

Session 23: Acts 15:36-28:31

- Paul began his 2nd missionary journey (Acts 15:36). During his ministry in Thessalonica, Paul asserted that, according to the prophecies, **the Christ (Messiah-King) must suffer, be crucified, and rise from the dead**, as Jesus Himself did, and as He taught on the road to Emmaus (see Lk 24:25-27). Essentially, Paul preached that the proper understanding of the Christ (Messiah-King) is that of the **Suffering Servant, Whose Kingdom is spiritual and heavenly, not political and earthly** (Acts 17:2).
- Some Jews and many Greeks responded positively to Paul's preaching. However, the Jews who rejected his preaching became jealous that many gentile God-fearers began to believe that Jesus was the Christ, and thus complained that Christianity was "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). These perfidious Jews accused the Christians of treason, of having violated allegiance to Caesar (king), as Christians were accused of allegiance to Christ the King instead. **Importantly, however, although Christ the King demands the highest allegiance of every Christian, His rule is over the world not of the world (Jn 18:36), so His heavenly rule does not eliminate the need for earthly rulers, who themselves must be subservient to Christ, seeking to spread His social reign, including His moral code.**
- When Paul traveled to Athens, He was then dealing with pagan gentiles, who did not even know the One True God, so his evangelical approach was different, focusing on secular philosophy, which is the latest intellectual fads (Acts 17:16-34).
- In Corinth, Paul encountered enough opposition from the Jews that he "shook out his garments" (Acts 18:6), which was a symbolic curse gesture, **indicating that the rejection of the Gospel will result in the divine punishment of eternal damnation in Hell.**
- Paul began his 3rd missionary journey (Acts 18:23), spending two years at Ephesus, at which time he wrote his 1st letter to the Corinthians. Later, he traveled to Macedonia and Greece.
- At Troas, Luke, the traveling companion of Paul, writes, **"On the first day of the week (Sunday), we were gathered together to break bread (Acts 20:7)."** Note that, in the New Covenant, Sunday observance, as Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, replaces and fulfills Saturday (Sabbath) observance, as Saturday (Sabbath) had been a type or foreshadowing of Sunday observance. **Because Sunday observance requires participation in communal worship by participating in the breaking of the bread, which is the oldest expression for Christian worship called Eucharistic Liturgy (Greek) or Mass (Latin), of course it is a mortal sin to skip the Eucharistic Liturgy on Sunday, just as it had been a mortal sin to skip Sabbath worship in the Old Covenant.**
- Concluding his 3rd missionary journey to Jerusalem, Paul was arrested by the Jews in accord with the prophecy of Agabus, though Paul had expressed his willingness to suffer and die for Christ (Acts 21:10-14).
- Paul, as a Roman citizen, appealed his case to Caesar, and thus was sent to Rome, where he remained for two years under house arrest, during which time he wrote his so-called Captivity Epistles (Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon). This is the conclusion of Acts.
- The fate of Paul is not mentioned in Acts, but he was released, took a 4th missionary journey to Spain, Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and Crete. Again, he was arrested, during which time he wrote his 2nd letter to Timothy while in confinement, and later was beheaded, which was the death penalty for Roman citizens.