
a ***Grace Notes*** course

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 406: **Acts 26:19-32**

ACTS

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ACTS 26:19-32**ACTS 26:19. *Whereupon, O King Agrippa,***

Having been favoured with this illustrious appearance of the Lord and with this declaration and commission from him:

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; to Christ himself, who appeared from heaven in so much light and glory, and spoke unto him, and appointed him what he should be, and do, and declared what use he should be of: he did not disbelieve what Christ said, nor was he disobedient to the orders he gave, but immediately set about the work he called him to, without consulting flesh and blood; (see Galatians 1:16).

ACTS 26:20. *But showed first unto them of Damascus,* The Jews at Damascus to whom the apostle first preached; (see Acts 9:20,22).

and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea; observing the order of his mission, (Acts 26:17) though it was not until after he had been in Arabia, and had returned to Damascus, that he went to Jerusalem, and preached there; (see Galatians 1:17,18) compared with (Acts 9:28).

and [then] to the Gentiles; as at Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra in Lycaonia; and at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea in Macedonia; and in many places in Greece and Asia, as at Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and others, as this history shows; and indeed he preached the Gospel from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum;

that they should repent; that is, that they should repent of their sins; of sin in general, as it is committed against God, is a transgression of his law, and as it is in itself exceeding sinful, and in its effects dreadful; and of particular sins, such as men have been more especially addicted to, and of which the Jews and Gentiles, the apostle was sent unto, and to whom he preached, had been guilty: as the former of their will worship, and following the commandments and traditions of men, thereby making void the law of God; of their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah; of their

persecution of his apostles, ministers, and people; and of their trust in, and dependence upon, their own righteousness for justification: and the latter of their immoralities, superstition, and idolatry; and both not of the outward gross actions of life only, but of inward sins and lusts: and repentance of each of these lies in a different sentiment of them; in a detestation and abhorrence of them; in shame and confusion on account of them.

In self-reflections upon them, and humiliation for them; in an ingenuous acknowledgment of them, and turning from them: and this is not a national repentance which the ministers of the Gospel are to show to men the necessity of; though this is not unworthy of them, when there is a call in Providence to it, and the state of things require it; much less a legal one, but an evangelical repentance; which has along with it faith in Christ Jesus, dealing with his blood and righteousness for the remission of their sins.

Their justification before God; and which springs from, and is encouraged and heightened by, a sense of the love of God: and now this being a part of the Gospel ministry, does not suppose it to be in the power of men to repent of themselves, since no man, whilst he remains insensible of the evil nature of sin, and the hardness of his heart continues, which none but God can remove, can repent; and when he becomes truly sensible, he then prays to God to give him repentance, and to turn him: nor does it at all contradict its being a blessing of the covenant, a gift of Christ, and a grace of the Spirit of God; nor does it suggest, that the preaching of the word is sufficient of itself to produce it; the contrary of which the ministry of John the Baptist, of Christ, and of his apostles, declares.

The design of its being insisted on in the Gospel ministry, is to show that men are sinners, and in such a state and condition, that they are in need of repentance, and that without it they must perish; and the rather this is to be quietly inculcated, since true repentance is unto life, is the beginning and evidence of spiritual life, and

issues in eternal life; and since there is a close connection between that and salvation, and that without it there is no salvation. It follows, **and turn to God**; this is to be understood, not of the first work of conversion, which is God's work, and not man's act, and in which man is passive, and which is before repentance, whereas this follows upon it; though the ministers of the word have a concern with this; to bring about this is the design and use of their ministrations; their business is to show the nature of conversion, what it is, and wherein it lies; to rectify mistakes about it, and to observe the necessity of it: but here is designed a turning to God, in consequence of the grace of first conversion; by an acknowledgment and confession of sin to God, by an application to him for pardoning grace and mercy, by a trust and dependence on him for righteousness, life, and salvation, and by obedience to his commands and ordinances. It intends a turning of the Jews from their evil principles and practices, from the traditions of their elders to the law of God, the Gospel of Christ, and the ordinances of it, and of the Gentiles, from their idols to the worship of the true and living God: **and do works meet for repentance** the same with "fruits meet for repentance", (Matthew 3:8). And such as are particularly mentioned in (2 Corinthians 7:11) they are they which are the reverse of the evil actions they have been guilty of, and which are properly good works. And they are they which are done according to the will of God declared in his word, this is a requisite of a good work; what is not according to the word of God is not a good work, nor can it be any evidence of repentance; and they are also such as spring from love to God, for if they are done through fear of punishment, or for sinister and selfish ends, they show repentance to be a mere legal one: and they are such as are done in faith, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God by him. All external good works are designed, which show that the inward repentance professed, and that the outward change made in religion and worship, are genuine and sincere: the doctrines

of internal repentance and outward worship, and all goodworks, are parts of the Gospel ministry, and to be insisted on in their proper places.

ACTS 26:21. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, He means the Asiatic Jews, who finding him in the temple, laid hold on him, and dragged him out of it: and, as he says, went about to kill me; for no other reason, but for preaching to the Gentiles, and for preaching the above doctrines to them: what he refers to is in (Acts 21:27-31).

ACTS 26:22. Having therefore obtained help of God, Both to preach the Gospel, and escape danger; for he had delivered him many a time both from Jews and Gentiles, according to his promise, (Acts 26:17) and particularly from the Asiatic Jews, when they were about to kill him, by the means of Lysias the chief captain, who rescued him out of their hands; and also from the lying in wait of the Jews to take away his life, and the various methods they used both with Felix and Festus to get him into their power: but the Lord appeared for him, and saved him from all their pernicious designs against him; and therefore he could say as follows,

I continue unto this day: in the land of the living, though in bonds:

witnessing both to small and great; to kings and subjects, as now to Agrippa, Festus, the chief captains and principal inhabitants of Caesarea, and to the common people assembled; to high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, young and old; to persons of every state, age, and sex:

saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. This he mentions in opposition to the charge against him, as that he spoke against the law of Moses, as well as against the temple, and the people of the Jews; whereas his doctrine was perfectly agreeable to the writings of Moses, and the prophets, concerning the Messiah, they speak of in many places, and the Jews expected.

There is an entire harmony and agreement between the writings of Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, in all the doctrines of the Gospel revelation; in the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence, and of the proper deity of each person; in the doctrines respecting the person, offices, and work of Christ; that he is the Son of God, God and man in one person, and the only Mediator between God and man; and that he is prophet, priest, and King; and that the great work he was appointed to, undertook, and came about, and has fulfilled, is the redemption of his people; and in the several doctrines of grace concerning the choice of men to salvation, the covenant made with Christ on account of them, their redemption, justification, and pardon, their repentance and good works, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state: the particular things instanced in, the apostle preached, and Moses and the prophets said should be, and in which they agreed, are as follow.

ACTS 26:23. *That Christ should suffer*, Great afflictions in soul and body, and death itself; this is recorded by Moses, (Genesis 3:15) and is the sense of many of the types, as of the passover, brazen serpent, etc. and of all the sacrifices which from God were appointed by him, and is the constant account of all the prophets from the beginning to the end; (see Psalm 22:1,2,6,7,11-21, Isaiah 53:2-12) (Daniel 9:26, Zechariah 9:9, 12:10, 13:6,7).

The sufferer is Christ, or the Messiah, not the Father, nor the Spirit, but the Word, or Son of God, and not in his divine nature, which was incapable of suffering, but in his human nature; though sufferings may be ascribed to his whole person, both natures being united in him: and hence they became efficacious to answer the purposes for which they were endured; and which he endured, not for himself, nor for angels, but for chosen men, sinners, and ungodly persons; in order to make peace and reconciliation for them, procure the pardon of their sins, obtain eternal redemption for them,

deliver them from all evil, and from all enemies, and bring them nigh to God.

What he suffered were no other than what had been foretold in the writings of the Old Testament, which all along represent the Messiah as a suffering one; and in particular that he should suffer in his character, be reproached, and accounted a worm, and no man, (Isaiah 53:3, Psalm 22:6, 59:9) and in his soul and body, and be put to death and buried, as the above prophecies referred to show; the several circumstances leading on to, or attending his sufferings and death, are distinctly expressed; as the betraying him by one of his disciples, selling him for thirty pieces of silver, his being forsaken by all his disciples, his crucifixion between two thieves, the parting of his garments, giving him gall and vinegar to drink, and the piercing his side with a spear, (Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12,13) (Zechariah 13:7, Isaiah 53:12, Psalm 22:18, 69:21 Zechariah 12:10).

And to this agreed the doctrine of the apostle, who taught that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ that was to come, and that he had suffered all that Moses and the prophets did say should come upon him: but these were not the present sentiments of the Jews, who expected the Messiah to be a temporal Prince and Saviour, and to live in great outward prosperity, and for ever.

And that he should be the first that should rise from the dead: by his own power, and to an immortal life, as Jesus did; and so is the firstborn from the dead, and the first fruits of them that slept: a type of this, in the deliverance of Isaac, is recorded by Moses in (Genesis 22:12-14) compared with (Hebrews 11:19) and the thing itself is foretold by many of the prophets, (Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 26:19, Hosea 6:2).

and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles: in his own person to the people of the Jews, and by his apostles to the Gentiles. In the writings of Moses he is spoken of as the great prophet God would raise up in Israel, to whom they should hearken; and as the Shiloh to

whom the gathering of the people should be, (Deuteronomy 17:15, Genesis 49:10) and that he should be a light to both Jews and Gentiles, through the ministration of the Gospel, is said by the prophets, (Isaiah 9:2, 42:6, 49:6) and these were the things which the apostle asserted in his ministry, in perfect agreement with those writings.

ACTS 26:24. *And as he thus spake for himself,*

Asserting the integrity and innocence of his past life and conversation, in proof of which he appealed to the Jews themselves; setting forth the prejudices to the Christian religion he had been under; declaring the heavenly vision that had appeared to him, and the divine orders he had received; alleging, that in his ministry there was an entire harmony between him, and the writings of Moses, and the prophets, for which the Jews professed a veneration; as he was thus vindicating himself, ere he had well finished his apology,

Festus said with a loud voice; that all might hear, and being moved with resentment at what he had heard; and it may be, he was displeased with Paul that he took so much notice of Agrippa, and so often addressed him, and appealed to him, when he scarce ever turned to, or looked at him:

Paul, thou art beside thyself; not in thy senses, or right mind, to talk of such an appearance and vision, and especially of the resurrection of a person from the dead. This is no unusual thing for the ministers of the Gospel to be reckoned madmen, and the doctrines they preach madness and folly: our Lord himself was said to be beside himself, and to have a devil, and be mad; and so were his apostles, (Mark 3:21, John 10:20 2 Corinthians 5:13) and it is not to be wondered at that natural men should entertain such an opinion of them, since what they deliver is quite out of their sphere and reach: Festus added,

much learning doth make thee mad; the apostle was a man of much learning, both Jewish, Greek, and Roman; and Festus perceived him to be of great reading by his making mention of Moses, and the prophets,

writings which he knew nothing at all of. And as this sometimes is the case, that much reading, and hard study, do cause men to be beside themselves, he thought it was Paul's case: so the philosopher suggests, that men of great wit and learning, and who are closely engaged in study, whether in philosophy, or politics, or poetry, or in technical affairs, are inclined to be melancholy, and phrenetic.

ACTS 26:25. *But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus,* That is, Paul said, as the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: he replied to Festus, to whom he gives his title of honour, not out of fear, nor flattery, but according to custom; and though he used him in such a reproachful manner, as if he was not himself, which he denies; nor did what he had said show anything of that kind, but the reverse, to which he appeals;

but speak forth the words of truth and soberness; which are true in themselves, being perfectly agreeable to the Scriptures of truth; and are what Christ, who is truth itself, had spoken, and of which he is the subject; and which the spirit of truth leads into, and owns and blesses: the Gospel in general, and all the doctrines of it, are words of truth; they are true, in opposition to that which is false, there is nothing of falsehood in them, no lie is of the truth; and to that which is fictitious, as the counterfeit Gospel of false teachers, which looks like the Gospel, and has the appearance of truth, but in reality is not; and to that which is but shadow, the Gospel, and the truths of it, are solid and substantial ones; hence the law and truth are opposed to each other, (John 1:17).

There are particular doctrines of the Gospel, and such as the apostle had been speaking of, or referred unto, which are called truth, words of truth, and faithful sayings; as that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that he is God manifest in the flesh, or is God and man in one person; that he came into the world to save the chief of sinners; that he suffered, died, and rose again from the dead; that justification is by his righteousness; and that as he is the first that rose from the

dead, others will rise also; or that there will be a resurrection of the dead by him; (see 1 John 2:21,22, 1 Timothy 3:15,16) (1 Timothy 1:15 1Corinthians 15:1,3,4, Galatians 3:1 2 Timothy 2:18).

These are “words of soberness” also; they are words of the highest wisdom, which contain the wisdom of God in a mystery, even hidden wisdom, the deep things of God, and such as could never have been found out by the wisdom of men; they are the means of bringing a man to himself, to his right mind, who before was not himself; of causing a man to think soberly of himself, and not more highly than he ought to think, even to think of himself, that he is the chief of sinners, and the least of saints; and of speaking soberly, wisely, and prudently; and of living soberly, righteously, and godly: they are doctrines, as delivered by the faithful ministers of them, which come from a sound and sober mind, and have a tendency to make wise and sober; and therefore should be spoken “forth”, openly and boldly, freely and faithfully, constantly and continually, as they were by the apostle, whatever reproaches, calumnies, and reflections may be cast upon them for so doing, even though they may be called fools and madmen.

ACTS 26:26. *For the king knoweth of these things,* Something of them, of the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, and of his showing light to Jews and Gentiles, as they are spoken of by Moses and the prophets, whose writings Agrippa was conversant with, and of these things as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; at least he had heard the report of them, how that they were said to be accomplished in him.

Before whom also I speak freely; because of the knowledge he had of these things:

for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; as that Moses and the prophets have foretold then, and that they have had their fulfilment in Jesus;

for this thing was not done in a corner: the ministry of Jesus was, public, his miracles were done openly, his suffering the death of the cross under Pontius Pilate was generally known, and

his resurrection from the dead was a well attested fact, and the ministration of his Gospel to Jews and Gentiles was notorious. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions refer this to Paul’s words and actions, that what he had said and done were not private but public, and of which Agrippa had had, by one means or another, a full account; but the other sense is best.

ACTS 26:27. *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?* What they have said concerning the person, office, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and that what they have said is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth?

I know that thou believest; that what the prophets said were true, and are accomplished.

ACTS 26:28. *Then Agrippa said unto Paul,* Either seriously or ironically; rather the former, arising from the convictions of his mind, which he could not stifle nor conceal:

almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian; to profess faith in Jesus as the Messiah, to embrace his doctrine, and submit to his ordinances, which is to be a Christian, at least externally: and when he says “almost”, or “in a little”, his meaning is, that within a little, or very near, he was of being persuaded to embrace Christianity; or in a little matter, and in some respects; or rather in a few words, and in a small space of time, Paul had strangely wrought upon him to incline to the Christian religion; though the first sense, that he was almost, or within a little of being a Christian, seems to be the best, as appears by the apostle’s reply to it: what it is to be a real Christian, (see Gill on “Acts 11:26”).

An almost Christian is one that has much light and knowledge, but no grace; he may know something of himself and of sin, of its being a violation of the law of God, and of the bad consequences of it, but has not true repentance for it; he may know much of Christ in a speculative way, concerning his person and offices, as the devils themselves do, and of the good things which come by him, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; but has no application of these things to himself; he

may have a large notional knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel.

He has no experience of the power, sweetness, and comfort of them in his own soul; all his knowledge is unsanctified, and without practice: he is one that has a taste of divine things, but has not the truth of them; he may taste of the heavenly gift, of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come; yet it is but a taste, a superficial one, which he has.

He does not savour and relish these things, nor is he nourished by them: he has a great deal of faith in the historical way, and sometimes a bold confidence and assurance of everlasting happiness; but has not faith of the right kind, which is spiritual and special, which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; by which the soul beholds the glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, under a sense of need, and goes forth to him, renouncing everything of self, and lays hold upon him, and trusts in him for salvation; and which works by love to Christ and his people, and has with it the fruits of righteousness: he may express a great deal of flashy affectation to the word, and the ministers of it, for a while, but has nothing solid and substantial in him;

It is one part of the Gospel ministry to persuade men, but this of itself is ineffectual; a real Christian is made so by the power of divine grace. Agrippa was only persuaded, and but almost persuaded by the apostle to be a Christian, but not by the Lord, nor altogether, who persuades Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem.

ACTS 26:29. *And Paul said, I would to God,*

This prayer of the apostle's shows his affection for the souls of men, and his great desire for their conversion, and also his sense of the power and grace of God, as necessary to it:

that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am; that is, his wish was that not only Agrippa, but that all that were present, were not only within a little, or in some low degree, but entirely, in the highest and fullest sense,

Christians, as he was; that they knew as much of Christ, and had as much faith in him, and love to him, as he had, and were as ready to serve and obey him.

He does not wish that Agrippa and the rest that heard him were as he had been, a bigot for traditions and ceremonies, that trusted in his own righteousness, did many things contrary to the name of Jesus, was a blasphemer of him, a persecutor of his saints, and an injurious person; but as he now was, not meaning with respect to his civil circumstances, as a mean poor man, and a tent maker, or with respect to his single state of life, which he elsewhere advises to, (1 Corinthians 9:5) or with respect to his ministerial capacity, as an apostle of Christ, and a preacher of the Gospel; but as a Christian, and in a private capacity.

His sense is, he wished that they were as he, regenerated by the Spirit of God, new creatures in Christ, called by the grace of God with an holy calling, believers in Christ, lovers of him, pardoned by his blood, justified by his righteousness, sanctified by his grace, children of God, and heirs of eternal life: and all this he wishes for of God, saying, "would to God", etc. knowing that the whole of this is not of men, but of God; all grace, and every blessing of it, which make or show a man to be a Christian indeed, are from him.

This wish is expressive of true grace, which desires the good of others, and also of a spirit truly generous, that is not selfish and monopolizing; and which is concerned for the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the weakening of Satan's kingdom: and from the whole of this it appears, that a person may arrive to true satisfaction of his own state; and that it is an evidence of grace, when the heart is drawn out in desires, after the salvation of others; and that altogether Christians are the only desirable ones; and that to be made a real Christian is the work of God, and to be ascribed to him.

This the apostle wished for, for Agrippa and all that heard him; as does every Gospel minister for their hearers, the hearing of the word being

the ordinary means of believing; and the rather it is desired by them, because the condemnation of those that hear the word is otherwise thereby aggravated: the apostle adds, **except these bonds**; which were both troublesome and reproachful: not but that he cheerfully endured them himself, and thought it the duty of Christians to bear them patiently, when called to it, but then they were not things to be desired and wished for; the exception is not only Christian like, but humane and genteel.

ACTS 26:30. And when he had thus spoken, These words are omitted in the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions:

the king rose up; from the judgment seat; that is, King Agrippa:

and the governor; the Roman governor, Festus:

and Bernice: the sister of King Agrippa:

and they that sat with them; either in council, or to hear; the chief captains, and principal inhabitants of Caesarea.

ACTS 26:31. And when they were gone aside, Into some apartment adjoining to the judgment hall:

they talked between themselves; that the common people might not hear their debates, and the result of them, and what were their sentiments concerning Paul and his case:

saying, this man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds; according to the Roman laws; for as yet there were no laws among the Romans against the Christians as such, or against their professing and preaching Christ.

ACTS 26:32. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, As declaring his sense, and by way of advice and counsel; but not as determining anything himself, for that lay in the breast of Festus, the Roman governor and judge:

this man might have been set at liberty; from his bonds and imprisonment; for ought that appears against him, or any law to the contrary:

if he had not appealed unto Caesar; wherefore an inferior judge could not release

him; but so it was ordered in divine Providence, that he should appeal to Caesar, that he might go to Rome, and there bear a testimony for Christ; however, this declaration of Agrippa, and what he and the governor and the rest said among themselves, are a considerable proof of the innocence of the apostle.

Paul's Missionary Labors

The public life of Paul, from the third year after his conversion to his martyrdom, A.D. 40–64, embraces a quarter of a century, three great missionary campaigns with minor expeditions, five visits to Jerusalem, and at least four years of captivity in Caesarea and Rome. Some extend this period to A.D. 67 or 68. It may be divided into periods, as follows:

A.D. 40–44

The period of preparatory labors in Syria and his native Cilicia, partly alone, partly in connection with Barnabas, his senior fellow-apostle among the Gentiles.

On his return from the Arabian retreat Paul began his public ministry in earnest at Damascus, preaching Christ on the very spot where he had been converted and called. His testimony enraged the Jews, who stirred up the deputy of the king of Arabia against him, but he was saved for future usefulness and let down by the brethren in a basket through a window in the wall of the city. Three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem to make the acquaintance of Peter and spent a fortnight with him.

Besides him he saw James the brother of the Lord. Barnabas introduced him to the disciples, who at first were afraid of him, but when they heard of his marvellous conversion they "glorified God" that their persecutor was now preaching the faith he had once been laboring to destroy. He did not come to learn the gospel, having received it already by revelation, nor to be confirmed or ordained, having been called "not from men, or through man, but through Jesus Christ." Yet his interview with Peter and James, though barely mentioned, must have been fraught with the deepest interest. Peter,

kind-hearted and generous as he was, would naturally receive him with joy and thanksgiving.

He had himself once denied the Lord—not malignantly but from weakness—as Paul had persecuted the disciples—ignorantly in unbelief. Both had been mercifully pardoned, both had seen the Lord, both were called to the highest dignity, both could say from the bottom of the heart: “Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” No doubt they would exchange their experiences and confirm each other in their common faith.

It was probably on this visit that Paul received in a vision in the temple the express command of the Lord to go quickly unto the Gentiles. Had he stayed longer at the seat of the Sanhedrin, he would undoubtedly have met the fate of the martyr Stephen.

He visited Jerusalem a second time during the famine under Claudius, in the year 44, accompanied by Barnabas, on a benevolent mission, bearing a collection of the Christians at Antioch for the relief of the brethren in Judaea. On that occasion he probably saw none of the apostles on account of the persecution in which James was beheaded, and Peter imprisoned.

The greater part of these four years was spent in missionary work at Tarsus and Antioch.

A.D. 45-50

First missionary journey. In the year 45 Paul entered upon the first great missionary journey, in company with Barnabas and Mark, by the direction of the Holy Spirit through the prophets of the congregation at Antioch. He traversed the island of Cyprus and several provinces of Asia Minor.

The conversion of the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, at Paphos; the rebuke and punishment of the Jewish sorcerer, Elymas; the marked success of the gospel in Pisidia, and the bitter opposition of the unbelieving Jews; the miraculous healing of a cripple at Lystra; the idolatrous worship there offered to Paul and Barnabas by the superstitious heathen, and its sudden change into hatred against them as

enemies of the gods; the stoning of the missionaries, their escape from death, and their successful return to Antioch, are the leading incidents of this tour, which is fully described in Acts 13 and 14.

This period closes with the important apostolic conference at Jerusalem, A.D. 50, which will require separate consideration in the next section.

From A.D. 51-54

Second missionary journey. After the council at Jerusalem and the temporary adjustment of the difference between the Jewish and Gentile branches of the church, Paul undertook, in the year 51, a second great journey, which decided the Christianization of Greece. He took Silas for his companion. Having first visited his old churches, he proceeded, with the help of Silas and the young convert, Timothy, to establish new ones through the provinces of Phrygia and Galatia, where, notwithstanding his bodily infirmity, he was received with open arms like an angel of God.

From Troas, a few miles south of the Homeric Troy and the entrance to the Hellespont, he crossed over to Greece in answer to the Macedonian cry: “Come over and help us!” He preached the gospel with great success, first in Philippi, where he converted the purple dealer, Lydia, and the jailor, and was imprisoned with Silas, but miraculously delivered and honorably released; then in Thessalonica, where he was persecuted by the Jews, but left a flourishing church; in Berea, where the converts showed exemplary zeal in searching the Scriptures.

In Athens, the metropolis of classical literature, he reasoned with Stoic and Epicurean philosophers, and unveiled to them on Mars’ Hill (Areopagus), with consummate tact and wisdom, though without much immediate success, the “unknown God,” to whom the Athenians, in their superstitious anxiety to do justice to all possible divinities, had unconsciously erected an altar, and Jesus Christ, through whom God will judge the world in righteousness.

In Corinth, the commercial bridge between the East and the West, a flourishing centre of wealth and culture, but also a sink of vice and corruption, the apostle spent eighteen months, and under almost insurmountable difficulties he built up a church, which exhibited all the virtues and all the faults of the Grecian character under the influence of the gospel, and which he honored with two of his most important Epistles.

In the spring of 54 he returned by way of Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem to Antioch.

During this period he composed the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, which are the earliest of his literary remains excepting his missionary addresses preserved in the Acts.

A.D. 54-58

Third missionary tour. Towards the close of the year 54 Paul went to Ephesus, and in this renowned capital of proconsular Asia and of the worship of Diana, he fixed for three years the centre of his missionary work. He then revisited his churches in Macedonia and Achaia, and remained three months more in Corinth and the vicinity.

During this period he wrote the great doctrinal Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans, which mark the height of his activity and usefulness.

A.D. 58-63

The period of his two imprisonments, with the intervening winter voyage from Caesarea to Rome. In the spring of 58 he journeyed, for the fifth and last time, to Jerusalem, by way of Philippi, Troas, Miletus (where he delivered his affecting valedictory to the Ephesian presbyters), Tyre, and Caesarea, to carry again to the poor brethren in Judaea a contribution from the Christians of Greece, and by this token of gratitude and love to cement the two branches of the apostolic church more firmly together.

But some fanatical Jews, who bitterly bated him as an apostate and a seducer of the people, raised an uproar against him at Pentecost; charged him with profaning the temple,

because he had taken into it an uncircumcised Greek, Trophimus; dragged him out of the sanctuary, lest they should defile it with blood, and would undoubtedly have killed him had not Claudius Lysias, the Roman tribune, who lived near by, come promptly with his soldiers to the spot.

This officer rescued Paul, out of respect for his Roman citizenship, from the fury of the mob, set him the next day before the Sanhedrin, and after a tumultuous and fruitless session of the council, and the discovery of a plot against his life, sent him, with a strong military guard and a certificate of innocence, to the procurator Felix in Caesarea.

Here the apostle was confined two whole years (58-60), awaiting his trial before the Sanhedrin, uncondemned, occasionally speaking before Felix, apparently treated with comparative mildness, visited by the Christians, and in some way not known to us promoting the kingdom of God.

After the accession of the new and better procurator, Festus, who is known to have succeeded Felix in the year 60, Paul, as a Roman citizen, appealed to the tribunal of Caesar and thus opened the way to the fulfilment of his long-cherished desire to preach the Saviour of the world in the metropolis of the world.

Having once more testified his innocence, and spoken for Christ in a masterly defence before Festus, King Herod Agrippa II. (the last of the Herods), his sister Bernice, and the most distinguished men of Caesarea, he was sent in the autumn of the year 60 to the emperor. He had a stormy voyage and suffered shipwreck, which detained him over winter at Malta. The voyage is described with singular minuteness and nautical accuracy by Luke as an eye-witness. In the month of March of the year 61, the apostle, with a few faithful companions, reached Rome, a prisoner of Christ, and yet freer and mightier than the emperor on the throne. It was the seventh year of Nero's reign, when he had already shown his infamous character by the murder of Agrippina, his

mother, in the previous year, and other acts of cruelty.

In Rome Paul spent at least two years till the spring of 63, in easy confinement, awaiting the decision of his case, and surrounded by friends and fellow-laborers "in his own hired dwelling." He preached the gospel to the soldiers of the imperial body-guard, who attended him; sent letters and messages to his distant churches in Asia Minor and Greece; watched over all their spiritual affairs, and completed in bonds his apostolic fidelity to the Lord and his church.

In the Roman prison he wrote the Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon.

A.D. 63 and 64

With the second year of Paul's imprisonment in Rome the account of Luke breaks off, rather abruptly, yet appropriately and grandly. Paul's arrival in Rome secured the triumph of Christianity. In this sense it was true, "Roma locuta est, causa finita est." And he who spoke at Rome is not dead; he is still "preaching (everywhere) the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, with all boldness, none forbidding him."

But what became of him after the termination of those two years in the spring of 63? What was the result of the trial so long delayed? Was he condemned to death? or was he released by Nero's tribunal, and thus permitted to labor for another season? This question is still unsettled among scholars. A vague tradition says that Paul was acquitted of the charge of the Sanhedrin, and after travelling again in the East, perhaps also into Spain, was a second time imprisoned in Rome and condemned to death.

The assumption of a second Roman captivity relieves certain difficulties in the Pastoral Epistles; for they seem to require a short period of freedom between the first and a second Roman captivity, and a visit to the East, which is not recorded in the Acts, but which the apostle contemplated in case of his release. A visit to Spain, which he intended, is possible, though less probable.

If he was set at liberty, it must have been before the terrible persecution in July, 64, which would not have spared the great leader of the Christian sect. It is a remarkable coincidence that just about the close of the second year of Paul's confinement, the celebrated Jewish historian, Josephus, then in his 27th year, came to Rome (after a tempestuous voyage and shipwreck), and effected through the influence of Poppaea (the wife of Nero and a half proselyte of Judaism) the release of certain Jewish priests who had been sent to Rome by Felix as prisoners. It is not impossible that Paul may have reaped the benefit of a general release of Jewish prisoners.

The martyrdom of Paul under Nero is established by the unanimous testimony of antiquity. As a Roman citizen, he was not crucified, like Peter, but put to death by the sword. The scene of his martyrdom is laid by tradition about three miles from Rome, near the Ostian way, on a green spot, formerly called Aquae Salviae, afterwards Tre Fontane, from the three fountains which are said to have miraculously gushed forth from the blood of the apostolic martyr.

His relics were ultimately removed to the basilica of San Paolo-fuori-le-Mura, built by Theodosius and Valentinian in 388, and recently reconstructed. He lies outside of Rome, Peter inside. His memory is celebrated, together with that of Peter, on the 29th and 30th of June. As to the year of his death, the views vary from A.D. 64 to 69. The difference of the place and manner of his martyrdom suggests that he was condemned by a regular judicial trial, either shortly before, or more probably a year or two after the horrible wholesale massacre of Christians on the Vatican hill, in which his Roman citizenship would not have been regarded.

If he was released in the spring of 63, he had a year and a half for another visit to the East and to Spain before the outbreak of the Neronian persecution (after July, 64); but tradition favors a later date. Prudentius separates the martyrdom of Peter from that of Paul by one

year. After that persecution the Christians were everywhere exposed to danger.

Assuming the release of Paul and another visit to the East, we must locate the First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus between the first and second Roman captivity, and the Second Epistle to Timothy in the second captivity. The last was evidently written in the certain view of approaching martyrdom; it is the affectionate farewell of the aged apostle to his beloved Timothy, and his last will and testament to the militant church below in the bright prospect of the unfading crown in the church triumphant above.

Thus ended the earthly course of this great teacher of nations, this apostle of victorious faith, of evangelical freedom, of Christian progress. It was the heroic career of a spiritual conqueror of immortal souls for Christ, converting them from the service of sin and Satan to the service of the living God, from the bondage of the law to the freedom of the gospel, and leading them to the fountain of life eternal. He labored more abundantly than all the other apostles; and yet, in sincere humility, he considered himself "the least of the apostles," and "not meet to be called an apostle," because he persecuted the church of God; a few years later he confessed: "I am less than the least of all saints," and shortly before his death: "I am the chief of sinners." His humility grew as he experienced God's mercy and ripened for heaven. Paul passed a stranger and pilgrim through this world, hardly observed by the mighty and the wise of his age.

And yet how infinitely more noble, beneficial, and enduring was his life and work than the dazzling march of military conquerors, who, prompted by ambitions absorbed millions of treasure and myriads of lives, only to die at last in a drunken fit at Babylon, or of a broken heart on the rocks of St. Helena! Their empires have long since crumbled into dust, but St. Paul still remains one of the foremost benefactors of the human race, and the pulses of his mighty heart are beating with stronger force than ever throughout the Christian world.

Note on Paul's 2nd Roman Captivity

The question of a second Roman captivity of Paul is a purely historical and critical problem, and has no doctrinal or ethical bearing, except that it facilitates the defence of the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles.

The best scholars are still divided on the subject. Neander, Gieseler, Bleek, Ewald, Lange, Sabatier, Godet, also Renan (Saint Paul, p. 560, and L'Antechrist, p. 106), and nearly all English biographers and commentators, as Alford, Wordsworth, Howson, Lewin, Farrar, Plumptre, Ellicott, Lightfoot, defend the second captivity, and thus prolong the labors of Paul for a few years. On the other hand not only radical and skeptical critics, as Baur, Zeller, Schenkel, Reuss, Holtzmann, and all who reject the Pastoral Epistles (except Renan), but also conservative exegetes and historians, as Niedner, Thiersch, Meyer, Wieseler, Ebrard, Otto, Beck, Pressensé, deny the second captivity. I have discussed the problem at length in my Hist. of the Apost. Church, § 87, pp. 328-347, and spin in my annotations to Lange on Romans, pp. 10-12.

I will restate the chief arguments in favor of a second captivity, partly in rectification of my former opinion.

1. The main argument are the Pastoral Epistles, if genuine, as I hold them to be, notwithstanding all the objections of the opponents from De Wette (1826) and Baur (1835) to Renan (1873) and Holtzmann (1880). It is, indeed, not impossible to assign them to any known period in Paul's life before his captivity, as during his three years' sojourn in Ephesus (54-57), or his eighteen months' sojourn in Corinth (52-53), but it is very difficult to do so. The Epistles presuppose journeys of the apostle not mentioned in Acts, and belong apparently to an advanced period in his life, as well as in the history of truth and error in the apostolic church.
2. The release of Timothy from a captivity in Italy, probably in Rome, to which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews 13:23 alludes, may have some connection with the release of Paul,

who had probably a share in the inspiration, if not in the composition, of that remarkable production.

3. The oldest post-apostolic witness is Clement of Rome, who wrote about 95:; Paul ... having come to the limit of the West (ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν) and borne witness before the magistrates (μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, which others translate, "having suffered martyrdom under the rulers"), departed from the world and went to the holy place, having furnished the sublimest model of endurance" (Ad Corinth. c. 5).

Considering that Clement wrote in Rome, the most natural interpretation of τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, "the extreme west," is Spain or Britain; and as Paul intended to carry the gospel to Spain, one would first think of that country, which was in constant commercial intercourse with Rome, and had produced distinguished statesmen and writers like Seneca and Lucan. Strabo (II. 1) calls the pillars of Hercules πέρατα τῆς οἴκουμένης; and Velleius Paterc. calls Spain "extremus nostri orbis terminus." See Lightfoot, St. Clement, p. 50.

But the inference is weakened by the absence of any trace or tradition of Paul's visit to Spain. Still less can he have suffered martyrdom there, as the logical order of the words would imply. And as Clement wrote to the Corinthians, he may, from their geographical standpoint, have called the Roman capital the end of the West. At all events the passage is rhetorical (it speaks of seven imprisonments, ἐπτάκις δεσμὰ φορέσας), and proves nothing for further labors in the East.

4. An incomplete passage in the fragmentary Muratorian canon (about A.D. 170): "Sed profectioem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficiscentis ..." seems to imply a journey of Paul to Spain, which Luke has omitted; but this is merely a conjecture, as the verb has to be supplied. Comp., however, Westcott, The Canon of the N. Test., p. 189, and Append. C., p. 467, and Renan, L'Antechrist, p. 106 sq.

5. Eusebius (d. 310) first clearly asserts that "there is a tradition (λόγος ἔχει) that the

apostle, after his defence, again set forth to the ministry of his preaching and having entered a second time the same city [Rome], was perfected by his martyrdom before him [Nero]." Hist. Eccl. II. 22 (comp. ch. 25). But the force of this testimony is weakened first by its late date; secondly, by the vague expression λόγος ἔχει, "it is said," and the absence of any reference to older authorities (usually quoted by Eusebius); thirdly, by his misunderstanding of 2 Tim. 4:16, 17, which he explains in the same connection of a deliverance from the first imprisonment (as if ἀπολογία were identical with αἰχμαλωσία); and lastly by his chronological mistake as to the time of the first imprisonment which, in his "Chronicle," he misdates A.D. 58, that is, three years before the actual arrival of Paul in Rome. On the other hand he puts the conflagration of Rome two years too late, A.D. 66, instead of 64, and the Neronian persecution, and the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, in the year 70.

6. Jerome (d. 419): "Paul was dismissed by Nero that he might preach Christ's gospel also in the regions of the West (in Occidentis quoque partibus). De Vir. ill. sub Paulus. This echoes the τέρμα τῆς δύσεως of Clement. Chrysostom (d. 407), Theodoret, and other fathers assert that Paul went to Spain (Rom. 15:28), but without adducing any proof.

These post-apostolic testimonies, taken together, make it very probable, but not historically certain, that Paul was released after the spring of 63, and enjoyed an Indian summer of missionary work before his Martyrdom. The only remaining monuments, as well as the best proof, of this concluding work are the Pastoral Epistles, if we admit them to be genuine. To my mind the historical difficulties of the Pastoral Epistles are an argument for rather than against their Pauline origin. For why should a forger invent difficulties when he might so easily have fitted his fictions in the frame of the situation known from the Acts and the other Pauline Epistles? The linguistic and other objections are by no means insurmountable, and are overborne by the evidence of the

Pauline spirit which animates these last productions of his pen.

Damascus

from "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul" by Conybeare and Howson. ¹

Damascus is the oldest city in the world. ² Its fame begins with the earliest patriarchs and continues to modern times. While other cities of the East have risen and decayed, Damascus is still what it was. It was founded before Baalbec and Palmyra, and it has outlived them both.

While Babylon is a heap in the desert, and Tyre a ruin on the shore, it remains what is called in the prophecies of Isaiah, "the head of Syria." (Isa. 7:8) Abraham's steward was Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15:2), and the limit of his warlike expedition in the rescue of Lot was "Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus." (Gen. 14:15) How important a place it was in the flourishing period of the Jewish monarchy we know from the garrisons which David placed there (2 Sam. 8:6; 1 Chron. 18:6), and from the opposition it presented to Solomon (1 Kings 11:24). The history of Naaman and the Hebrew captive, Elisha and Gehazi, and of the proud preference of its fresh rivers to the thirsty waters of Israel, are familiar to everyone.

And how close its relations continued to be with the Jews, we know from the chronicles of Jeroboam and Ahaz and the prophecies of Isaiah and Amos. ³ Its mercantile greatness is indicated by Ezekiel in the remarkable words addressed to Tyre, "Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making; they occupied in this fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate.

¹ Grace Notes: <http://www.gracenotes.info>

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² Josephus makes it even older than Abraham. (Antiquities, I.6.3)

³ See 2 Kings 14:28; 16:9,10; 2 Chron. 24:23; 28:5,23; Isa. 7:8; Amos 1:3,5.

Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches, in the wine of Helbon, and white wool." (Eze. 27:16,18) Leaving the Jewish annals, we might follow its history through continuous centuries, from the time when Alexander sent Parmenio to take it, while the conqueror himself was marching from Tarsus to Tyre, to its occupation by Pompey, ⁴ to the letters of Julian the Apostate, who describes it as "the eye of the East," and onward through its golden days, when it was the residence of the Ommiad Caliphs, and the metropolis of the Mahommedan world, and through the period when its fame was mingled with that of Saladin and Tamarlane, to our own days, when the praise of its beauty is celebrated by every traveler from Europe.

It is evident, to use the words of Lamartine, that, like Constantinople, it was a 'predestinated capital.' Not is it difficult to explain why its freshness has never faded through all the series of vicissitudes and wars.

Among the rocks and brushwood at the base of Antilibanus are the fountains of a copious and perennial stream, which, after running a course of no great distance to the southeast, loses itself in a desert lake.

But before it reaches this dreary boundary it has distributed its channels over the intermediate space and left a wide area behind it rich with prolific vegetation. These are the "streams from Lebanon" which are known to us in the imagery of Scripture (Cant. 4:15); the "rivers of Damascus," which Naaman not unnaturally preferred to all the "waters of Israel." (2 Kings 5:12) By Greek writers the stream is called Chrysorrhoeas, or the "river of gold."

⁴ Its relative importance was not so great when it was under a Western power like that of the Seleucids or the Romans; hence we find it less frequently mentioned than we might expect in Greek and Roman writers. This arose from the building of Antioch and other cities in northern Syria.

This stream is the inestimable unexhausted treasure of Damascus, The habitations of men must always have been gathered around it, as the Nile has inevitably attracted an immemorial population to its banks. The desert is a fortification round Damascus. The river is its life. It is drawn out into watercourses, and spread in all directions. For miles around it is a wilderness of gardens, gardens with roses among the tangled shrubberies and with fruit on the branches overhead.

Everywhere among the trees the murmur of unseen rivulets is heard. Even in the city, which is in the midst of the garden, the clear rushing of the current is a perpetual refreshment. Every dwelling has its fountain; and at night, when the sun has set behind Mount Lebanon, the lights of the city are seen flashing on the waters.

It is not to be wondered at that the view of Damascus, when the dim outline of the gardens has become distinct, and the city is seen gleaming white in the midst of them, should be universally famous.

All travelers in all ages have paused to feast their eyes with the prospect; and the prospect has always been the same. It is true that in the Apostle's day there were no cupolas and no minarets; Justinian had not built St. Sophia, and the caliphs had erected no mosques. But the white buildings of the city gleamed then, as they do now, in the center of a verdant inexhaustible paradise.

The Syrian gardens, with their low walls and waterwheels, and careless mixture of fruits and flowers, were the same then as they are now. The same figures would be seen in the green approaches to the town, camels and mules, horses and asses, with Syrian peasants and Arabs from beyond Palmyra. We know the very time of the day when Saul was entering these shady avenues. It was at mid-day.⁵ The birds

⁵ Acts 22:6; 26:13. Notices of the traditional place where the vision was seen are variously given both by earlier and later travelers. The old writer Quaresmius mentions four theoretical sites: (1) twelve miles south of Damascus, where there is a stream on the right of the

were silent in the trees. The hush of noon was in the city. The sun was burning fiercely in the sky. The persecutor's companions were enjoying the cool refreshment of the shade after their journey; and his eyes rested with satisfaction on those walls which were the end of his mission, and contained the victims of his righteous zeal.

Damascus

by Dr. Glenn Carnegiey

1. THE CITY'S NAME HAS BEEN DAMASCUS FROM ABOUT 1500 BC UNTIL THE PRESENT.

Egyptian inscriptions speak of TI-MAS-KU and SA-RA-MAS-KI between the 1500's and 1200's BC.

The Arab name is DIMASHK ESH-SHAM or "DIMASHK of the Left". The meaning of DIMASHK or Damascus is unknown, but the ESH-SHAM means "the Left" and is to be compared to YEMEN or "The Right".

2. THE CITY IS LOCATED IN THE NW CORNER OF THE GHUTA, A FERTILE PLAIN ABOUT 2300 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL, EAST OF MT. HERMON.

The Eastern part of the Ghuta, east of the city, is called the "Meadow Land" of Damascus, the ELMERJ. The River Barada (Abana) flows through Damascus and waters the plains beyond the city.

A few miles south of the city the river NAHR EL-AWAJ flows through the plain as well. It is surrounded on three sides by barren hills and on the east beyond the GHUTA by the desert. The city is marked by fountains and streams, orchards and fields, especially in the spring.

road, with the ruins of a church on rising ground; (2) six miles south on the left of the road, where there are traces of a church and stones marked with crosses; (3) two miles south on the same road; (4) half a mile from the city; and this he prefers on the strength of earlier authorities and because it harmonizes best with what is said of the Apostle being led in by the hand. It one of these cases there is an evident blending of the scene of the Conversion and the Escape; and it would appear from Mr. Stanley's letter that this spot is on the east and not the south of the city.

In Arabic literature Damascus is described as an earthly paradise.

The Barada River is the lifeblood of the city, coming out of the hills in a narrow gorge, it spreads out into many streams through the Ghuta and loses itself into the desert, where it vanishes in the marshes.

Its beauty can only be appreciated if seen from the desert point of view, and especially in the spring when its fruit trees bloom. (Apricot, pomegranates, walnuts and many others.

3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE CITY.

The main part of the city runs east to west along the south bank of the river.

A long street called the Meidan stretches along the southern part of the city, passing beyond the city wall and terminating at the BAWWABET ALLAH ("The gate of God"), which is the starting-point of the annual HAJ, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

In the Greek and Roman period, a long colonnaded street ran through the city. (Acts 9:11) DERB EL-MUSTAKIM.

- Archaeologists have uncovered parts of the Street Called Straight

- It runs from east to west with the Jewish Quarter on the South and the Christian quarter on the North.

- On the West end of town the street ends in the SUK EL- MIDHATIYEH, a bazaar built by MIDHAT PASHA, north of which is the Moslem quarter of the city, in which are the citadel and the Great Mosque.

Part of the city wall has been preserved with a foundation going back to Roman times, with Arab rebuilding above it.

Biblical sites pointed out to the tourist are spurious.

- Traditional site of Paul's escape over the wall in a basket. II Cor 11:33; Acts 9:25

- NAAMAN's House. II Kings 5:1ff

4. INDUSTRY ASSOCIATED WITH DAMASCUS.

It always was famous for its textile industry, from which the English word "Damask" is taken.

In the Middle Ages it was famous for the "Damascus blades" of the time of the Crusaders.

Timur (Tamerlane), the son of Genghis Khan, took the city and ended its armament production by carrying its armorers off to Samerkand, but the city went right on after 1399 AD.

5. EARLY HISTORY OF THE CITY OF DAMASCUS.

The earliest reference to it in Scripture is Genesis 15:2, in which Abraham complains that this "Son of possession", BEN MESHEQ, ELIEZER, the DAMESHEQ (Damascus), will "inherit his house."

This would indicate a date for the city of, at the oldest, 1800 BC.

Eliezer the Damascusite was from Damascus and the city name would thus mean something on the order of "The one who possesses or has possessions." (Based on Aram. relative pronoun DIY + MESHEQ).

The city is mentioned one additional time during Abraham's time, in Genesis 14:15, where Abraham is said to have pursued the four kings of Mesopotamia "as far as Hobah, which is on the left hand (North) of DAMASCUS."

6. DAMASCUS DURING THE TIME OF DAVID.

Damascus allied itself with neighboring Aramaean cities against David. II Sam 8:5ff

The center of Aramaic power during David's time was Zobah, whose king Hadadezer, was executed by David after the defeat of the allied army.

Unfortunately, Rezon, ben Eliada, an officer in Hadadezer's army escaped and built an army of bandits and ultimately seized the city of Damascus, where he ruled as king and built a powerful kingdom. I Kings 11:23ff

Rezon continued to be a thorn in the side of Solomon. I K 11:25.

7. THE ARAMAEAN KINGDOM. (950-732 BC).

Rezon may or may not be identical with Biblical Hezion, who fathered Tab-rimmon, Who in turn fathered Ben-hadad. I K 15:18

Ben-hadad (BIR-IDRI) is the first king after Rezon of whom we have any first-hand knowledge, when he became the nemesis of Ahab.

He played Israel against Judah beautifully to the detriment of both.

- ASA hired him with a bribe to attack Israel to relieve him. I K 15:18ff

- Either the above Ben-Hadad I or his successor, Ben-Hadad II, defeated Omri of Israel, annexed several Israelite cities, and secured the right to have Aramaic "streets" or Bazaars in Samaria, in about 880 BC.

Ben-Hadad II, then, campaigned incessantly against Israel.

(1) Scripture account of his campaigns against the Jews is found in I Kings 20:22.

(2) He won the first encounter, but later lost twice to Ahab.

(3) He became a prisoner of Ahab after the Battle of Aphek, but was treated with great consideration by Ahab.

(4) Ahab demanded only the return of his cities and the reciprocal right of setting up "Streets" in Damascus as penalty.

(5) Primary enemy was Assyria, who under Shalmaneser III, attacked a coalition of 10 states including Israel & Damascus at the Battle of Qarqar in 854 BC, though the battle was a draw, neither side winning a decisive victory.

(6) The Assyrians attacked Ben-Hadad twice more, in 842 and 846, with no more decisive results than at Qarqar.

(7) With the death of Ahab at Ramoth-Gilead the only threat to Damascus other than Assyria was ended.

In about 844 BC Hazael murdered Ben-Hadad and usurped the throne.

(1) He was attacked by the Assyrians in 842 and 839, again without any decisive outcome.

(2) From then until about 810 BC, the Assyrians stayed home, allowing the Aramaeans a free hand against the Jews.

In 803 BC, Mari' (Ben-Hadad III, Son of Hazael) was forced to become a vassal of Ramman-Nirari III of Assyria. II K 13:3

This allowed tremendous expansion of Israel under Jeroboam II.

The Assyrians attacked Damascus again in 773 BC

Tiglath-Pileser III, (745-727 BC) campaigned in the West often, bringing about the payment of tribute by Rezin in 738 BC

Rezin joined with Pekah of Israel to force Judah into an anti-Assyrian coalition. II K 15:37; 16:5; Isaiah 7.

In 734 BC the Assyrians advanced and placed Damascus under siege, taking the city in 732 BC. Rezin was executed and the city was destroyed.

8. Subsequent to its destruction by the Assyrians, the city lost most of its prominence and is only incidentally mentioned during the remainder of the OT. Jer. 49:23ff; Ezek 27:18; 47:16.

9. AFTER THE PERSIANS TOOK OVER, THE CITY REGAINED ITS PROSPERITY, THOUGH NOT ITS COMMAND POSITION.

10. WHEN THE SELEUCID KINGDOM OF SYRIA WAS ESTABLISHED IN 301BC, ITS CAPITOL CITY WAS ANTIOCH ON THE COAST, AND THE CENTER OF POWER SHIFTED WEST TO THE SEACOAST FROM THE INTERIOR.

11. IN 111 BC THE SYRIAN KINGDOM WAS DIVIDED, AND ANTIOCHUS CYZICENUS BECAME KING OF COELE-SYRIA (TRANSJORDAN), AND MADE DAMASCUS HIS CAPITOL.

- His successors, Demetrius Eucerus and Antiochus Dionysus, had problems including wars with the Parthians and with Alexander Jannaeus of the Judahite Hasmonean line as well as with Aretas, the Nabatean, who took Damascus in 85 BC.

- Tigranes, the Armenian, ruled thereafter until the Romans took the city under Pompey in 64BC.

12. UNDER ROMAN RULE ITS HISTORY IS OBSCURE, BUT THE NABATEANS SEEM TO HAVE GAINED CONTROL OF DAMASCUS FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME.

- Roman coins indicate that the Romans held it from 31 BC to 33 AD.

- Aretas IV, king of Nabatea held it and appointed an ETHNARCH to rule the city after this. II Cor 11:32

- Under NERO it reverted back to Roman rule.

13. DURING THE CHRISTIAN ERA IT PLAYED A MINOR ROLE IN HISTORY, THOUGH IT IS OBVIOUS THAT PAUL'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE CITY AT HIS CONVERSION DREW SOME ATTENTION TO THE SITE. ACTS 9:1-25

- All the NT references to it are to be related to that conversion.

- Under the Emperor of the early Byzantine period the city continued to be an unimportant city, second to Antioch.

- Passed out of Christian control to the Arabs in 634 AD.

- Damascus has been a Moslem city ever since.
