

HIGHLIGHTS OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN BIBLE LANDS

by

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ARCHAEOLOGY AND CITIES IN THE TERRITORY OF PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

THE THRILLING STORY OF SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY A PIONEER NEW TESTAMENT ARCHAEOLOGIST

It was Ramsay who did a great deal of the pioneer work in the archaeology of Greece and Asia Minor, with much of his efforts centering on the latter field. Years were spent in research work there, and much was accomplished in proving the Bible writers to be historically accurate. The story of how he came to engage in this kind of work is a fascinating one.

In 1876, at twenty-five, he was a young married man in the last year at Oxford University. His physician ordered him to travel for his health, so he traveled in Germany, Switzerland, Italy and England. He paid expenses by teaching and by writing for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In 1880 he secured a "studentship" from the British Museum (paying him \$1500) to travel in Greek lands to do research work. He began his work in Phrygia in Asia Minor. He discovered that there were no maps that could be trusted, either ancient or modern. So he began work on the making of a map of the district. 1

The transformation of a skeptic. Ramsay had been a follower of Wellhausen, who said that the Book of Acts in the Bible was an untrustworthy work produced in the latter half of the second century.

The turning point of Ramsay's life was his study of Acts 14:5, 6 which stated as a fact of geography that in going from Iconium to Lystra and Derbe the apostles had to cross from the country of Phrygia into the country of Lycaonia. But the German critics of the Book of Acts asserted that Iconium was located in Lycaonia and not in Phrygia. They said that Luke was mistaken. But Ramsay discovered that, although before Paul's time and again after his time Iconium was considered to be a part of Lycaonia, yet in Paul's day it was assigned to Phrygia. Inscriptions were discovered indicating that even as late as A.D. 150, the people of Iconium were making use of the Phrygian language as shown by their public records, whereas in other districts the records were in either Greek or Latin. 2

THE LOCATION OF THE DISTRICT OF GALATIA

Archaeology further corroborates the Acts. When Ramsay began his research work in Asia Minor, he accepted the critical view that the term Galatia referred to the northern district, and that Luke made mistakes about the term because the Book of Acts was written in the middle of the second century A.D. But after examining old inscriptions, he found out that the Galatia of the Acts and of the inscriptions was not in the northern but in the southern district, and included the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra. This discovery solved Biblical puzzles and did away with so-called Biblical mistakes. Ramsay was driven to the conclusion that the critical view of a late date for the Acts was wrong, and that Luke wrote with an accurate historical and geographical knowledge of his time. 3

The remarkable accuracy of Luke as a writer. Ramsay sums up the results of his research work in these words:

That the Acts contained and described a series of improbable incidents, was a view that has not been tenable or possible since 1890 except through total disregard of recent advance in knowledge. It had by that time become evident that every incident described in the Acts is just what might be expected in ancient surroundings. The officials with whom Paul and his companions were brought in contact are those who would be there: proconsuls in senatorial provinces, asiarchs in Ephesus, strategoi in Philippi, politarchs in Thessalonica, magicians and soothsayers everywhere. The difficulties which the apostles encountered were such as they must inevitably meet in ancient society. The magistrates take action against them in a strictly managed Roman colony like Pisidian Antioch or Philippi, where legality and order reigned; riotous crowds try to take the law into their own hands in the less strictly governed Hellenistic or Hellenic cities like Iconium and Ephesus and Thessalonica. 4

THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS AND ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA

Cyprus. When Paul and Barnabas visited this island on their missionary journeys, the deputy or proconsul named Sergius Paulus believed the Gospel (Acts 13:6-12). At the town of Paphos where this took place an inscription on a marble block has come to light. This was part of a monument which a man by the name of Apollonius dedicated to his parents about A.D. 55, and the inscription states that he “revised the Senate by means of assessors in the time of the Proconsul Paulus.” There is no reason to doubt that this Paulus was the very man who became a convert of Paul. 5

Antioch of Pisidia. Important excavations were carried on by Ramsay in this city, and as a result there have been discovered several inscriptions that have a bearing on the New Testament. The following writing was found on a monument erected to honor an important public official:

To Lucius Sergius Paullus, the younger, one of the four commissioners in charge of the Roman streets, tribune of the soldiers of the sixth legion, etc.

Ramsay came to the conclusion that this official was the son of the Sergius Paulus who believed the Gospel on the Island of Cyprus under Paul's preaching. Like his father, he had become an official of the government. Another interesting inscription commemorates a woman:

The most excellent Sergia Paulla, daughter of Lucius, wife of Gaius Caristianus Fronto, legatus of the Emperor Caesar—Augustus—[This monument erected by] Gaius Caristianus Fronto, son and grandson of Gaius.

Ramsay ascertained that this Sergia Paulla was daughter of the Lucius Paulus who was proconsul of Cyprus, and she was sister of Lucius Paulus, Junior, in whose honor the above-mentioned monument was erected. She was married to G. Caristianus Fronto about A.D. 72. Now we know that this woman had two sons, the eldest of which is mentioned in other inscriptions found by Ramsay. His name was G. Caristianus Fronto, Junior. He abandoned Caristianus, his Roman name, and also the Latin language in favor of the Greek tongue, and also he was not like his father and grandfather in accepting governmental office. It is believed the reason for this is that his mother had become a Christian and reared her son with Christian training. Thus we see that some of the descendants of the Sergius Paulus of Cyprus gave indication of living a Christian life. 6

In 1910-1913 Sir William Ramsay excavated the sanctuary of *Men-Askaenos* at Antioch. A temple was not found, but instead a high place which opened to the sky in which was a hall for initiation and a font for the purification of worshipers. What was here discovered was the hall that had been made famous by the Phrygian Mysteries. These mystery fraternities were well known by the people of the first two centuries in the Roman world. Profound secrets, not known by the ordinary person, were supposed to be revealed to those initiated into the orders. Twenty-six times in the New Testament the word mystery appears, ten of these times being in Ephesians and Colossians. The New Testament writers used the vocabulary of these mystery religions, but were careful to emphasize that those initiated into the experience of the new birth are led into a life of holiness. This sort of life was not lived by the devotees of the mystery religions.

Ramsay found on an inscription at this sanctuary the same verb used that Paul used in Colossians 2:18: **"Dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."** What the member of the mystery fraternity saw when he was initiated into the order, made him conceited. But Paul warns against the emptiness of all such visions. 7

EPHESUS, THE CITY OF THE TEMPLE OF DIANA

Discovery of the temple. J. T. Wood began excavations at the site of old Ephesus in 1863. His main object was to find the remains of the Temple of Diana, but it had been so completely lost that it took him six years to discover where it was located. For a long time he dug inside the city and found no trace of it. In 1869 he found an inscription, and on it was a description of the temple processions of the long ago. Indication was made that in carrying the sacred images from the theater to the temple, the procession went through the Magnesian Gate. This suggested that the temple was outside the city itself. Wood found a magnificent gateway with three openings: two for vehicles, and one for foot passengers. There were deep ruts in the marble pavement showing much use. The road was 35 feet wide, paved with marble.

The excavator followed this road and was led to discover the site of the old temple. At a depth of 20 feet he came upon white marble pavement, and dug up capitals, sculptured columns, and great blocks of marble in white, blue, red, and yellow. Hundreds of temple inscriptions were uncovered. The size of the temple was determined to be about 340 feet by 160 feet. It had 127 columns 60 feet high. It is believed that gold was used instead of mortar between the blocks of marble.

The temple was one of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World,” and many considered it to be first among the seven. 8

How appropriate it was for the apostle Paul to make use of the spiritual temple of the Lord in his Ephesian letter (see Ephesians 2:19-22), for his readers would be very “temple conscious,” living in the city where the people made so much of their temple edifice, and where crowds came from all over the Roman world to view the structure and participate in its activities.

Facts about the history and ritual of the temple. An earlier temple taking one hundred years to build was completed 480 B.C, about the time Ezra was returning to Jerusalem with the exiles. This temple was burned on the night Alexander the Great was born. All Asia cooperated to restore the temple.

It took a little over thirty years to complete its building. The temple worship reached its zenith about the time Paul visited Ephesus. The Goths captured the temple in the middle of the third century and left it desolate. The temple was completely destroyed when the Christians at Ephesus became dominant. 9

There were thousands of priests connected with the temple ritual, one of these being designated as the chief priest. Other deities were worshiped at the temple, but Diana (Artemis) was supreme. A multitude of priestesses who came to the temples as virgins were dedicated to prostitution as a part of the temple service. 10

Discovery of the foundation-deposit of the temple. D. G. Howarth undertook to excavate at Ephesus in the years 1904-1905. He had been digging for many weary months on the temple site without finding anything of much value. But at last he came upon a small oblong structure which he thought was “The Great Altar.”

Upon examination he discovered it was not wholly of marble but only “veneered with marble.” Beneath the veneer of marble was found limestone slabs and beds of mortar. In each bed of mortar great treasure was found. Here were discovered four thousand objects including earrings, necklaces, brooches, stars, jeweled hairpins, bracelets, pendants, charms, etc. These objects were made of gold, electrum, bronze, ivory, glass, crystal, paste, enameled wood, iron, terra cotta.

Mr. Howarth concluded that what he had found was the ancient “foundation-deposit,” which was made at the time the temple was first built, and which formed the pedestal for the statue of Diana. This statue was supposed to have fallen from Heaven (Acts 19:35), but may have been a meteorite which was worked upon by an artist until it resembled a human figure. 11

The apostle John is believed to have spent many of the last years of his life at Ephesus. In describing the foundations of the New Jerusalem, John under divine inspiration portrayed for us a foundation-deposit far exceeding in glory and value that of the temple at Ephesus (see Revelation 21:10-20).

Excavation of the Ephesus theater. The Austrians, Dr. Otto Benndorf and Rudolph Heberdey, excavated at Ephesus in 1864-1866, also in 1897 and following years. They explored the amphitheater. The theater was set up against the mountain. Its architecture even in ruins is magnificent. The acoustics were such that in the back seats you could hear a whisper on the stage. Its seating capacity was nearly twenty-five thousand. Here the old gladiatorial shows took place. In the lowest of 66 tiers of seats were 12 marble thrones. These were evidently either for high officials, or for victors of the games. 12

An inscription was found at the Ephesus Theater about a second century athlete. It read: "He fought three fights, and twice was crowned." 13

This reminds us of the swan song of the apostle Paul:

"I have fought a good fight. . . . Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (II Timothy 4:7, 8).

Light on Acts 19 from excavations at Ephesus

Acts 19:9: **"But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them [i.e., Jews in the synagogue] and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus."**

The Ephesian inscriptions discovered mention schools. They were probably elementary schools. Teachers taught in their classrooms a few hours in the forenoon and a little while in the afternoon. The rooms would thus be empty at other times and very suitable for Paul's use. These lecture-rooms were usually adjacent to the street. 14

Acts 19:18-20: **"And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver."**

One inscription found at Ephesus on blue-veined marble describes the augury rules of magical arts. It had to do with the flying of birds: "If the bird is flying from right to left, if it settles out of sight, it is lucky; but if it lift up the left wing, then whether it rises or settles out of sight, it is unlucky." 15

Acts 19:24: **"For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen."**

It is not surprising that no little silver images of Diana should have come to light, for the old heathen city gave way to a Christian city, and such objects of heathen worship would have either been destroyed altogether or melted for use in making other objects. But if shrines made of silver have not been found, those made of terra cotta and marble have been discovered. Furthermore, a pagan monument has been unearthed which tells of the dedication, by a wealthy citizen of Ephesus in the year when John probably died, of many statues to be set up in the Ephesus temple. Among these was “a silver statue of Diana and two other silver images.” 16

Acts 19:27: **“So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth.”**

The Ephesian inscriptions indicate that in the days when the worship of Diana was supreme, one month every year (our March-April) was dedicated to this goddess. There was a great religious festival; there were also athletic events, as well as dramatic and musical events. People came from far and wide to attend these events. The word “magnificence” used by the silversmiths well describes the activities of this special month. 17

Acts 19:28: **“And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”**

The inscriptions indicate that the shout of the mob, “**Great is Diana!**” was a formula often used in the ceremonies with the worship of this goddess. Every detail of the story as Luke gives it to us is shown to be in keeping with the facts that have come to light concerning the times. 18

Acts 19:31: **“And certain of the chiefs of Asia [Asiarch], which were his [i.e., Paul’s] friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theater.”**

Inscriptions tell us that the Asiarch was a provincial and not a municipal officer; he traveled in state and was in charge of the great festival for the worship of the emperor. He provided games for the people. Only one Asiarch served at a given time, but there would be a number of former Asiarchs. 19

Acts 19:35: **“And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?”**

The town clerk was a very important person according to the inscriptions. He was responsible for the form of decrees submitted to the assembly as well as acting as chairman at the public meetings and having charge of money bequeathed to the people. Luke says the town clerk called the city of Ephesus “The Temple-Keeper.” This very same expression is used in the inscriptions concerning Ephesus. 20

How Christianity took the place of the worship of Diana at Ephesus. The apostle Paul was the pioneer missionary to Ephesus, and he was so successful that it caused a great riot in the city (Acts 19).

We know from Scripture and Early Church history that Christianity finally took the place of the worship of Diana at Ephesus. Christian tombs and Christian churches have been discovered there that date from the second to the fifth centuries. These church buildings were modest in contrast to the ancient buildings of the Ephesians. Crosses were discovered everywhere. These findings certainly prove that Christianity did actually triumph over Diana worship. But this came about at a great cost in the death of martyrs. A stele of white marble has been found with four sunken panels. One of these pictures a lion rushing upon a man, and the man is defending himself with a club. In the third panel the man is seen lying beaten beneath the lion. It is believed that this represents a Christian martyr. Christians were often thrown to the lions at the end of a gladiatorial show. 21

PHILIPPI, THE CITY THAT WAS A ROMAN COLONY

What it meant to Paul that Philippi was a Roman colony. The apostle Paul's first missionary work in Europe was done at Philippi which Luke said was a Roman colony (Acts 16:12).

Antony and Octavian, in order to celebrate their victory in the Battle of Philippi in 42 B.C, made the city a Roman colony, and it would seem that its first citizens were veterans of the battle. The colony's territory took in Neapolis, which was the seaport where Paul disembarked when he first landed in Europe. A Roman colony was a small edition of the city of Rome itself, its citizens enjoying special rights and privileges.

In Philippians 3:20 Paul wrote, "**For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven**", even as the citizens of Philippi had their citizenship in Rome, being a colony. In this city Roman citizenship was fully appreciated and Paul being a Roman citizen himself, said to the officials: "**They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily?**" (Acts 16:37). 22

Did Luke blunder in applying the word "colony" to the division of a province? It was once said that Luke was badly mistaken in saying in regard to Philippi (Acts 16:12), "**Which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony.**"

It was contended that the word colony [district] should not be applied to the division of a province such as Macedonia was. But an old Macedonian coin was found which uses the word district in exactly the same way that Luke uses it of Macedonia. Other documents have corroborated such usage. Luke was acquainted with this section of the Greek world, having lived at Philippi, and this use of terms has now been proved to be correct. 23

Was Philippi "the chief city" (Acts 16:12)? Ancient historians call Amphipolis capital of that section and not Philippi. Again, did Luke make a mistake here in calling Philippi "the chief city of that part of Macedonia"? But we now know that Philippi and Amphipolis were rival cities, and Luke being a native of Philippi would naturally give first place to his own city which claimed that position. Later on, this claim was recognized universally for Philippi. 24

Were the officials of Philippi called magistrates (Greek, praetors) (Acts 16:20, 22, 35, 36, 38)? Technically Luke did not use the correct title for these officials, but William Ramsay by his archaeological discoveries once again comes to the rescue of Luke as an accurate historian. Ramsay writes that the title of praetor was “employed as a courtesy title for the supreme magistrates of a Roman colony; and as usual Luke moves on the plane of educated conversation in such matters, and not on the plane of rigid technical accuracy.” 25

Excavators at Philippi identify the place where the Gospel was first preached in Europe. French archaeologists have labored at Philippi from 1914 through 1938. One of their greatest discoveries was the foundations of a great arched gateway, and it is believed that this was the place where they exited the city, mentioned in Acts 16: 13: “**on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side.**” A distance of a little over a mile from this gate is a stream of water.

Thus one could be fairly certain of locating the exact spot where Paul first heralded the Gospel on European soil. 26

The site of the old market place at Philippi. The Philippian market place has been uncovered. A kind of balcony in rectangular form, with steps leading to it on two sides, was evidently the place where the magistrates (praetors) administered justice. Although this market place was rebuilt in the second century A.D., nevertheless, the old plan was not radically changed. So we may reasonably conclude that here Paul and Silas were dragged, and here they were given sentence by these Philippian officials. 27

THESSALONICA, THE GREEK “FREE CITY”

An inscription that proves Luke was right about a city official. From Philippi Paul traveled seventy miles on the Roman road via Egnatia to reach Thessalonica, where the city of Salonika is now located. The course of the old road is indicated by the Main Street of the modern city. At the same time Philippi had become a Roman colony, because of military assistance Thessalonica was made by the Romans a “free city.” It was ruled by men whom Luke called “**rulers of the city**” (Acts 17: 6, 8) (Greek, *politarchs*). This title is used nowhere else in the New Testament.

A few years ago it was thought that this title was not in Greek literature, and Luke was discredited for using it regarding the Thessalonian city officials. Until 1876 a Roman arch named Vardar Gate spanned the Via Egnatia at the place where it entered the western end of the city. On this arch was an inscription that has been transferred to the British Museum. A portion of the inscription reads: “In the time of the politarchs.” The date of the inscription is somewhere between 30 B.C. and A.D. 143. Other inscriptions of ancient dates refer also to politarchs. Luke’s accuracy as a writer is once again confirmed. 28

A tribute to Luke’s accuracy. The accuracy of details which Luke gives us in describing what took place in the apostles’ experiences at Thessalonica has been summed up as follows:

The whole aspect of what happened at Thessalonica, as compared with the events at Philippi, is in perfect harmony with the ascertained differences in the political condition of the two places.

There is no mention of the rights and privileges of Roman citizenship; but we are presented with the spectacle of a mixed mob of Greeks and Jews, who are anxious to show themselves to be “Caesar’s friends.” No lictors with rods and fasces, appear upon the scene; but we hear something distinctly of a *demus* (Acts 17:5), or free assembly of the people. Nothing is said of religious ceremonies (Acts 16:21), which the citizens, **“being Romans,”** may not lawfully adopt; all the anxiety, both of people and magistrates, is turned to the one point of showing their loyalty to the Emperor; and those magistrates by whom the question at issue is ultimately decided are not Roman praetors, but Greek politarchs. 29

ATHENS, THE CITY OF GREEK CULTURE

The Apostle Paul’s arrival at Athens. From the city of Berea the apostle doubtless took a ship for Athens. His ship would land at Piraeus, the port of Athens. In those days this was a busy harbor and also a naval base. The harbor was about five miles from the main part of the city of Athens. Before entering the western gate of the city, Paul passed through a large ancient cemetery, for it was customary among the Greeks to have their dead buried outside the city walls. In this cemetery through which he had to pass before entering the city, Paul was able to see monuments that were erected to distinguished men. Some of the old sculptured tombstones are still to be seen along “The Street of the Tombs.” 30

The Athenian market place. After passing through the western gate, Paul would see ahead of him a long street lined with buildings and leading to the great market place, which politically, commercially, and socially was the center of the city of Athens. It was here that Paul spent much time disputing daily **“with them that met with him”** (Acts 17:17).

Previous to 1930 only meager work had been done by excavators at the site of the Athenian market place, due to the fact that there were dwelling places in the territory which would have to be demolished and the ground purchased. But in 1930 the Greek government recognized the desirability of doing away with such unsightly dwellings in such close proximity to the Acropolis.

So in that year the government authorized the American School of Classical Studies to undertake the excavation of the site of the old market place. The project was largely financed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and was under the direction of Professor T. Leslie Shear, of Princeton University. A museum was built to house the treasures that were discovered. The location of the sites of many famous buildings was determined. 31

Around the sides of the market place were located many public buildings. It is important to realize that each public place was also a sanctuary.

As examples of this, the meeting place of the Athenian Council had statues of Apollo and Jupiter, and the Record House was a sanctuary of the mother of gods. Other public buildings included a music hall, where musical and oratorical contests were held, and a library structure. Also there were the Temples of Apollo and of Ares. 32

The Acropolis. This was a hill 512 feet high. The platform of the Acropolis was a museum of art, of history, and of religion. The whole was “one vast composition of architecture and sculpture, dedicated to the national glory and to the worship of the gods.” 33

Is it any wonder Paul’s spirit was “**stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry**” (Acts 17:16)?

Athens had had her golden age under Pericles about 443 to 429 B.C. At this time the sculptor Phidias was in charge of the Parthenon, which has often been said to be the most beautiful building ever erected by man. It was erected on the Acropolis, and within it a gold and ivory statue of Athena was placed. From the spoils won in the battle of Marathon, Phidias made a colossal bronze statue of Athena, the goddess of wisdom. She is identified as the Roman Minerva. The apostle Paul could have seen this statue from the deck of his vessel as it first came in sight of Athens. 34

Other notable buildings of Athens. The Tower of Winds was an octagonal marble building with its water clock inside and sundials and weather vane outside. Did Paul get the time of day here? Southeast from the Acropolis was the temple of the Olympian Zeus. It was the largest temple in all Greece, and one of the largest in the ancient world. On the south slope of the Acropolis was the outdoor Theater of Dionysius, where great plays were presented. 35

Mars’ Hill or the Areopagus. This was a rocky hill about 377 feet high, and located northwest of the Acropolis. Rock-cut steps led to its top, where rock benches on three sides of a square are to be seen. In olden times the Court of the Areopagus met here. Originally, it was mainly a criminal court, but in the days when Paul visited the city, they handled cases of religion and education also. 36

Some writers have advocated the view that Paul was subjected to a trial before this august body. But there is no indication from the language used that there was an actual trial. Ramsay suggests that the Athenian philosophers “wanted him examined by the council to see if he was entitled to a permit to lecture in the university atmosphere.” 37

Thus they were passing on his qualifications as a lecturer.

Paul’s speech at Athens. The apostle’s reference to an inscription in the city, “**To the unknown god**” (Acts 17:23), has been proved by ancient writers and by inscriptions of the excavators to have been appropriate to the city and the times. Altars in the city were erected to Fame, Modesty, Energy, Persuasion, and Pity.

In the life-story of Apollonius, of Tyana, a heathen philosopher who visited Athens not far from the date of Paul’s visit, it was said of this old traveler: “Having come to anchor in the Piraeus, he went up from the Harbor to the City. Advancing onward, he met several of the philosophers. In his first conversation, finding the Athenians much devoted to Religion, he discoursed on sacred subjects. This was at Athens, where also altars of Unknown Divinities are set up.” 38

Dr. Adolf Deissmann has published the picture of an altar which he found at Pergamum. On the altar is the inscription: **“To the Unknown Gods.”** 39

In Acts 17:28 Paul quoted from Greek poetry: **“As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”** The Greek poet Aratus has a similar thought in a poem of his: “Hail, O Zeus! for to thee should each mortal voice be uplifted: Offspring are we too of Thine, we and all that is mortal around us.” 40

Cleanthes, a Greek philosopher suggests the same idea in a hymn of his to Zeus: “We are thy children, we alone, of all on earth’s broad ways that wander to and fro, bearing thy image whereso’er we go.” 41

Summary of results at Athens. Dr. Camden Cobern makes a statement about the results of the work of the excavators in classical lands, and especially at Athens:

It is a most suggestive fact that while these unrivaled discoveries of the monuments and inscriptions of the ancient world have in scores of instances cast discredit upon the accuracy of classical historians and ancient writers, they have served only to put in clearer light the remarkable knowledge and scrupulous exactness of the New Testament writers. The account of Paul’s visit to Athens sounds to modern scholars who are best acquainted with the Athens of the first century like the report of an eyewitness. 42

CORINTH, THE TRADE CENTER OF THE GREEKS

The old city of Corinth. The modern city of Corinth is located about three miles from the place where the old city was situated. About 146 B.C. the city of Corinth was completely destroyed following defeat in a war with Rome.

In 46 B.C. Julius Caesar resettled it as a Roman colony. Augustus made the city the capital of Achaia and the seat of the proconsul. (Cf. Acts 18:12.) In Paul’s day it was the commercial center of Greece. 43

Excavations at Corinth. Some preliminary excavations were undertaken at Corinth in 1886 by Dr. Dorpfeld, and in 1892 by Mr. Skias. But the most thorough and the most fruitful work was done by Dr. Rufus B. Richardson under the auspices of The American School of Classical Studies, from 1896 to 1913.

The excavators of necessity had to purchase the modern village located on the site, and remove an immense quantity of debris before they could begin to reach the level of the old city. Further excavations were undertaken at Corinth from 1934 to 1936. 44

Results of the excavators. The early excavators were able to uncover an entire street of old Corinth. They also uncovered the old Greek theater. They discovered Peirene, most famous fountain of ancient times. They cleared the remains of the Temple of Apollo which Dorpfeld had located ten years before. Then they cleared the market place of old Corinth. A great quantity of archaeological treasures were found, and a museum was built to store many of these. 45

Character of the city as revealed by the excavators. Corinth in Paul's day was a great trade center, and a flourishing business city, with Cenchrea as its ancient harbor. The monuments mention the athletic games that took place at the shrine of Poseidon northeast of the city. No doubt Paul borrowed from these games some of his figures of speech when he wrote to the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 9:24-26).

But Corinth was a vicious and immoral city. Why was this so? The excavators have discovered the answer. On the hill *Acro-Corinth*, rising fifteen hundred feet above the city, was the Temple of Aphrodite, or Astarte. This was originally Ashtoreth, a Canaanite goddess, but Phoenician colonists from the East established this religion in Corinth.

To the Greeks, Aphrodite or Astarte was the goddess of love and sensuality. A thousand priestesses sold themselves into a life of prostitution in connection with this temple, and other women also defiled themselves. Such an immoral religion fostered in the Corinthians a lack of sensitiveness in moral matters. How appropriate it was for Paul to emphasize to the Corinthians the truth that the Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:15-20)! 46

The Corinthian market place. The nerve center of an Oriental city's life was considered to be its market place. The excavators at Corinth discovered the ruins of the city's old market place to be south of the Temple of Apollo.

This place is of special interest to Bible students because it was in a shop located here that the apostle Paul labored with Aquila making tents. It has been suggested that their shop must have been situated not far from where the road coming from Lechaeum entered the market place. At this general vicinity are ruins of a number of old shops which were usually rooms that opened directly on the street, or else on a courtyard located near a street. 47

The apostle Paul mentioned eating that which was sold in the shambles (meat market) when he wrote to the Corinthian Christians (I Corinthians 10:25). Some of the shops of ancient times which the excavators found at Corinth were clearly meat and food markets. Each shop had a well connected with a subterranean channel that supplied fresh water and made possible the cooling of perishable foods, especially meat. 48

Judgment seat at Corinth. In the market place the excavators discovered an elevated platform which was in old times a platform used for speakers. A Latin inscription refers to it as the rostra and this is the equivalent to the Greek word for judgment seat, which is mentioned in the account of Acts 18: 12-17. No doubt here is the very place where Paul was brought before Gallio for judgment. 49

Synagogue at Corinth and house of Justus. In Paul's day the entrance from the Lechaeum Road into the market place was by a broad stairway at that time surrounded by a gateway. The excavators found at the foot of this stairway a heavy stone that had once served as lintel over a door of a building. The stone was somewhat damaged, but its inscription read: "**Synagogue of the Jews.**" The date of this inscription has been variously estimated to be all the way from 100 B.C. to A.D. 200.

Either it stood over the doorway of the very synagogue where Paul preached at Corinth, or in a later building erected on the same site (see Acts 18:4). The letters of the inscription are 1 ½ to 2 ½ inches high. Because they are poorly cut, some have suggested that therefore the synagogue was not wealthy. Because this stone is a heavy one, it has been suggested that the site of the synagogue was not far from the place where the archaeologists found the stone. The road from Lechaëum was lined on its western side with shop buildings, but on the eastern side of the road was a residential district, for the most part. No doubt the synagogue was on this side of the street, and this would mean that the house of Titus Justus could have been situated hard by the synagogue (Acts 18:7). 50

Inscription of Erastus. During Paul's sojourn in the city of Corinth, he won to the Lord the chamberlain of the city whose name was Erastus, for his name is mentioned in Romans 16:23, when Paul wrote from Corinth.

Paul further refers in Acts 19:22 and II Timothy 4:20 to this man who had served as city treasurer of Corinth. A most interesting block has been found at the northern end of the street that led past the theater. It had been used to repair the pavement and was inscribed. Not all of the complete inscription was left, but it would appear that it once read thus: "Erastus, in return for the aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense." There is no reason to doubt that this man who paid for this pavement work and whose name was thus inscribed on the stones was the personal friend and convert of the apostle Paul. 51

Potters' quarters at Corinth. The remains of large potters' quarters including broken or discarded vases were discovered by the excavators at Corinth. Paul's letter to the Romans was doubtless written from Corinth, and his reference to the potter in Romans 9:20-23 would thus be most appropriate. 52

Emperor Nero and the apostle Paul at Corinth. The work of uncovering these old cities of Greece has served to set in striking contrast the careers of Nero and Paul. Both Nero and Paul visited the city of Corinth within a few years of each other. When Nero, the emperor, visited the city, new coins were made in his honor and they were called "advent coins." Also an inscription has come to light on a marble tablet which was made to immortalize a speech that the emperor made on his visit to Corinth. On this same inscription divine honors were accorded Nero. 53

In contrast with this speech of the emperor, Dr. Deissmann has pointed out how the message on love that Paul included in his first epistle to the church at Corinth has lived to this day, and will live forever:

The paean of love chanted under Nero at Ephesus for the poor saints of Corinth has not perished with Corinth. Annihilated forever, the magnificence of Nero's Corinth lies buried today beneath silent rubbish-mounds and green vine yards on the terraces between the mass of the Acro-Corinth-us and the shore of the shining Gulf: nothing but ruins, ghastly remnants, destruction. The words of that paean, however, have outlasted the marble and bronzes of the empire, because they had an unassailable refuge in the secret depths of the soul of the people. 54

DELPHI, WHERE SLAVES' FREEDOM WAS RECORDED

Records of manumission at the Delphi Temple. At this Grecian city French archaeologists have found and have published a great many records of manumission among the ancients, and a number of them date to the New Testament era. They discovered such inscriptions on the polygonal retaining wall of the temple which was dedicated to the god Apollo. Dr. Deissmann describes the custom of those days as follows:

Among the various ways in which the manumission of a slave could take place by ancient law, we find the solemn rite of fictitious purchase of the slave by some divinity. The owner comes with the slave to the temple, sells him there to the god, and receives the purchase money from the temple treasury, the slave having previously paid it there out of his savings. The slave is now the property of the god; not however, a slave of the temple, but a protégé of the god. Against all the world, especially his former master, he is a completely free man; at the utmost a few pious obligations to his old master are imposed upon him. The rite takes place before witnesses; a record is taken, and often perpetuated on stone. 55

An example of such an inscription is herewith given:

Date. N. N. sold to the Pythian Apollo a male slave named X. Y. at a price of ____ minae, for freedom (or on condition that he shall be free).

Then follows special arrangements and the names of the witnesses. 56

This ancient custom throws light on the teachings of Paul. He taught that we were all the slaves of sin (Romans 6:17); Christ hath made us free (Galatians 5:1); and we are free because Christ bought us (I Corinthians 6:20).

Influence of Paul against slavery. Although the great apostle did not openly advocate the overthrow of slavery, yet his Christian teachings had an influence in overcoming slavery.

Reference is made to Paul in a Byzantine Christian formulary of manumission of a later time. It says:

Since, however, the most mighty-voiced Paul cries clearly, “**There is no bond but free,**” behold, thee also, my household servant bought with money . . . thee will I make free from this day forth. 57

A Delphi inscription that sets the date of Paul's visit to Corinth. A fragment of an inscription was found at this city stating that Gallio, the Roman official of Corinth, was appointed between the summers of A.D. 51 and 52. This would show that Paul arrived at Corinth toward the beginning of A.D. 50. This discovery, therefore, has an important bearing on the chronology of Paul's life and ministry. 58

1. Camden M. Cobern, *The New Archeological Discoveries and Their Bearing upon the New Testament*, pp. 412-414.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 414; W. M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, pp. 35-89; S. L. Caiger, *Archeology and the New Testament*, pp. 124, 125.
3. Cobern, *op. cit.*, pp. 523, 524.
4. W. M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, reprinted, 1953), pp. 96, 97.
5. Caiger, *op. cit.*, pp. 118, 119; Cobern, *op. cit.*, pp. 552, 553.
6. Caiger, *ibid.*, pp. 142, 143; Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 538-540.
7. Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 534-536; cf. A. T. Robertson, *Paul and the Intellectuals*, pp. 133, 134.
8. Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 461-463; J. A. Hammerton, ed., *Wonders of the Past*, ed. of 1937, pp. 911-916.
9. Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 463, 464; Hammerton, loc. cit.
10. Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 464, 465.
11. Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 468-470; Merrill M. Parvis, "Archaeology and St. Paul's Journeys in Greek Lands, Part IV Ephesus," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, VIII, No. 3, Sept. 1945, pp. 62-73.
12. Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 471-473.
13. Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (New York & London: Harper & Brothers, 4th ed. 1922), p. 309.
14. Cobern, *op. cit.*, pp. 473, 474.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 474.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 476, 477; Floyd V. Filson, "Ephesus and the New Testament," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, VIII, No. 3, Sept. 1945, pp. 73-80.
17. Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 464, 465.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 468.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 466; A. T. Robertson, *Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*, p. 188.
20. Cobern, *ibid.*, pp. 466, 467.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 480, 481.
22. Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, pp. 269, 270; Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-186.
23. Robertson, *ibid.*, p. 184.
24. Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 546.
25. W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), p. 218.
26. William A. McDonald, "Archaeology and St. Paul's Journeys in Greek Lands—Philippi," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, III, No. 2, May, 1940, p. 20.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 21.
28. Finegan, *op. cit.*, p. 271; Conybeare and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of Saint Paul*, p. 278; Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 195f.; Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 547.
29. Conybeare and Howson, *ibid.*, pp. 290, 291.
30. William A. McDonald, "Archaeology and St. Paul's Journeys in Greek Lands—Athens," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, IV, No. 1, Feb. 1941, pp. 1-9.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 3; T. Leslie Shear, "Excavations in the Athenian Agora," *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 40, 1936, pp. 188-203.
32. McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 4; Finegan, *op. cit.*, p. 274; Conybeare and Howson, *op. cit.*, p. 307.
33. Conybeare and Howson, *ibid.*, p. 308.
34. Finegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 272, 273.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 274; Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 484; J. A. Hammerton, ed., *Wonders of the Past*, ed. 1937, pp. 381-402; Henry S. Robinson, "The Tower of the Winds and the Roman Market Place (at Athens)," *American journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 47, 1943, pp. 291-305.
36. Finegan, *op. cit.*, p. 275.
37. Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
38. Conybeare and Howson, *op. cit.*, p. 308, quotation: p. 298.
39. Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 490.
40. Conybeare and Howson, *op. cit.*, p. 328.
41. Cobern, *op. cit.*, pp. 490, 491.
42. Camden M. Cobern, *The New Archeological Discoveries and their Bearing upon the New Testament* (New York & London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 5th ed. 1921), p. 488.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 493; Finegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 278, 279.
44. Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 497; see also Richard Stillwell, "Excavations at Corinth, 1934-1935," *American journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 40, 1936, pp. 21-45. Also *ibid.*, article by Charles H. Morgan, Vol. 40, pp. 466-484.
45. Cobern, *op. cit.*, pp. 497, 498.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 493-496; Finegan, *op. cit.*, p. 280; see "Ashtoreth" in People's Bible Encyclopedia.
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48. Finegan, *op. cit.*, p. 280.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 281; McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
51. McDonald, *ibid.*, p. 46.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
53. Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 496; Deissmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 371, 354.
54. Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (New York & London: Harper & Brothers, 4th ed. 1922), p. 391. For additional material on Corinth see Hammerton, *Wonders of the Past* (1937 ed.), pp. 1031-1037.
55. Deissmann, *ibid.*, p. 322.
56. *Loc. cit.* See also William L. Westermann, "Two Studies in Athenian Manumission," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. V, No. 1, Jan. 1946, pp. 92-104.
57. Deissmann, *op. cit.*, p. 329.
58. Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 494; Finegan, *op. cit.*, p. 282; Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 175, 176.

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