Acts 27-28

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Acts 27-28 – the long perilous journey to Rome
- Abrupt ending of Acts?

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Luke's narrative of sea voyage:
  - Puzzles commentators of the long narrative
  - Parallels to ancient genre of shipwreck and perilous journey at sea (see Chariton of Aphorodisian, Longus, Petronius, Achilleus Tatius, Heliodorus, and Xenephon of Ephesus)
  - Perhaps suggesting that Paul's life is in God's hand and that he will arrive in Rome as a witness there.

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Caesarea to Myra
  - Sailed for Italy – Luke does not give Rome as the final destination as Rome is not a port city
  - Most ships would land at either Puteoli (240km) or Ostia at the mouth of River Tiber (30km)

- Photos of Ostia

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Caesarea to Myra
  - Paul and other prisoners under the care of Julius, the centurion
  - Luke now joins Paul (note the "we" passage)
  - Aristarchus (see 19:29: identified as a Macedonian; 20:4: identified as a Thessalonian. See also Col 4:20 and Phlm 24)
    - A prisoner could be accompanied by family or friends subject to approval of Roman officials.
    - Aristarchus shared Paul's time of imprisonment in Rome → send by the Thessalonian church??

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Caesarea to Myra
  - The fact that Luke and Aristarchus accompany Paul suggest that they not only provide fellowship but also share in Paul's sufferings.
  - Are we willing to do the same?

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Myra to Fair Havens in Crete
  - Paul is transferred to another ship heading to Rome
  - Sailing is slow as it is against the wind
  - Paul suggests not to sail as it is October already (after the celebration of Day of Atonement normally celebrated end of Sept to early Oct) – winter is approaching
  - Centurion refuses to listen to Paul

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Myra to Fair Havens in Crete
  - Sailing proceeds
  - Strong winds
  - Throwing of cargo
  - Giving up hope of surviving

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Myra to Fair Havens in Crete
  - Paul's speech
    - Confident that no one will be lost
    - Vision from God: 27:24: "Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor; and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.'
    - Offers hope to the crew

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Myra to Fair Havens in Crete
  - Ship getting closer to Malta
  - Some sailors try to escape but not successful
  - Paul urges the people to take some food, and he breaks bread and give thanks to God and eats it (Eucharistic language?)
  - 276 people on board

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Myra to Fair Havens in Crete
  - Ship hits the ground and is breaking
  - Soldiers' plan is to kill the prisoners but the centurion objects to the plan.
  - All swim and use the planks as floated objects to reach Malta.
  - Welcome by the locals

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Myra to Fair Havens in Crete
  - A snake fastens itself to Paul's hand and bites him
  - The locals believe Paul is a murderer
  - Nothing happens to Paul
  - The people now believe Paul is a god

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Myra to Fair Havens in Crete
  - Publius and his sick father
  - Paul heals the father
  - All who have illness come to Paul for healing
  - Paul stays for 3 months in Malta, and is well taken cared of by the locals

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Malta to Puteoli
  - Boards a ship from Alexandrian
  - Interesting that Luke mentions that the ship has Dioscuri as its figurehead
  - Dioscuri − sons of Zeus, the twins of Leda, are called upon as helpers in distress, particularly by seamen who regarded their ephiphany as a stellar constellation as a sign of help.
  - Irony: Dioscuri could not help them but Paul's God does.

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Arrives in Puteoli and stays with the local believers for 7 days
- Then travels to Rome and meets believers from Rome at Forum of Appius (62km southeast of Rome) and Three Taverns (48km southeast of Rome)
- Two parties from Rome travel so far to meet Paul suggests that they hold Paul in high regards. They would have received Paul's letter to the Romans a few years earlier.

Paul's Journey to Rome

- Paul in Rome
- 28:16 − Paul's imprisonment in Rome
  - From Puteoli, Paul travels on Via Appia to Rome
  - He is allowed to live by himself, possibly in private lodgings, with a soldier guarding him, a lighter custody (not guarded by centurion or larger contingent of soldiers) − suggesting that his case is not that serious based on the charges brought by the Jewish leaders

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:17-22
  - Paul's meeting with the Jewish leaders
  - Paul's speech, updating the Jewish leaders his situation
  - Question: strange that Luke does not mention the gentile believers in Rome − Paul addressed them in Romans a few years ago. Why?
  - The Jewish leaders response and their eagerness to hear Paul

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:23-28
  - Paul preaches about the Kingdom of God to the Jewish people
  - Some believe while other do not

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:23-28
  - 28:25-28 → Paul reaffirms his calling to go to the gentiles
  - Quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10 (see also Matt 13:13-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10 (parable of the sower); John 12:39-40; Rom 11:8

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:23-28
  - Changes made to the quotation cf to LXX:
  1. Imperatives "keep listening, but do not comprehend" & "keep looking but do not understand" changed to future indicatives "you will listen but never understand" & "you will look but never see"
  2. Command that Isaiah is to make the people's heart dull changed to statement of fact "the mind of this people has become dull"
  3. Passive "be healed" changed to the future indicative "I will heal them"

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:23-28
  - Context of Isa 6 - a message of judgement
  - Isaiah in the temple − receives the commission from God and responds, "Here I am, send me"
  - God commands Isaiah to tell the people to tell the people to go on behaving as apostates who hear God's word but who neither understand or obey it.
  - God will judge his people for their disobedience, and the judgement will run its course before any hope can be seen (Isa 6:11-13)

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:23-28
  - Function of Isa 6 in Acts 28: also a message of judgement for the Jewish people?
  - God has given the same mandate he gave to Isaiah to Paul, that Paul is to preach to the Jews?
  - What will happen to those who do not believe? Judgement awaits them? The Jewish people deliberate choice to reject God?
  - Cf Isaiah and Paul − have things changed? What about today?

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:23-28
  - Israel's rejection → salvation for gentiles (cf Rom 9-11)
  - Gentiles will listen (echoes Isa 40:5?)
  - This turning to gentiles is the 3rd mention in Acts
    - See 13:46-17 in Pisidian Antioch
    - See 18:6 in Corinth
  - Paul predicts that the gospel will be preached to the gentiles even in Rome

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:29??

Paul's Journey to Rome

- 28:30-31
  - Paul stays in Rome for 2 years and welcomes all
  - Paul proclaims and teaches the gospel unhindered
  - The prisoner has freedom to preach the gospel with boldness in the heart of the Roman Empire – what an irony!
  - God fulfills his promises – that Paul would preach the gospel in Rome, and that gentiles will hear. The gospel has reached the ends of theearth as per Acts 1:8

Paul's Journey to Rome

- What happens after Acts 28?
  - Abrupt ending
  1. Historical explanations – Luke narrates up to where he witnesses Paul's life
  2. Theological explanations – Luke conveys the fulfillment of Acts 1:8 in bringing the gospel to Rome
  3. Literary explanations – Luke is planning to write Vol 3?

Date	Events
62-64	***Missionary Journey 4 ??(Asia)*** Crete (Tit 1:5), Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3), Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3), Nicopolis? (Tit 3:12), Corinth and Miletus (2 Tim 4:20).
64-68	Nero persecutes Christians
65-67?	Roman Mamertine imprisonment; in dungeon; expecting death (2 Tim 1:16-17; 2:9; 4:6-8, 16-18)



The Chapel above the Prison Cell



Stairs leading to the prison cell



Mamertine Prison, Rome: note position of the cross



Hole above the cell



Date	Events
66-67?	Execution under Nero: Paul and Peter (Eusebius, EH II.22,25)
***68**	**Nero died**

Church of St. Paul of Three Fountains, Rome



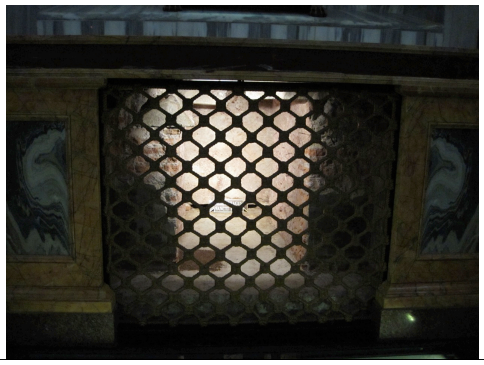




Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls



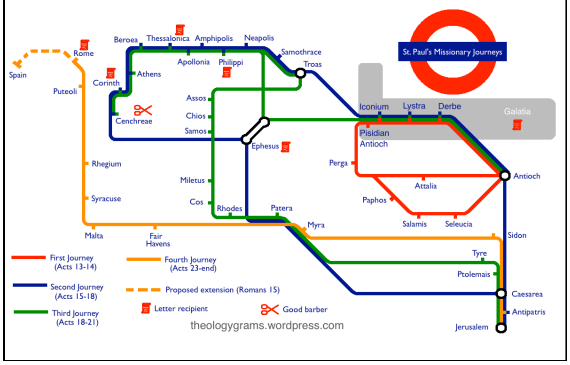
The tomb of Paul







Paul's Missionary Journeys



Discussion

- Within a span of about 10 years, Paul has carried out 3 missionary journeys that cover all the "world" according to the people in his days. Think about the magnitude of his travels covering present day Middle East, Israel, Syria, Turkey, Greece and Italy. Would you think we would have done it today?

Discussion

- Read: Is there A Place for Suffering in Mission? Perspectives from Paul's Sufferings in 2 Corinthians" in Tan Kang San, ed, *The Soul of Mission: Perspectives on Christian Leadership, Spirituality and Mission in East Asia* (Petaling Jaya: Pustaka Sufes, 2007), 64-78.

Discussion

- Suffering and persecution seem to accompany Paul wherever he goes. Do you think it is any different today if we were to follow God's will in reaching out to those who have yet to hear the gospel? Are you prepared to pay the price?

Discussion

- Read: "Are Signs and Wonders for Today?"
- What are the roles of signs and wonders in Acts?
- Is there any significance of signs and wonders in mission today?

Discussion

- What are the two lessons you learn from Paul's life and ministry?