–Save This Page as a PDF–

Paul's Witness before Caesar
27:1 to 28:16

Seasonal data suggest the journey to Rome took place in late 59 during the risky time for sea travel, and the Paul probably arrived in Rome at least by the early February 60 AD.



What was different about Paul's voyage to Rome? In the final **two chapters** of **Acts**, all the major themes of the book come together. Not least among these is the journey motif. From the time the church at Antioch first commissioned **Paul and Barnabas**, **the apostle** had constantly been seen as traveling – to Cyprus, the towns of southern Galatia, to Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Ephesus. Three times **he** made the return trip to Yerushalayim. Now **he** departed Palestine, seemingly for the last time, bound for the capital of the empire and his appearance before Caesar. **He** and **his** companions traveled this time by sea. **Paul** had traveled by sea before, and **Luke** had often depicted these voyages in extreme detail, naming ports and landmarks and even time spent sailing. But this voyage was different. It is told with *considerably* more detail, occupying three-fourths of the total text of **Chapters 27** and **28**.[604] This account of **Paul's** journey to **Rome** is considered on the finest ancient descriptions of any sea voyage.



Did Paul ever stand before Caesar in Rome? The overarching theme of the voyage is the providence of **God**. The central verse is **27:24** where **the angel of God** spoke to **Paul** and said, **"Do not fear, you must stand before Caesar; and indeed, God has granted safety to you all who are sailing with you." Paul's** witness in **Rome** had been the central focus since **he resolved in the Ruach . . . to go to Rome (19:21).** While imprisoned in **Jerusalem, the Lord** assured **him** in a vision that **he would surely witness in the Roman city (23:11).** Now, in the midst of the howling storm, **Paul** was given a final assurance that in **God's** providence the witness **before Caesar** would take place. It is perhaps the major theme of **Acts** – the triumphful witness of **Yeshua Messiah**![605]

Did **the apostle** ever appear **before Caesar**? Some have contended that probably **he** didn't. It is surmised that **his** accusers from **Judea** never showed up to press their case, so the charges were dropped. There is no evidence for this view, and it runs counter to the testimony of **the angel** who informed **Paul, "You must stand before Caesar" (Acts 27:24).**

Was Peter ever in Rome? According to **Roman** Catholic tradition, **Peter** was the first bishop of **Rome**. **His** pontificate supposedly lasted for twenty-five years until **he** was martyred in **Rome** in 67 AD. The remarkable thing, however, about **Peter's** alleged reign as pope in **Rome**, is that the New Covenant does not say one single word about it. The word **Rome** appears only nine times in the Bible, and never is **Kefa** mentioned in connection with it. There is no mention to **Rome** in either of **Peter's** letters. But **Paul's** journey to **Rome** is recorded in great detail in **Acts 27** and **28**. In fact, there is no evidence in the New Covenant, nor any historical proof of *any* kind, that **Peter** was *ever* in **Rome**.

Moreover, the most compelling reason for believing that **Peter** was never in **Rome** is found in **Paul's** letter to the **Romans**! According to **Roman** Catholic tradition, **Kefa** reigned as pope in **Rome** from 42 to 67 AD. It is generally agreed that **Paul's** letter to the church in **Rome** was written in the year 58 AD, at the very height of

Peter's alleged reign there. **He** did not address **his** letter to **Peter**, as **he** should have if **he** was pope, but to the believers in **Rome**. How strange for a missionary to write to a church and not mention its pastor! That would have been an inexcusable insult. What would we think of a missionary today who would dare to write a congregation in a distant city and without mentioning their pastor, tell them that he was anxious to go there so that he might bare some fruit among them even as he had seen in his own community **(Romans 1:13)**, that he was anxious to instruct and strengthen them, and that he was anxious to preach to **gospel** there where it had not been preached before? How would the pastor feel if he knew that such greetings had been sent to 27 of his most prominent members, but not him? Would he stand for such unethical actions? Even more so the pope! If **Peter** had been ministering in the church at **Rome** for 16 years, why did **Paul** write to the people of the church in these words: **I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong (Romans 1:11).** Would that not be an insult to **Kefa**? Would it not be presumptuous for **Paul** to go over the head of the pope? And if **Peter** had been there for 16 years, why was it necessary for **Paul** to go there at all, especially since in **his** letter **he** says that **he** does not build on another's foundation: **it has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation (Romans 15:20)**. At the conclusion of **his** letter to the **Roman** church, **Paul** sends greetings to the 27 people mentioned above, including some women. But **he** does not mention **Kefa** at all.

And again, had **Peter** been pope in **Rome** prior to, or at the time **Paul** arrived there as a prisoner in 61 AD, **Paul** could not have failed to mention **him**, for in the letters written in **Rome** during his imprisonment – **Ephesians**, **Philippians**, **Colossians** and **Philemon – he** gives quite a list of his fellow-workers in **Rome** and **Peter's** name is not among them. **He** spent two whole years there as a prisoner **and welcomed all who came to see him (Acts 28:30).**
Nor does he mention **Peter** in his second letter to **Timothy**, which was written form **Rome** during **his** second imprisonment, in 67 AD, the year that **Peter** is alleged to have suffered martyrdom in **Rome**, and shortly before **his** own death **(Second Timothy 4:6-8)**. **He** says that all **his** friends had abandoned **him**, and that only **Luke** was with him **(Second Timothy 4:10-11)**. Where was **Peter**? If **he** was the pope in **Rome** when **Paul** was a prisoner, why did **Peter** not call on **Paul** and offer aid? What kind of spiritual leader would that be?

All of this makes it quite clear that **Peter** was never in **Rome** at all, even though

the Vatican has publicly unveiled a handful of bone fragments purportedly belonging to **him**. Not one of the early church fathers gives *any* support to the belief that **Peter** was bishop in **Rome** until Jerome in the fifth century. Du Pin, a **Roman** Catholic historian, acknowledges "the primacy of **Peter** is not recorded by the early church writers, Justin Martyr (139 AD), Irenaeus (178 AD), Clement of Alexandria (190 AD), or others of the most ancient fathers." Catholicism builds her foundation neither on biblical teaching, nor upon the facts of history, but like **the Oral Law**, only on **the** unfounded **traditions of men** **(Mark 7:8)**.[606]