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Judea during the Time of Paul

The Roman province of **Judea** was established in 6 AD when Agustus removed Archelaus from his position as ethnarch of **Judea**, Samaria, and Idumea **(Joseph *Antiquity of the Jews* 17,31ff, *Jewish War* 2.90ff)**. Since Archelaus' territories were too small to warrant the creation of an independent province they were annexed to the neighboring province of Syria, whose governors had supervised **Judean** affairs even during Herod's reign. Like Egypt, it belonged to a class of imperial provinces noted for their rulers' equestrian ranking. Such provinces normally hosted no legionary forces and were considered unworthy, as it were, of a senatorial governor, either because of their special character or for economic reasons. They frequently appear to have been a function either of a "tenacious and individual culture" or a semi-barbarous population – both of which caused serious difficulties in the implementation of normal, ordinary regulations.

The governor of **Judea** was directly appointed by the Emperor. The length of his office was affected by various factors, including a given Emperor's general policy with regard to terms of service and his interest in promoting favorites in the administrative hierarchy outside **Judea**, the governor's personal connections at court, and his ability in maintaining peace and security in his territory without unreasonable tyranny and cruelty. Generally speaking, the average term of service appears to be about two years.

At the same time, the province's administrative division continued to follow the Herodian system. **Judea** proper was divided into eleven toparchies which **Josephus** enumerates as Jerusalem, Gophna, Acrabeta, Thamna, Lydda, Emmaus, Pella, Idumaea (excluding Gaza), Engedi, Herodium, and Jericho, plus Jamnia and Joppa **(*Jewish War* 3.54ff)**. The toparchies appear to have followed the division of the country according to **the twenty-four priestly courses** (see the commentary on **the Life of David, to see link click Ev – The Divisions of Priests**), although the latter were not confined to **Judea** but covered the whole Land of **Isra'el (*Antiquities of the Jews* 7.363ff, *Life* 2, Taanith (fast days) 3.6 and 4.2, Sanhedrin 11:2).** While most of the priests apparently lived in **Judea** they did not by any means all reside in Jerusalem. **Zechariah** lived in the hill country of Judah

(Luke 1:39), Mattathias dwelt in Modi'in (First Maccabees 2:1), and **the Oral Law** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**) rules wherever a priest resides he must receive the heave-offering **(Terumoth [Heave offerings] 2:4)**.

Although Jerusalem served as **Judea's** permanent administrative capital as well as that of Idumaea, its control over the whole country ceased when it became a Roman province, at which point the governor's seat was transferred to Caesarea. Jerusalem nevertheless remained the province's largest city and the main focus of its political, social, and religious life, due to the presence of both the Temple and the Sanhedrin (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Lg – The Great Sanhedrin**).[35]