

1. Open the Word of Truth to Acts 28:15. We are studying Paul's journey to Rome. Before we continue our Bible study you may want to take advantage of God's protocol for fellowship by silently naming your sins to God as we pray.
2. Last week I continued our study of The Doctrine of the Roman Empire.
3. Before we resume that study, I want us to take a look at a map of the journey to Rome and then review an expanded translation of Acts 28:11-14.

Expanded Translation

Acts 28:11 Now after three months we put out to sea in an Alexandrian grain ship which had wintered on the island; the vessel sailed under the ensign of Castor and Pollux, sons of Jupiter.

Acts 28:12 After landing at Syracuse the ship's captain decided to remain in port for three days hoping for favorable winds,

Acts 28:13 and from Syracuse, with some difficulty we made our way north arriving on the southern tip of Italy at the city of Rhegium. And the next day a gentle wind from the south began to blow so the captain after conferring with the Centurion decided we should begin our journey north to the bay of Naples and the city of Puteoli,

Acts 28:14 there at Puteoli we found several brothers and sisters in Christ who graciously invited us to spend the week with them; and after spending the week in Puteoli we began the long walk to Rome.

4. When time expired last week we were studying a history of the Roman Empire taken mainly from the *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia* and Michael Grant's books *The Twelve Caesars* and *The Army of the Caesars*.
5. After a brief review we will resume with an analysis the reign of Vespasian.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Introduction--Rome and her empire have meant many things to many people.

- To Constantine (306-337) it meant a restoration of greatness and a creation of a new Rome on the Bosphorus in ca. 325.
- To Charlemagne it meant establishment of a Holy Roman Empire in the image of the first Rome.
- To Innocent III, other popes and faithful Catholics through the ages the term has become synonymous with the mother church.
- To many contemporary students of prophecy, the Roman Empire is an object of speculation: when and how will it be restored?

- To most Romans of the 1st and 2nd century A.D. it was "the world," and the Mediterranean (*Mare Nostrum--our sea*).
- To the apostle Paul the empire meant a place to preach and to suffer; its citizenship meant protection from undue harassment and a place to seek legal vindication, and eventually to die.
- For early Christians the empire was not only home but a persecutor for their belief in Christ.

Early Development--Rome was strategically placed to dominate the Italian peninsula and Italy. It was also strategically located to dominate the Mediterranean world. The Mediterranean is surrounded by a rim of deserts and mountains and other natural barriers.

This topography facilitated the unification of the land around the sea. In a very real sense Roman history began with the entrance of several Italic tribes into the peninsula from the north between 1000 and 750 B.C.

About 800 B.C. Etruscan peoples moved into west and northwest Italy, apparently from the Near East. The early Etruscans settled in what is today known as Tuscany. These people made numerous contributions to Roman civilization, not the least of which, was urbanization of the city of Rome.

During the 8th century B.C. Greek migrations began to hit the Italian mainland and continued for a couple of centuries. They located primarily in southwest Italy and Sicily. Gauls or Celts moved into the Po Valley in the north of Italy at the end of the 6th century B.C. and posed a threat to the Romans for some three centuries thereafter. The Po Valley extends for some 405 miles following the Po River. The river begins in northern Italy flowing from the slopes of Mt. Viso just southwest of the Alps until it reaches the Adriatic Sea.

Kings ruled during these early years, assisted by their councils of nobles. Then, as the traditional view has it, around 500 B.C. the Latins successfully revolted against the Etruscans and set up a republic, ruled by consuls, a senate and an assembly. The tendency now is to hold that the change from monarchy to republic was more evolutionary and required a considerable period of time.

Rome found herself almost incessantly at war with a variety of powers for hundreds of years. Rome organized her territory in a threefold way. Some towns had full Roman citizenship and rights. Others were known as Latin allies and had lesser privileges.



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Conquest of the Mediterranean World--Hardly had Rome united the peninsula when she became involved in a series of wars (the Punic Wars) with the Carthaginians. The immediate issue before them was who would control Sicily--at that time a rich agricultural region. This question was of great importance to Rome because Sicily was then within shouting distance of the Italian coast. During the first war with Carthage (264-241 B.C.) Rome took Sicily, developed a first-rate navy and became the dominant naval power in the western Mediterranean.

Subsequently she took Sardinia and Corsica and pushed her boundaries in the north to the Alps, thereby erasing any future Gallic threat. The second war with Carthage (218-202 B.C.) was essentially a land war. Hannibal marched from Spain, through southern France and over the Alps into Italy.

His war elephants helped to terrorize the many small city states located outside of Rome. Hannibal counted heavily on a revolution of the Gauls and numerous Italian cities to bring Rome to her knees. Ultimately Rome won the war by invading the Carthaginian homeland and decisively defeating the Carthaginians. Rome fought a third war with Carthage, destroyed the city and annexed Carthaginian territory in north Africa.

After Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., his empire broke up and ultimately fell into three major divisions: Macedonia under Cassander, Seleucia (including initially Syria, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and other territories) under Seleucid, and Egypt under Ptolemy. As long as a balance of power was maintained between these empires, Rome was safe. Just before 200 B.C. a boy king ascended the throne of Egypt. Seeking to take advantage of the situation. Seleucia and Macedonia went into action. Egypt appealed to Rome. Rome felt obliged to intervene to restore the balance of power and to settle accounts with Macedonia for declaring war on Rome in one of her darkest hours.

A series of wars ensued between Seleucia and Egypt; these finally ended when in 146 B.C. Rome took this opportunity to destroy the venerable old city of Corinth in an effort to cow the Greeks. Internally Rome was embroiled in controversy over how much power should be delegated to the Caesar from the Senate. The activities of Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Julius Caesar, Crassus, Mark Antony and others cannot be commented on in detail here. But select activities require attention if one is to gain some idea of Roman development.

Pompey was granted emergency powers to exterminate Mithradates's pirate threat to Roman shipping. As a by-product of that campaign, he took several eastern provinces in 64-63 B.C., including Syria and Palestine. Subsequently (in 60 B.C.), Pompey, Julius Caesar and Crassus organized a triumvirate. By pooling their political support they sought to gain certain personal concessions. The most important was the grant of an army to Caesar to conquer Gaul. The triumvirate was renewed in 55 B.C., but it gradually disintegrated in the heat of personal ambition. In 48 B.C. a civil war left Julius Caesar ruler of the empire when he defeated Pompey at Pharsalus in Greece.

Granted dictatorship, Caesar set about with great vigor and ability to restore order and prosperity to the Roman state, governing it as an empire. Not the least of his reforms was the Julian calendar, which remained in effect for several centuries.

Unfortunately Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C. by men distraught over the demise of the republic. But they did not realize it was impossible to restore the old political institutions. Octavius, Caesar's adopted heir, Mark Antony and Lepidus in 44 B.C. had themselves appointed by the Senate to rule the state and in 42 B.C. destroyed the republican forces led by Brutus and Cassius. Soon Octavius and Antony pushed Lepidus into the background and began to square off for an ultimate struggle. Again the decision as to who would rule the empire was made in Greece, this time at a naval battle off the coast of Actium in western Greece. In 31 B.C. Octavius pursued the fleeing Antony and Cleopatra to Egypt, where they both subsequently committed suicide; Egypt came into

the empire in 30 B.C.

Now Octavius was free to restore the empire, which by this time was in a very disheveled condition. Augustus became in effect commander-in-chief of all armed forces.

Augustus proceeded to carry out numerous programs initiated by Julius and to launch some of his own. He brought peace and prosperity to the empire, reorganized political institutions everywhere, provided the first real police and fire protection for Rome, and in many other ways benefited the empire.

Augustus (27 B.C. - A.D. 14) was succeeded by his adopted heir, Tiberius (a stepson by his third wife). In adopting his heir before his death and associating him with himself, Augustus guaranteed a regular and peaceful succession and set a precedent that was to characterize subsequent imperial administrations. Augustus also inaugurated what is known as the Principate (rule of princeps, first citizen), an arrangement in which the ruler was to be viewed as first citizen of the empire rather than dictator.

Tiberius (A.D. 14-37) is especially significant for the New Testament student because Christ was crucified during his reign. He also appointed Pontius Pilate procurator of Judea (A.D. 26-36). Though much maligned as an embittered and suspicious ruler, Tiberius' greatest difficulty was with the Senate; he gave good government to the empire.

Caligula (A.D. 37-41), grandson of Augustus' daughter Julia, next occupied the imperial chair. As a result of a serious illness he seems to have become mentally deranged. Among his wilder projects was the erection of a temple to himself out of public funds and appointment of his favorite horse as high priest of the cult. In order to obtain needed funds, he resorted to new taxes and confiscations, and used treason laws as a means of seizing money and property. Caligula had alienated not only the Romans but Jews as well. Their monotheistic beliefs prevented them from worshiping images of the princeps, and his statues were forcibly erected in the synagogues in Alexandria.

The Praetorian Guard elevated Caligula's uncle, Claudius (41-54) to the imperial office. The Senate had no choice but to rubber stamp the action. Claudius seems to have provided a high quality of administration for the empire. He adjusted tax burdens and inaugurated an extensive program of public works. This involved building new aqueducts, roads and canals, and especially the development of Ostia as a harbor for Rome.

For some decades, however, Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli), near Naples, was to remain the chief port of the capital. Paul landed at this far away port, some 150 miles distant from the capital, when he came to Rome. Claudius also added Britain and Thrace to the empire and extended Roman citizenship in the provinces. Claudius' activities crossed paths with the New Testament narrative on at least two occasions. He permitted Judea a brief experience as a client kingdom under Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44) and then restored it to its position as an imperial province under the rule of procurators. Pursuant to some trouble with Jews in Rome, he expelled them all from the capital (Acts 18:2; the historian Suetonius confirms this action).

Claudius adopted as his son and successor Nero, son of his second wife by a previous marriage. Nero (A.D. 54-68) ruled well during his first five years, when he was under the domination of his mother and capable heads of the executive departments of government, chief of whom was the philosopher Seneca. When Nero became his own man, he came increasingly into conflict with various individuals and factions in the government. One hot July night in 64, fire broke out in Rome in the slums east of the Circus Maximus and burned with unabated force for nine days, gutting more than half the city. No effort to check it succeeded. Even Nero's palace lay a charred mass. To divert criticism from himself, he laid blame for the fire on Christians of the city and initiated the first official persecution of them. Of special importance was his failure to hold allegiance of the military, who launched a successful rebellion in 68. Nero committed suicide, and with him died the Julio-Claudian line.

The years 68 & 69 is often known as the Year of the Four Emperors, as Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian followed each other in rapid succession.

Finally Vespasian (69-79) won undisputed control of the empire. Vespasian could have followed the path of military dictatorship or cooperation with civilian administrators. He chose the latter and became a kind of second Augustus, dividing rule of Rome and the empire with the Senate. Vespasian faced a herculean task in lifting the empire from its disheveled state. But he was equal to the emergency. He put down rebellions, reformed the army, built extensive fortifications, restored the economy, and built numerous public buildings in the capital. His most famous structure, which he was not able to finish, was the great Colosseum, built on the site of one of the lakes on the grounds of Nero's palace.

The most significant of Vespasian's activities for the Bible student was his suppression of the Jewish revolt. This rebellion had broken out in 66, and Vespasian had reduced all of Judea but Jerusalem by the time he made his bid for the imperial chair in 69.

His son Titus assumed command of the armies that finally destroyed the city and the temple in A.D. 70. To commemorate this victory, Titus erected a triumphal arch adjacent to the Forum in Rome. One of the reliefs of this arch shows plunder from the temple, including the golden lampstand and the silver trumpets. Titus ruled the empire briefly during the years 79-81. He completed the Colosseum and delighted the populace with a festival of 100 days' duration on that occasion. Obviously the structure did not exist during the Neronian persecution and had nothing to do with Paul's execution. Moreover, there is no firm evidence that it was ever used for martyrdom of Christians. The short reign of Titus was saddened by the eruption of Vesuvius and the consequent burial of Pompeii and nearby cities, and by another great fire which roared through the capital for three days.

Titus was succeeded by his younger brother Domitian (81-96), who was received without opposition by the Praetorian Guard and the Senate. Very soon he won the undying hostility of the Senate by his autocratic ways, which indicated his intention of absolute dictatorship. After 86 he seems to have required officials of his household to address him as "Lord and God." A persecution of Jews broke out in the empire about

A.D. 90 and soon engulfed Christians. The apostle John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos at this time. But Domitian cannot be dismissed as a mere tyrant. In Rome he was an able administrator and built extensively in an effort to erase the scars left by the great fire of 80. He ruled the empire well, and it prospered under his administration. But ultimately no one felt safe from his suspicion and purges. His own wife, believing she was to be the next victim, launched a conspiracy that resulted in his assassination on September 16, 96. With the death of Domitian, the apostle John was freed to return to his beloved Ephesus where he probably finished writing the book of the Revelation and died a natural death.

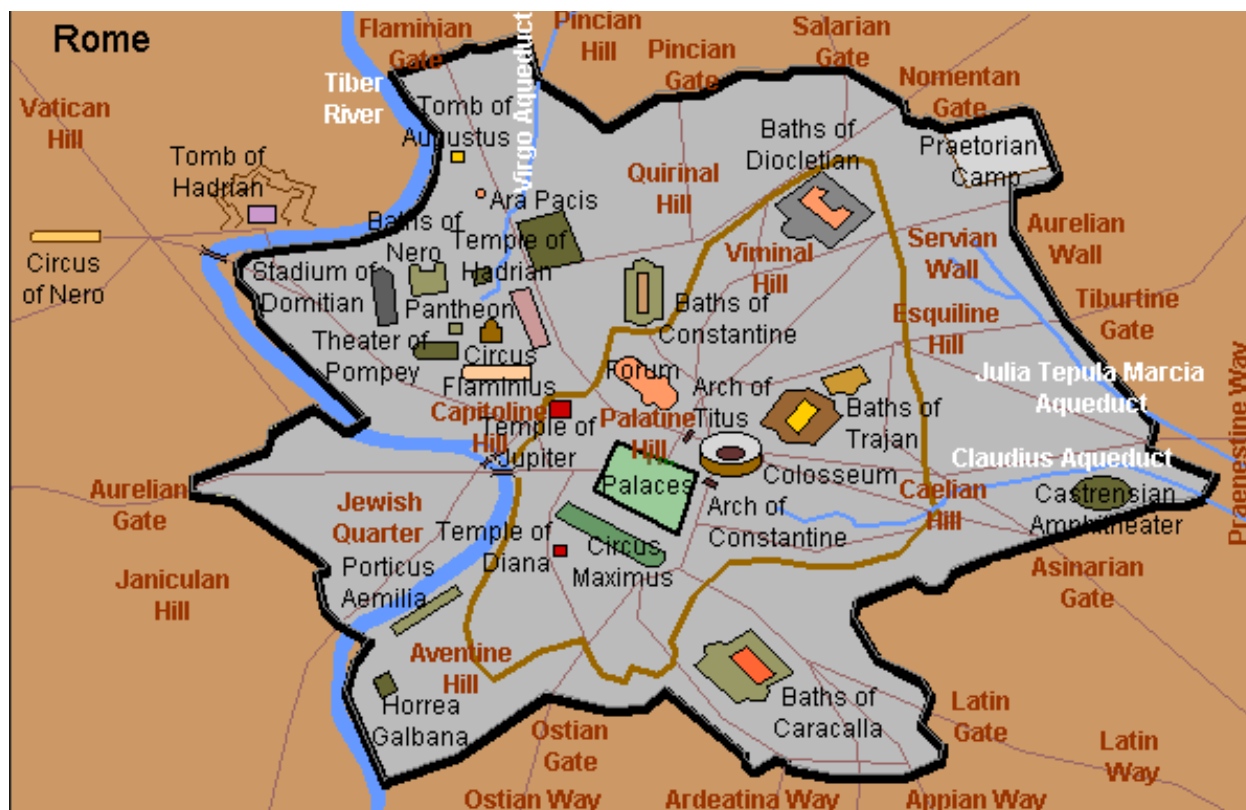
6. Now let's see what we can learn from Acts 28:15.

KJV-New Sentence

Acts 28:15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

NIV

Acts 28:15 The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged.



AND FROM THENCE Κακειθεν

1. **Kakeithen** is better translated "and then ..." or "now when ..."

2. **Kakeithen** is a compound consisting of the conjunction **Kai** and the adverb **Ekeithen**. It is translated "and then, then, from there, afterwards" or "and from thence."

3. Several uses found elsewhere in the New Testament are as follows:

Mar 10:1 Jesus "**then**" left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

Acts 7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: "**and from thence**," when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

Acts 13:21 "**Afterward**" the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years.

Acts 20:15 The next day we set sail "**from there**" (Mitylene Lesbos) and arrived off Kios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus.

WHEN THE BRETHERN HEARD Ο ΑΔΕΛΦΟΣ ΑΚΟΥΩ

1. **Ho Adelphos Akouo** is better translated "when the brothers and sisters in Christ heard ..." or "when the brothers in Rome found out ..."

2. **Adelphos** is a monadic noun declined as a nominative plural followed by the verb **Akouo** parsed as an aorist active participle.

3. Luke often used **Adelphos** in the book of Acts.

Acts 22:1 "**Brothers**" and fathers, listen now to my defense."

Acts 22:2 When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said:

Acts 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

Acts 22:4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,

Acts 22:5 as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their "**brothers**" in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

End Lesson Taught 4-4-10