

Lecture 16: New Testament Survey

Roman Citizenship

In ancient Rome, Roman citizenship held a place of utmost significance, being a union of legal, political, and social privileges. Roman citizens were granted not only the right to a fair judicial process, but were also exempted from certain punishments. They could not be condemned without cause; rather, they possessed the right to a proper hearing in a court of law. Furthermore, they could appeal against judicial decisions. Roman citizens were generally spared from scourging, nor were they crucified. For this very reason, the blessed Apostle Paul was executed by the sword.

Citizens possessed the right to vote, to hold public office, and to access the benefits of the state. Moreover, they could own property and were exempt from local taxation.

Themes in the Book of Acts

1. The Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Book of Acts both begins and ends with the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

2. The Three Authorities

- i. The Jewish Sanhedrin
- ii. The Roman Governors
- iii. The Greek Philosophers

3. Martyrdom

Within the Acts of the Apostles, the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:54–60) and of Saint James (Acts 12:1–2) is recorded.

4. Patterns of Missionary Work

- Boundaries were broken.
- Chains were loosed.
- Bridges were built.

5. Teamwork

6. Witnesses

The word *witness* is employed eleven times within the Book of Acts. The early believers were called witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). The term *witness* points to the responsibility of the disciples to testify of what they had seen and heard.

For this, the Greek word *martyrs* is used, from which the English word *martyr* is derived. A martyr is one who lays down his life for the sake of his faith and confession. It is to be remembered that the word *martyr* springs forth from the word *witness*; yet within the very idea of witness lies the seed of sacrifice and death.

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Sequential Events in the Book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul

The Events Recorded in Acts

- The Ascension of the Lord — Acts 1:9–11
- The Outpouring at Pentecost — Acts 2:1–41
- The Martyrdom of Stephen — Acts 6–7
- The Conversion of Saul — Acts 9:1–19
- The First Visit of Paul to Jerusalem — Acts 9:26–30
- Paul in Tarsus — Acts 9:30
- Paul Journeys to Antioch — Acts 11:25–26
- The First Missionary Journey of Saint Paul and Barnabas — Acts 13–14
- The Council at Jerusalem — Acts 15
- The Second Missionary Journey of Saint Paul — Acts 15:36–18:22
- The Third Missionary Journey of Saint Paul — Acts 18:23–21:17
- The Visit of Paul to Jerusalem — Acts 21:17–26
- The Imprisonment of Paul at Caesarea — Acts 23:23–26:32
- The Voyage of Paul by Ship unto Rome — Acts 27–28
- The Imprisonment of Paul at Rome — Acts 28

The Epistles of Paul

- The Epistle to the Galatians
- The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians — (cf. Acts 15:40–18:22)
- The First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians — (cf. Acts 18:23–21:32)
- The Epistle to the Romans — (cf. Acts 20:3)
- The Epistle to the Philippians — (cf. Acts 28)
- The Epistle to the Colossians — (cf. Acts 28)
- The Epistle to Philemon — (cf. Acts 28)
- The Epistle to the Ephesians — (cf. Acts 28)
- The First and Second Epistles to Timothy
- The Epistle to Titus
- The Second Epistle to Timothy — (during Paul's final imprisonment in Rome)