

Conybeare and Howson also give a time line of events in the life of Paul, and note that he was probably executed in May or early June of 68 A.D. A very short time after this, within days, and God only knows the time table for sure, Nero's prized personal guards, the Praetorian guards, many of whom Paul no doubt testified to; these same Praetorian guards got sick and tired of Nero's antics, and his persecuting innocent Christians; thus it became obvious to Nero himself that his overthrow was eminent, so Nero committed suicide on June 9, 68 A.D.

So we find two famous men who lived in the first century died within days of each other. One was a Caesar, the chief ruler of his day, who worshipped himself: the other an Apostle, who worshipped the Supreme Authority, God the Father through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Paul wrote Timothy in his first epistle to him the following: 2 TIMOTHY 2:1 *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* If Paul ever did get to talk to Nero during his appearances before Caesar's court, one of the things Paul would have made known unto him was the fact that Nero should repent and turn to God, just as Paul told king Agrippa in ACTS 26:20. It is recorded that some of Nero's last words were "what an artist the world loses in me," showing his focus continued to be upon himself. Paul's last words are not recorded in scripture, but we have recorded in his epistles where his focus was, and that being on the heavenly things above. Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 1:21 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Paul most recently had written Timothy in 2 TIMOTHY 4:8 *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* Because Paul believed upon Jesus as his personal Saviour he has eternal life. {Study JOHN 3:15.} Since Nero didn't accept Christ as his Saviour, Nero has eternal judgment. {Study HEBREWS 6:2.} Nero died in sorrow. Paul died rejoicing in the Lord as he also encouraged us in his very first epistle: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 *Rejoice evermore.*

As noted above Paul in all of his epistles began his introductions, and ended all of his epistles conclusions with the mention of Jesus, and with the mention of GRACE, again showing that these two five letter words go hand in hand. Paul's final words to Timothy are found in 2 TIMOTHY 4:22 *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.* We will end this study with one of the Apostle Paul's most profound conclusions found in ROMANS 16. ROMANS 16:24 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. 25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*

Eulogy

We have no accurate record of a funeral service for our Apostle Paul. Some state that he was buried where he was executed, and others speculate that friends took up his corpse, and carried it for burial. At this point only the Lord knows for sure where our Apostle Paul was buried. The Apostle Paul's last will and testament is actually found recorded in our New Testament scripture, of ACTS, and Paul's own epistles.

Paul never wished to be eulogized beyond what is recorded of him in scripture. Whenever he used the words "I," "me," "my," and "we" in his writings, it was most often in close connection with a reference to God, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For example in ROMANS 14:8 Paul

wrote: *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.* Note how Paul uses the pronoun "I" in the following two portions of scripture found in GALATIANS. GALATIANS 1:9 *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. 11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* GALATIANS 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* GALATIANS 2:20 also reveals a little of how Paul used the word "me;" it was in reference to Christ. Note how Paul used the word "my" in PHILIPPIANS 4:1 *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.* Earlier in PHILIPPIANS 3:7 & 8 Paul made frequent use of used the words "I," "me," "my" writing: *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.* Ever since meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul didn't live one day without Jesus Christ being forefront in his mind, and thinking.

We have recorded in scripture approximately thirty plus years of Paul's life, which include eighteen months of living in Corinth, and three years of residence in Ephesus, yet in all of these accounts we find not one record of Paul ever preaching a funeral! Think about this for a minute, and wonder, did Paul ever preach a funeral? As an Apostle, and a pastor, and a teacher, certainly Paul must have preached a funeral, yet we have no record of him doing this. Why? Because Paul was sent to preach life unto those who were dead in trespasses and sins. Thus in this sense every sermon that our Apostle Paul preached was a funeral that ended with a promise of everlasting life to those who accepted Jesus as their own personal Saviour. Jesus said in JOHN 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

In ACTS 20 we have the story of Paul preaching at Troas, and during one of his long winded sermons, which lasted until at least midnight, a young man named Eutychus fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. This was as close to preaching a funeral that we have a scriptural record of Paul preaching, but note what is recorded in ACTS 20:10 *And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.* There was no funeral service here for Paul proclaimed *...his life is in him.* Then note what happened next: ACTS 20:11 *When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.* The fact that they were not a little comforted has got to rank among the top under statements found in scripture. What do you suppose was chief among the many topics discussed that whole night? How about this: *...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures...* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 & 4.

The closest thing we have to a funeral service preached by Paul is his farewell address spoken to the Ephesian elders, which we also find in ACTS 20. ACTS 20:17 *And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the*

things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. 36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.

We wrote a whole 42 page chapter in this study on the life of Paul reviewing what Paul said in the above verses spoken unto to Ephesian elders. A few short days after this Paul was arrested at Jerusalem, which put him on that path as a prisoner of Jesus Christ that eventually took him to Rome. It would be approximately nine years before Paul would once again return to Ephesus, and for many, if not all, of these Ephesian elders, this short visit to Paul in Miletus in ACTS 20 was the last time they did get to see Paul, or hear him speak. One topic heavy on his mind as Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders was what he taught them, as noted in verse 21 *...repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* Paul in verse 24 expressed from his heart what was taking place within him, which revealed the spirit of a full overcomer as he stated: *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* Paul did exactly that, testify the gospel of the grace of God until the day he went home to glory. Along the way he robbed hell of thousands. And he did finish his course with joy, and wrote a joy book of the Bible from prison called PHILIPPIANS. To the Philippians Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 1:21 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Additionally at the end of his race course Paul wrote Timothy: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing...* 2 TIMOTHY 4:7 & 8. This statement was written approximately ten years after the time frame of ACTS 20. One high light of Paul's final words spoken to the Ephesian elders at Miletus is what he said in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* It was the word of God that Paul encouraged them to have their attention drawn unto. This is the very same word of God that the church of Philadelphia in REVELATION 3 held in such high esteem. So high in fact that they become the joint-heirs with Christ that Paul spent his racecourse running life preaching, and teaching about. The Word of God is indeed Jesus as is noted in REVELATION 19:13.

So we find in Paul's own words recorded in ACTS, and in Paul's epistles, the appropriate Holy Ghost inspired words that Paul spoke, and wrote, which describe the life he lived; words fit for his own funeral service. Charles Spurgeon once preached a sermon at a Sunday evening service in remembrance of an acquaintance who had died the day before. When Charles Spurgeon himself

died, his wife had that very same sermon published, feeling it was very much appropriate for his own funeral sermon. Above we too find Paul's own words very much appropriate for his own funeral sermon.

One final thought concerning Paul for your consideration. Paul was born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, according to his own words recorded in ACTS 22:3. He is first mentioned in scripture at the death of Stephen in ACTS 7:58, where he is noted to be a "young man." No age is assigned to him other than he was a "young man" at the time Stephen was stoned. From the stoning of Stephen until the death of Paul was in the neighborhood of thirty to thirty-five years. When Paul wrote PHILEMON 1:9 he called himself "Paul the aged," which is to say an old man. In LUKE 1:18 John the Baptist's father, Zacharias a priest, calls himself an "old man," yet according to NUMBERS 8:25 he would of had to be less than fifty years old. In Paul's day we see that a man over fifty was considered an old man, but he would only have been thirty or so years away from having been called a "young man." If a "young man" was twenty to twenty-five, then Paul lived to be around sixty when he died, and maybe younger than that! From the day he got saved on the road to Damascus, until he went home to glory was around thirty years! Stated another way, Paul walked with the Lord approximately thirty years. (How long have you walked with the Lord?) There were a lot of miles put on his old frame in those thirty or so years he was a Christian. Paul wasted not a day in his walk with the Lord. With heavenly focus he daily pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, as he wrote in PHILIPPIANS 3:14. Paul faced death many times, and in his darkest hours we find him praying and singing praises unto God as he did in the Philippian jail at midnight. *Rejoice evermore...* Paul wrote in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16, and he did so too. Paul also wrote in EPHESIANS 5:19 & 20 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...* and he did so too. With a song of praise unto the Lord flowing from his heart out through his lips, and with a smile full of joy and faith Paul departed this world to be with Christ, which is far better. PSALMS 16:11 *...in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* Always remember these words of Paul: PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*