

Covenants, Promises & Paul's Mysteries

Introduction:

The Bible is a Jewish Book! It is “for “Gentiles but there is very little in it outside the Epistles written by Paul. The Old Testament is exclusively about Israel and tells of His prophetic plan to redeem both the Jew and the Gentile. The Old Testament actually ends with the end of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. God created the nation of Israel for Himself to be used for His purpose to reconcile all He created to Himself.

God has always and still relates to Israel through their covenants. Circumcision is what makes one Jewish! The Law of Moses is what defines the Jew’s relationship. Circumcision created the nation of Israel and the Law of Moses defined all the aspects of the Jew.

Pauls revelation of the “Mystery of the Gentile” along with six other mysteries was unknown to the Twelve and the Jews of the early church. For a period of 10 years after the resurrection only Jews were being preached the Gospel.

This mystery was revealed to Paul while in Arabia! It is a secret that God would include Gentiles in His redemptive plan with no requirement to be circumcised OR adhere to the Law of Moses to be “accepted as righteous.” The Gentile was not even required to be “baptized.” which was a Jewish tradition and ritual prescribed by the Law.

Gentile Believers ONLY come to redemption by “grace through faith” apart from the Law. In other words, the Gentile Believers, which includes the church today, HAS NO COVENANT WITH GOD!

The Gentile receives redemption the same way Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all who were Gentiles. That way was “through faith” in the belief God would bless them and protect them from their enemies. These promises given to Abram became a sign to him and all “natural heirs” as a covenant between them and God...exclusively! It was later codified under Law of Moses.

(i.e., religion, cultural, political, foreign relations, family, and most of all “with God.”)

The Law of Moses has been used by nearly every Christian nation as a basis for their Laws and culture.

Three Most Important Biblical Covenants with Israel

- **Covenant of Circumcision**
 - created the Jewish nation for God (Abraham & God)
 - was a sign for the blessing & protection of the “**natural heirs**”
 - The “Seed” (Jesus , Messiah) would come through Abraham
- **Covenant of the Law of Moses**
 - Old Covenant: defined the nation of Israel (Moses, Israel & God)
- **Covenant of the Blood**
 - New Covenant: Jesus & God to show mercy on Israel (Jeremiah 21:31)
AND would applied by “grace through faith” the Gentile with no covenant (Rom. 3:30-4:25; Eph. 2; Gal.
 - ~ Better Covenant for Israel
 - ~ Brought judgement to Satan for his rebellion
 - ~ Brought Judgement for sin (NOT man)
 - ~ Destroyed the works of the devil
 - ~ Created a “New Creature” an eternal being who could never be corrupted.
 - ~ Jesus was the “first new and complete Creature”, the “first of many brethren”
 - ~ Did away with the Law so Gentiles could be included in redemption

Covenants, Promises & Paul's Mysteries

The Promises of Abraham

- Promises of blessing apply to both Israel & Gentiles
- Promises are the basis of “blessing” NOT covenants (covenants are conditional)
- Promises are the basis of “faith-righteousness” NOT covenants
- Promises are based in the Seed (Jesus) who is the blessing for ALL peoples & nations (promises are non-conditional)

The Call, Ministry and Message of the Twelve vs Paul

The Audience and ministry of the Jesus & the Twelve

- Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom to Israel
- Jesus taught the Twelve to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom
- Jesus sent the Twelve to Israel and not to the Gentiles

Matthew 15:24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

John 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

John 17:18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

- The Gospel of the Kingdom was preached to “Jews only” for

Acts 11:19 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word** to no one but the Jews only.

NOTE: The “word” or the “word of God” in every instance (42 total) in the New Testament is a reference to the Gospel of the Kingdom (for Jews) or the Gospel of Grace (for Gentiles). It is NOT referring to the Bible as the “word.” It means the same as the “proceeding word” found in Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:4

Paul was called to preach to three different audiences. The Twelve was sent to Israel only.

Acts 9:15-16

16 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name **before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.**

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

Acts 22:21 Then He said to me, 'Depart, for **I will send you (Paul) far from here to the Gentiles.'**"

Acts 26:17-18

17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' (“those” is a reference to the Jew; Israel)

Covenants, Promises & Paul's Mysteries

The Mysteries of Paul vs the Prophetic program of the coming Kingdom of God to Israel

Mysteries or “secrets held by God” were exclusive teachings revealed to the Apostle Paul

The Mysteries of Paul

- Seven “Secrets” held by God and revealed to Paul exclusively.
- The Twelve did not know about the Mysteries of Paul
- Paul taught two Gospel messages the Twelve taught one message
 - ~ The Gospel of Grace message was for Gentiles
 - ~ The Gospel of the Kingdom message was for Israel

The Prophetic program of the Twelve (and Paul)

- Jesus taught the “Mystery of the Kingdom” to the Twelve in His earthly ministry
- Israel was looking for the coming King and His Kingdom because of OT prophecies
- The Gentile had no knowledge of the coming King and His Kingdom
- Paul received understanding of the Kingdom after the resurrection by the Spirit

The “Mysteries given to Paul” were unknown to the Twelve

1. **Mystery of the Incarnation** (Mystery of Godliness)
 - Also called the Mystery of Godliness – 1 Timothy 3:16
2. **Mystery of the Indwelling of Christ**
 - Christ in you the hope of glory – Ephesians 3:3-6
3. **Mystery of the Body of Christ** (the Church)
 - The church which includes both Jews and Gentiles - Ephesians 2; 3:1-11
4. **Mystery of Israel's Blindness**
 - The Old Testament prophecy program is on HOLD until the “fullness of the Gentiles” – Romans 11:25; 26-32
5. **Mystery of Iniquity**
 - The incarnation of the Anti-Christ in the end-times - 2 Thessalonians 2:6
6. **Mystery of the Resurrection of the Believer** (exclusive to Paul)
 - The transformation of the Believer when Christ returns for the church before the Tribulation - 1 Corinthians 15:51
7. **Mystery of the Christ Oneness with the Believer**
 - Jesus and the Believer are one and the same in this present natural existence - Ephesians 5:32; confirmed by John's revelation 1 John 3:2; 1 John 4:17

Redemption is based on “Promises made to Abraham and NOT any covenant God has with people.

- Paul's understanding Promise of Blessings of all of humanity found in Genesis 12
- The Gentile are included in the Promises made to Abraham

Covenants, Promises & Paul's Mysteries

- The Gentile has never and is still not under any covenant. We become inheritors of the promises made to Abraham and the Jews. It is “grace through faith” just like Abram the Gentile, a man of faith, who became Abraham the Jew by covenant and the father of the circumcised.

The Importance of identifying “who is being spoken to” or “who is being spoken about” in Scripture:

Terminology can reveal “WHO” is being spoken to or WHO is spoken about. It’s very important part on understanding in context.

- Jew - Gentile
- Circumcised – Uncircumcised
- Who is Chosen? AND Who is Called? (by God is inferred)
 - Israel is the “Chosen” people of God.
 - BOTH Israel & Gentiles are “Called” (into Christ)
Gentiles ARE NOT “Chosen”

***** Israel was “chosen” – Gentiles are NOT “chosen”**

ALL are “called” into Christ ***

- Chosen used 134 times (111 times in OT)
- Called used 227 times (All are in the NT)
Matthew 20:16; 22:14 “MANY are called, FEW are chosen.”
1 Peter 2:9; Exodus 19:4-6 Israel is the “Chosen” People; a “kingdom of Priests
- Israel is referred to as the “Children of Israel.” They were created by God through the seed of Abraham as a nation for Himself. Israel is the ONLY nation that has covenants with God.
- Gentiles are referred to as Nations /Foreigners /Samaritans. Gentiles have never had any covenant with God including the New Covenant.
- The New Covenant is a covenant between God and Jesus.

Who is the New Covenant for? Israel or Gentiles?

Jeremiah 31:31- New Covenant is for Israel- Jews saved by Mercy

Ephesians 2:5; 8 - Gentiles have no covenant -Gentiles saved by “grace through faith”

- Israel Rejection of the Kingdom and given to the Gentile (until the “fulness of the Gentiles)

Romans 11:25-32

- **Gospel of the Kingdom – Gospel of Grace**

Redemption of the Jews and Gentiles has the same goal for redemption BUT a “different strategy, a different method” with a “different message.”

- According to Paul, the “Gospel of the Kingdom” was exclusively for Israel. The “Gospel of Grace was exclusively for Gentiles (the nations, uncircumcised, heathen, strangers.etc.)

A New Covenant for Israel NOT for Gentiles! (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

- Israel rejected the ‘Gospel of the Kingdom’
- Mercy is for those under the Covenant of the Law of Moses
Grace alone is for Gentiles...(Ephesians 2, Galatians 3)

Covenants, Promises & Paul's Mysteries

Jeremiah 31 says that the New Covenant would be made with Judah and Israel.
(Judah is the Southern Two Tribes and Israel is the Ten Northern Tribes)

Jer 31:31-34 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-

32 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them [*Israel*] by the hand to lead them [*Israel*] out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they [*Israel*] broke, though I was a husband to them [*Israel*], says the LORD.

33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the **house of Israel** after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their [*Israel*] minds, and write it on their [*Israel*] hearts; and I will be their [*Israel*] God, and they [*Israel*] shall be My people.

34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For **I will forgive their [*Israel*] iniquity, and their [*Israel*] sin I will remember no more."**

- The New Covenant was implemented to replace the Old Covenant FOR to Israel.

***** **Neither Old or New Covenants have ever applied to a Gentile!** *****
(This is IMPORTANT if you want to understand ALL of Scripture)

- Israel rejected the New Covenant that Jesus ratified for them in His blood.
- God, because of His grace, turned to the Gentile to extend redemption. (Ephesians 2)
- God forgave the sins of Israel because the New Covenant was with Jesus. He replaced the Old Covenant with the New Covenant for them. (Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37)
- The Gentile is "accepted by God" by "grace through faith" (in Jesus as Savior) with no covenant.
- The effects of the New Covenant removes the Dominion of Sin for ALL sin for ALL men (both Jew and Gentile) for ALL time. (John 3:16-17; 1 John 2:2)
- The New Covenant between God and Jesus is only effective for a person if they accept the terms by faith; forgiveness of sin and creation of a "new man" for a newness of life to name two. Accepting this means that any person no longer under the control of sin and they are set free from the control of darkness even though they may choose to place themselves there.

Paul's revelation of the "Blessings of Abraham"

- Paul's revelation was that Promise of Blessings of Abraham was for all of humanity (Genesis 12)
- Both Israel (Jew) and Gentile is included in the Promises made to Abraham
- The Gentile has never and is still not under any covenant. We become inheritors of the promises made to Abraham and the Israel. It is "grace through faith" just like Abram the Gentile, a man of faith, who became Abraham the Jew by covenant and the father of the circumcised.

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Jews & Gentiles are both “justified by faith” BUT through difference programs

Romans 3:29-30

29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,

30 since there is one **God who will justify the circumcised by faith AND the uncircumcised through faith.**

- Israel was looking for the coming “Kindred Redeemer.” The Gentile had no knowledge of Him
- Israel was accepted and justified by **mercy** because of the New Covenant mediated by Jesus
- Gentiles were accepted and justified by **“grace thorough faith”** and faith alone because the Blood of Christ was extended to ALL peoples when Israel rejected the Kingdom

The Promise of Blessing (justification) was Before the Covenant of Circumcision or the Law

Both Jew and Gentile are justified and “made righteous” because of faith in the works of God, which is the redemption

REVIEW all of Romans 4:1-25

- Paul is directing his commentary to the “Jewish Believers” in the Gentile Roman church.
- Paul is teaching there is no difference if a person is under the covenants of circumcision and the Law of Moses if it is the same faith and faith alone that makes a person justified.

“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” -**Romans 10:17**

Note: The “word of God” in EVERY instance in scripture DOES NOT mean the Bible. This does not make the scripture of any less importance. In every New Testament context, the “word of God” means the “Gospel” that was being preached. This is what the Old Testament refers to as the “proceeding word” in Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4. This was both the “Gospel (message) of the Kingdom” to Israel and the “Gospel (message) of Grace” to the Gentiles.

REVIEW all of Galatians 3

- Paul is countering the Jewish Believers (“Judaizers”) who came into the Gentile Churches and told them they had to be circumcised and obey the Old Testament Law of Moses.
- If a person, Jew or Gentile, is basing their redemption and justification on a covenant they are rejecting what Christ did on the cross. The “works of God” is what Jesus finished, among many other things.
- The cross provided redemption and justification everyone if it is received by faith. The resurrection provided the “new creature” or “born-again” person if the “work of God” was believed.

Galatians 3:6-9

6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

9 So then those **who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.**

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- The Gospel preached to Abraham was “in you all the nations shall be blessed.” Abraham believed and was “made righteous” because his faith.
- The point Paul is making is that Abraham was a “Gentile”, Abram, at the time and without a covenant with God. The Covenant of Circumcision did not take place until 24 years later.
- To mix a covenant (works; performance) Israel’s New Covenant or with grace given to the Gentile, is to “back slide.” The reason is that it nullifies the finished work of the cross. This is a continuing challenge in the life of every Believer, both Jew and Gentile.
- “Born- again” people now “walk in the Spirit because of His indwelling.
- Sin is no longer a consideration as a disqualification for redemption! We NOW “walk by faith” (in the work of God in Christ) like “believing Abraham.” There is no longer judgment and condemnation. The “work of Christ on the cross and His resurrection,” satisfied God’s judgment against sin forever for all people. They just have to “believe it!
- If a person lives by Israel’s Law of Moses they will always experience rejection and condemnation. If a person lives by “faith in the Son of God” and the “works of God in Him” they will always experience liberty. This is called the “Law of Liberty” which Christ accomplished for all mankind.

Christ redeemed “the JEW”, Israel, from the curse of the Law NOT the Gentile

Galatians 3:13-14

Christ has redeemed us (Israel) from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

14 that the **blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles** in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- The New Covenant for the Jew released them from the Old Covenant. It was a covenant of “mercy” because the Old Covenant condemned them and required a continuous sacrifice.
- The New Covenant with Israel allowed the Gentile to receive the “blessing of Abraham” also.

The BLESSING OF ABRAHAM is redemption by faith for both Jew and Gentile!!!

Galatians 3:16-18

16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

- The Promises were made to both “Abraham and his Seed” which is Jesus. Jesus walked by faith just like Abraham and was declared “righteous.”
- There is no covenant, no rules, involved except the “Law of Faith”

Romans 3:27-28

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but **by the law of faith.**

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

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REVIEW all of Ephesians 2

Ephesians chapter 2 is a VERY IMPORTANT and concise exposition of “How the Gentile became “accepted by God” without a covenant relationship. Paul is presenting the Mystery of the Gentile, which is the same as the Gospel of Grace, to an EXCLUSIVE Gentile congregation. There were no Jewish Believers in this church.

The following are major points found in this chapter:

1. Gentiles were ““made alive” or given the life of Christ through faith and acceptance of the Gospel of Grace even though they were previously”: Ephesians 2:1-3
 - “dead” and trespasses” against God
 - followed “soulish, fleshly” (not spiritual) promptings of their carnal nature which is influenced by the corruption in the world
 - Obeyed the devil who works in every person who does not come to Christ. (Called the “sons of disobedience)
 - The “sons of disobedience” fulfill the lust of the flesh and their vain imagination because they do not acknowledge not are they thankful (Romans 1:21-22)
 - Their nature was disgusting before God and warranted His judgment and wrath
 - The good news is the Gentile is
2. The Jew was “made alive” because showed “mercy” in the releasing them from the Old Covenant and Jesus inaugurating a New Covenant for them. It was a covenant that released them from the requirements and condemnation of the Law.
3. Gentiles were “saved” or “made safe” from the wrath of God by “grace through faith” of the blessings found in the Promise of Abraham which is Christ, the SEED, the One who redeem all people.
4. Gentiles before they came to Christ were:
 - Considered to be “sinners” by the Jews; unclean; uncircumcised with no covenant with God (like the Jewish Covenant of Circumcision; the Abrahamic Covenant)
 - Aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel; non-citizens; no rights no benefits
 - Strangers to the covenants of promise; i.e., Circumcision & the Law of Moses
 - “far off of held at a distance from the benefits God showered on Israel
 - “brought near; closer” and into a relationship with God because of the redemptive blood of Christ
5. Christ brought peace (removed hostility & contempt) between the Jew and the Gentile
6. Removed the Old Testament Law given to Israel which separated the Jew from the Gentile
7. Created a “new man” (creature) from the Jew & Gentile which allowed for peace with God and with each other through the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead.
8. The “enmity which is the Law” that separated them was put to death at the cross.
9. Jesus, or the physical blessing of Abraham, is now preached to both Jew and Gentiles
10. Both Jew & Gentile now have access to the throne room by the Spirit

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11. Gentiles are no longer “strangers or foreigners” but are NOW part of the members of the household of God
12. Both Jew and Gentile are like a house built on the works of Christ apart from and law of separation from God. Both have “equal standing in righteousness’ before God because of Christ.
13. Both Jew and Gentile are now a holy temple, a dwelling place, of God in the Spirit.

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ACTS OF THE APOSTLES Timeline:

Acts 2 (33 AD)

- 40 days after the resurrection
- Kingdom will be preached to Israel only; no Gentiles

Acts 9 (32 AD)

- 9 Years after the resurrection
- Paul, a Rabbi and murderer, is converted to the faith
- Paul called to “stand before Gentile, kings, & children of Israel”) (**This is important!!! Peter and the other eleven were only called to Israel)
- Paul spends three years in Arabia receives revelation from God (9 “mysteries” unknown to the Twelve)

Acts 9-10 (39-40 AD)

- 7 years after the resurrection
- Cornelius the first Gentile convert was baptized in the Holy Spirit
- Peter and six men with him were amazed
- Cornelius is baptized in water. Only mention of a Gentile being baptized (See Hebrews 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:4-6; Acts 8:34;)
- Peter testifies of the Cornelius conversion before other believing Jews
- First mention that Gentiles are “God granted repentance to life.” (born-again; redemption; saved, etc.)
- Jews do not understand how the Gentile saved without being Jewish
- Preached to Jews only - Paul & Barnabas
- Paul spends 2 weeks with Peter, James & John in Jerusalem

Acts 11 (41-44 AD)

- 9-10 years after the resurrection
- Barnabas retrieves Paul from Tarsus to settle in Antioch
- Spend one year in Antioch

Acts 13 (46-47 AD)

- 13 years after the resurrection
- Holy Spirit sends Paul & Barnabas sent out from church in Antioch

Acts 15 (49-50 AD)

- Called the “Jerusalem Council”
- 20 years after the resurrection
- Decision that Gentiles not required to become Jews by way of Covenant of Circumcision and do not have to adhere to the Law of Moses. (includes the Ten Commandments)
- Required to “remember the poor and not to eat meat offered to idols

Acts 22; 26 (58-60 AD)

- 30 years after the resurrection
- The window closed for Israel to receive the Kingdom. The Gospel of Grace was preached exclusively to the Gentile.

The Jewish Temple was destroyed in 70 AD.

There have been no sacrifices as prescribed by the Law since that time.

There is no longer a requirement because Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses for Israel.

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Pauline Ministry Timeline

34 AD	Conversion	Following his conversion on the Damascus Road. Paul preached in Damascus, spent 3 years in Arabia, and then returned to Damascus.
37-43 AD	Conference	Traveled to Jerusalem where he met briefly with Peter and James only. He then moved on to Tarsus, which became his base of operations for about six years
43-48 AD		Invited by Barnabas to move to Antioch of Syria where he minister for about five years (A.D. 43-48).
48-49 AD		He and Barnabas then set out on their so-called First Missionary Journey into Asia Minor (A.D. 48-49).
49 AD	Galatian Letter	Returned to Antioch. Wrote the Galatians to counter the Judaizers false teaching in the area of Galatian in Asia Minor. This was before the Jerusalem Council.
50-52	Jerusalem Council	Paul and Silas brought a letter from the Jerusalem Council to Asia Minor. This is the beginning of his Second Missionary Journey . Continued westward into the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Achaia.
51 AD	1 & 2 Thessalonian Letters	From Corinth, Paul wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians (A.D. 51). He then proceeded to Ephesus by ship, and finished the Second Missionary Journey at Syrian Antioch.
53 AD		From there he set out on his Third Missionary Journey passing through the same path as the second missionary trip. Galatia and Phrygian towards Ephesus (A.D. 53-57).
53-57 AD		Passing through Asia Minor, he arrived in Ephesus where he labored for three years (A.D. 53-56).
56 AD	1 Corinthians	Paul was living in Ephesus
56 AD	2 Corinthian Letter	Finally, Paul left Ephesus and traveled by land to Macedonia, where he wrote 2 Corinthians (A.D. 56).
56-57 AD	Roman Letter	He continued south and spent the winter of A.D. 56-57 in Corinth. There he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, and sent it by Phoebe (16:1-2) to the Roman church.
57 AD		The apostle then proceeded from Corinth, by land, clockwise around the Aegean Sea back to Troas in Asia, where he boarded a ship and eventually reached Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, the Jews arrested Paul and imprisoned him (A.D. 57).
60-62 AD	Prison Letters	Three years later he arrived in Rome as a prisoner, where he ministered for two years (A.D. 60-62). During this two-year time, Paul wrote the Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).
62 AD	1 Timothy & Titus Letters	The Romans freed Paul, and he returned to the Aegean area. There he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. He was arrested again and requested an audience with Caesar because of his Roman citizenship.
68 AD	2 Timothy Letter	He suffered imprisonment in Rome a second time, wrote 2 Timothy, and finally beheaded as a martyr under Nero in A.D. 68.

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