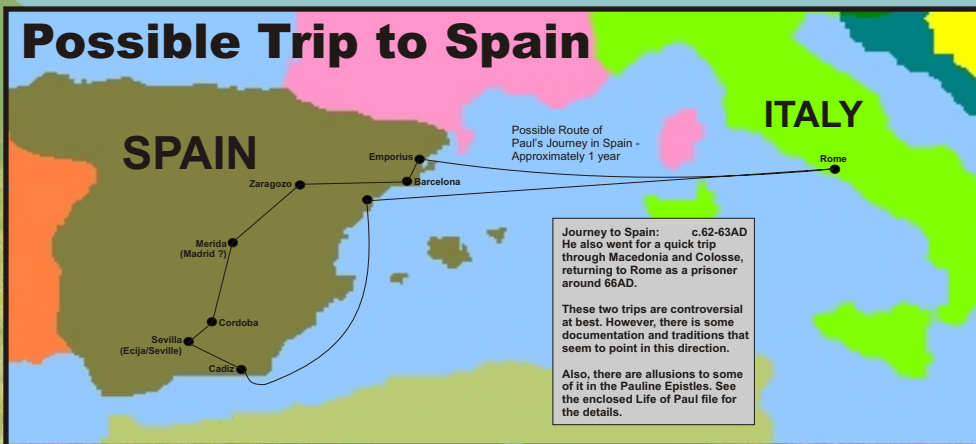


Paul's Final Journeys



Mediterranean Sea

Possible Trip to Spain



Paul's Last Journeys

The known history of the apostle Paul ends with the last verse of the book of Acts. From later epistles and the light of early writers we have gathered a few facts that seem to indicate further journeys. From Philippians and Philemon it is clear that Paul expected an acquittal and release. From 1 Timothy and Titus it seems evident that after his imprisonment there he had about two years of liberty. Combining the verses given in the epistles, we have provided one possible outline of Paul's journeys during that time.

In Romans 15:23, 28 Paul speaks of going to Spain and seeing the Colossians and Macedonians as well. Here it sounds like he did the Macedonia trip first and then Spain, but evidence so far shows he went to Spain first and then to Macedonia. Evidence is in the form of document fragments and local traditions, plus allusions to these two trips in the Pauline Epistles. The jury is still out on this one, but both trips seem to be entirely possible and the time frame is correct.

Near the close of his imprisonment in Rome Paul expressed an expectation of speedily visiting the churches of Proconsular Asia, especially Colosse, Philemon 1:22, and desired a lodging to be prepared for him at the house of Philemon. This purpose was, most likely, accomplished. There is reason to believe that both Ephesus and Colosse were visited at this time.

At one time Colosse was a large and flourishing city, but diminished in size as other eastern cities stole its trade. Paul had never visited this city; its church had been founded by Epaphras. Paul was obviously well acquainted with several of its members and addressed to this church, during his imprisonment, the Epistle to the Colossians. He also wrote to one of its members, the Epistle of Philemon.

Just before his release Paul dispatched Timothy to Philippi, expecting soon to follow him, Phil. 2:19-24. Timothy fulfilled his mission and went to Ephesus, where he was later left in charge of the church by Paul, who then went to Macedonia, I Tim. 1:3. While in Macedonia, he would have visited all the churches he had planted in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea, and he possibly journeyed as far south as Corinth.

Crete - It is judged that to this time period belongs Paul's visit to Crete, Titus 1:5. He had touched at this island during his first voyage to Rome, and may have gone on shore at Fair Havens; but now he organized the church and left it under the care of Titus, who had accompanied him to the island.

Nicopolis - We next find Paul at Nicopolis, a place not previously mentioned in his history, Titus 3:12. While there were no less than 10 cities of this name in the ancient world, the one in Epirus has generally been accepted as the one where Paul “determined to winter.” This would have been his first or second winter while at liberty. It was in the Roman province of Achaia, near the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Isles. Visitors to Nicopolis are shown the ruins of a small building where Paul supposedly went to pray.

Troas - At some point Paul passed through Troas and stopped to visit Carpus where he left his winter mantle and some of his manuscripts. Some writers believe he was arrested here in Troas and, therefore, was unable to return for his mantle and parchments.

Paul possibly had travelled from Nicopolis through Macedonia, passing through Philippi and sailing across the Aegean Sea to Troas.

Ephesus - Some believed that Paul was arrested at Troas. If this is true, then he probably would have been sent to Ephesus, the residence of the proconsul, for trial. There is some evidence that Paul had been in prison in Ephesus as there is a place people point out as the prison of Paul.

Paul's companion, Trophimus, who had been with him at the time of his former arrest in Jerusalem, took sick in Miletus, and Paul had to leave him behind when he left for Rome.

When Paul set sail from Miletus, possibly as a prisoner, he was accompanied by several friends: Titus, who had left Crete to follow him; Luke the physician, his companion (and lawyer?) to the end, and Tychicus. There is no information available about this trip, so it is shown on our map by the shortest route to Rome by sea.

Rome - Very little is known about this second trip to Rome. His internment was short; his friends were few, for the church had been scattered by the terrible persecutions of Nero.

Paul was left alone at his first hearing, II Tim. 4:16, 17, his friends having left for various reasons. II Tim. 4:10 states, “for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.” Only Luke was still with him.

He wrote Timothy to come and bring Mark with him, II. Tim. 4:9, 11. Paul asked them to bring him his cloak and parchments that he had left at Troas with Carpus, II Tim. 4:13. It would have been cold in prison and the parchments would have been a real comfort to him. He urged them to make every effort to get to him before winter, II Tim. 4:21. (His last winter.)

From his own expectations his martyrdom would not be delayed much longer. There is no further information that we can find as to whether Timothy and Mark were able to see him before his execution. He died by the sword, beheaded. As a Roman citizen he was spared from the mouth of the lions and was given a swift death reserved for Roman citizens.

The traditional place of his execution is shown at *Aquae Salvae*, now *Tre Fontane*, three miles from Rome, near the road to Ostia. It is believed by some that he was buried under the site of the magnificent “church of St. Paul without the Gates,” a few miles from the wall of the city. Some believe his remains were removed to another location.

W have presented two journeys, Spain and then Macedonia, but in fact it may have been several shorter journeys. He had four years of liberty before his second arrest and death, 62AD to 66AD.

Recent research and archaeology is continuously finding and producing more bits of evidence. One day we may discover more about the life of Paul, the Apostle.