

Acts to Revelation
The World of the First Christians

Session 12 – Paul’s Final Trip to Jerusalem and Caesarea

Session Summary – Despite the warnings, Paul’s heart was to return to Jerusalem one last time. While there, the Jewish leaders brought false charges against him and a riot broke out. The Roman legion stationed near the Jerusalem temple saved Paul from the mobs and sent him to Caesarea Maritima to face the Roman governor. We will make the trip from Jerusalem to Caesarea and visit the incredible harbor, ruins, and artifacts there. This is where Paul was under house arrest for two years until he was finally sent to Rome to face the Roman Emperor himself.

“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.” – Acts 20:22-24

In 1936, an inscription fragment was discovered near the Lion’s Gate in Jerusalem. It basically says, “No Foreigners Allowed Beyond this Point” – a clear warning that non-Israelites outsiders were forbidden to enter the inner sanctuary of the temple. A partial fragment is currently housed at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. However, it matches a complete version discovered in 1871, which is currently housed at the Istanbul Archaeology Museum in Turkey. Written in Greek, the full warning reads: “NO FOREIGNER IS TO GO BEYOND THE BALUSTADE AND THE PLAZA OF THE TEMPLE ZONE. WHOEVER IS CAUGHT DOING SO WILL HAVE HIMSELF TO BLAME FOR HIS DEATH WHICH WILL FOLLOW.” (Balustrade – a row of small columns topped by a rail)

Scripture Reading: Acts 21 – 26

Discussion Questions:

1. What charge was brought against Paul that caused a riot in Jerusalem?
2. Who was the commander of the Roman troops that served in Jerusalem?
3. Who built Caesarea Maritima near the end of the first century BC?
4. What revolutionary construction technique was used to create the harbor at Caesarea?
5. Who did Nero appoint to replace Felix as the Roman procurator serving at Caesarea?

Scripture for Next Week: Acts 27 – 28:1-10