

RUSSELL SANDERS

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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 59

HIS LAST DAYS – PART 2

MARTYRED

After Paul's house arrest ended under Nero's benevolence, he enjoyed freedom during 64 A.D. to early 66 A.D. during which time he secured the stability of the churches he had planted. That all changed quickly.

Emperor Nero seems to have had a drastic change of heart toward both Jews and Christians. Beginning in 66 A.D. he began severe persecution.

In 67 A.D. Nero invaded Jerusalem and destroyed much of the city. He captured and executed the Apostle Peter. He captured Paul and brought him back to Rome. Once in Rome Paul was beheaded along the Ostian Way, which was a road running west along the Tiber River from Rome to the Seaport of the Tyrrhenian Sea. (Ostia is today a quarter of Rome.) He was executed three miles from the city at the riverbanks.

Later on, in 70 A.D. the total destruction of Jerusalem was completed. All Jews and Christians who managed to survive escaped to other countries. This dispersion is called "the diaspora."

Nero died at the young age of 30, but the persecution continued with the executions of Thaddaeus in 72A.D., Barnabas in 73 A.D. and Simon Zelotes in 74 A.D. along with many other unknown martyrs.

Paul had finished his race. His legacy lives on today through the Christian church which he defined better than anyone. We owe much understanding of our faith and doctrine to him.