claudius (her uncle)



NERO CLAUDIUS CAESAR AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS
(37–68 AD)
Emperor of Rome,
54–68 AD



The Nero family line descends from Julius Caesar through his daughter Julia and the Claudian line. Power was secured through strategic marriages, adoptions, and the consolidation of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, culminating in Nero, the last emperor of that dynasty.

*“From the blood of Caesar flowed an empire—
and from his line, its darkness.”*



36



July 64 AD, The Fire of Rome

But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called **Christians** by the populace. **Christus**, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind.

Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.^[16]

37

THE FATES OF PETER & PAUL UNDER NERO: NON-BIBLICAL SOURCES

ROMAN HISTORIANS Eyewitness accounts of the Neronian persecution.	EARLY CHRISTIAN SOURCES 1st & 2nd Century writings mentioning the apostles' martyrdom.	APOCRYPHAL TRADITIONS Later, pious narratives and popular legends.
TACITUS (c. 56–120 AD) ► Annals XV Confirms NERO PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS in Rome (64 AD), blaming them for the Great Fire. "They were covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death... crucified... set on fire." SUETONIUS (c. 69–122 AD) ► Lives of the Caesars Nero "punished the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition."	CLEMENT OF ROME (c. 96 AD) ► Letter to the Corinthians Mentions Peter's martyrdom (Zeal/Envy) and Paul's martyrdom (Endurance, testifying before rulers, reaching the "limit of the West"). IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (c. 107 AD) ► Letter to the Romans Writes, "I do not command you, as Peter and Paul did." Acknowledges their authority and martyrdom in Rome. DIONYSIUS OF CORINTH (c. 170 AD) ► Fragment States Peter and Paul were martyred in Italy (Rome) "at the same time."	ACTS OF PETER (c. 180–190 AD) Peter requests CRUCIFIXION HEAD-DOWNWARD in Rome, deeming himself unworthy to die like Jesus. ACTS OF PAUL (c. 180–190 AD) Details Paul's final journey and his BEHEADING by sword outside Rome on the Via Ostiensis. MARTYRDOM OF PETER & PAUL (Ps.-Marcellus) Combines narratives. Details trial before Nero, Peter's inversion, and Paul's beheading, blending history with theological legend.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF APOSTOLIC FATES

At this Paul turned to face the east. Lifting up his hands to heaven, he prayed for a long time. After he had communed prayerfully with the fathers in Hebrew, he offered his neck without another word. And as the executioner struck off his head, milk spurted onto the soldier's tunic. When the soldiers and all the bystanders saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given Paul such honor

38

After Acts 28

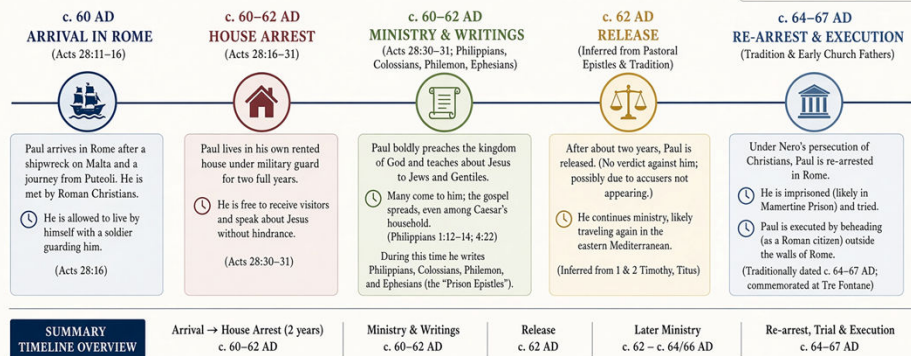
THE TIMELINE OF PAUL'S STAY IN ROME

From Arrival to House Arrest through Ministry, Trial, and Execution

— Acts 28:30–31



Historical dates are approximate (c. 60–64/67 AD). Based on Acts 28 and early church tradition.



Note: The timeline relies on the Book of Acts and early church tradition. Exact dates are not recorded in Scripture and remain approximate.

After Acts 28

PETER IN ROME: TIMELINE ACCORDING TO CHURCH TRADITION

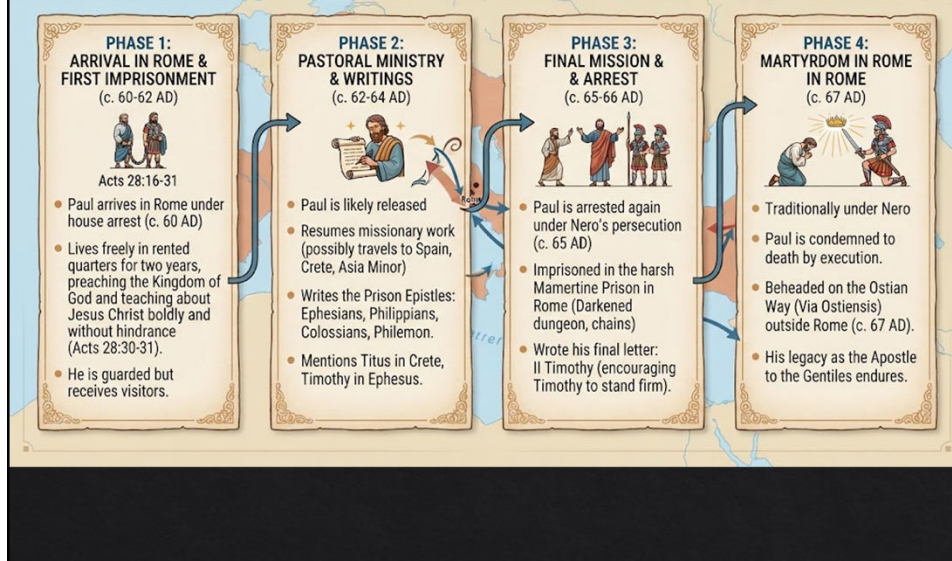
TRADITIONAL CHRONOLOGY OF HIS LIFE, MINISTRY, AND MARTYRDOM IN ROME

Based on early Church Fathers, liturgical tradition, and Roman martyrologies. •

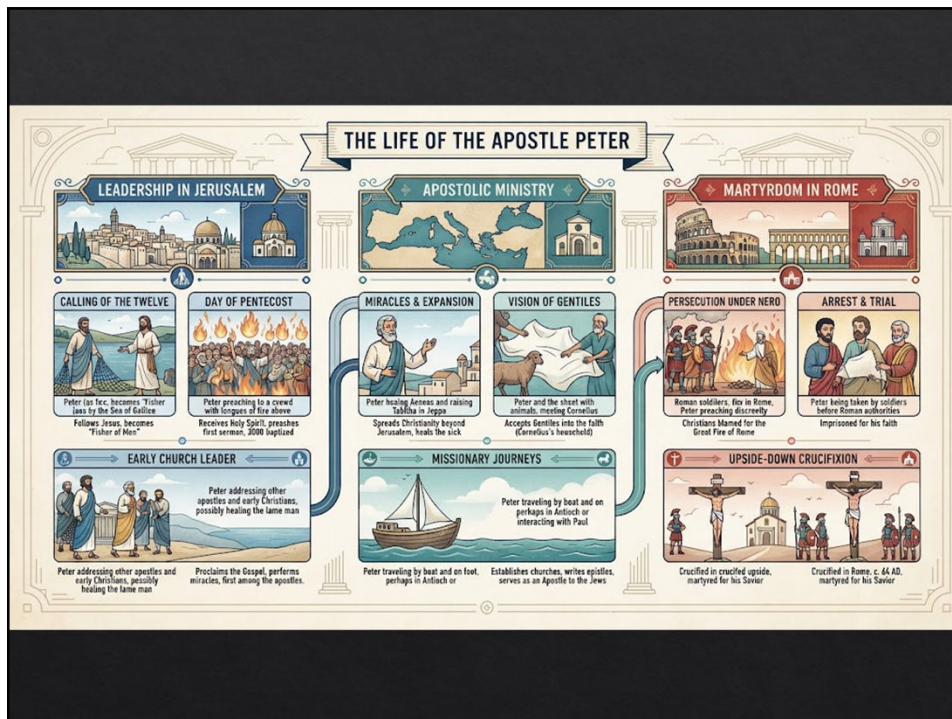


Note: Exact dates are traditional and approximate, as ancient sources do not always provide precise chronology

THE APOSTLE PAUL: FROM ACTS 28 TO MARTYRDOM | AN HISTORICAL TIMELINE (c. 60-67 AD)



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