

CHRISTIANITY IN FIRST CENTURY BRITAIN

by Allen Manteufel

Persecution Scatters Jerusalem Church--35 A.D.

A growing persecution against the early New Testament Church is recorded by Luke in the Book of Acts. The brunt of this persecution was aimed at the close associates of Jesus Christ, namely the twelve Apostles, plus other persons frequently mentioned in the Gospels: Lazarus, his sisters Martha and Mary, Joseph of Arimathea. Saul, who was later to become the Apostle Paul, was responsible for actually organizing much of the purge against the followers of Christ (See Acts 26:10-12).

In 35 A.D. this persecution came to a head. Luke states taught at this time "...there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles." "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1, 3-4).

Where will these fleeing Christians eventually go to avoid persecution? Christ had warned that "...when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another" (Matt. 10:23).

The full force of this persecution was directed against those who had been closest to Jesus Christ. Many of them had actually helped to finance the ministry of Christ and His disciples (Luke 8:2-3). Luke does not tell us in the Book of Acts of their destination--but, historical records do!

Joseph of Arimathea to Britain--38 A.D.

The surprising answer is that many fled to France and eventually went to the British Isles!

The famous Vatican Librarian, Cardinal Baronius, discovered an ancient manuscript in the Vatican telling of Joseph of Arimathea, Lazarus, Martha and Mary landing at Marseilles, France in 35 A.D.! From Marseilles Joseph and some of his company continued on to Britain, and that he died there after preaching the Gospel for many

years! The date of their arrival in Britain was 38 A.D., three years later! The eighth chapter of the Book of Acts gives the background of the explosion from Palestine of these early Christians.

History shows that the true Gospel reached the British Isles within a few years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Robert Parsons, in his work *Three conversions of England*, Vol. 1, p. 15, states that it was common with the majority of Catholic writers, that Christianity came into Britain directly from Jerusalem! The opinion that Christianity was first brought to Britain by the Roman Catholic missionary, St. Augustine, in 597 A.D. is simply not true. Much historical evidence proves differently.

The famous church historian Eusebius, who lived three hundred years before Augustine travelled to Britain, stated that "...the apostles passed beyond the ocean to the isles called the Britannic Isles." Gildas, the British historian (A.D. 516-570), states expressly that the Gospel was introduced into Britain in the last year of Tiberius Caesar. The last year of Tiberius was A.D. 38. This agrees with what Baronius discovered in the manuscript he found. This is also all in agreement with the records of the early English historian William of Malmesbury, who recorded that Joseph of Arimathea, accompanied by eleven associates under his charge, came to Britain from France, having been sent by Philip the Apostle, and that Joseph personally met with the British King, Arviragus! It is said that King Arviragus refuses to accept the Gospel but he did grant Joseph twelve Hides of land at Glastonbury!

Joseph of Arimathea continued preaching the Gospel in Britain until his death in 76 A.D. His preaching became quite well known among members of the British Imperial Family!

(A detailed account of Joseph at Glastonbury can be found in the following works: *St. Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury* by L.S. Lewis, *The Apostolic Church of Britain* by the same author, *Glastonbury--Her Saints* by the same author, *Two Glastonbury Legends* by Joseph Armitage Robinson, *The Mystery of Glastonbury and Her Immortal Traditions* by Frederick Bligh Bond, *Antiquities of Glastonbury* by William of

Malmesbury, translation by Lomax.)

Identity of Joseph of Arimathea

It is important now to take note as to who Joseph of Arimathea really was. Luke, in his Gospel, mentions that it was Joseph who claimed the body of Jesus Christ after his crucifixion.

Luke recorded, "And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: The same had not consented to the counsel (the Sanhedrin) and deed of them; he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged for the body of Jesus" (Luke 23:50-52).

It is agreed by most authorities that Mary, the mother of Christ, was widowed while Jesus was just a youth. It is also generally considered that Joseph of Arimathea was the uncle of Mary, having been the younger brother to Mary's father.

It is reputed that Joseph was a wealthy and influential man in the Jewish and Roman governments in Judea! This is born out by his actions in going directly to the high office of Pilate and boldly asking for the body of Jesus Christ.

Christ had been executed by popular demand of the people and the rulers. He was considered a national criminal. "For anyone to desire the remains of anyone so nationally condemned for the most serious crime known to the Jews, that of claiming to be the Messiah, was to incur the most serious risk of public hostility." Convicted criminals were to be buried outside of Jerusalem. The Jewish elders would have been delighted to have seen Jesus receive an ignominious criminal's burial outside the city. Pilate, normally, would hardly have given consent for any private burial at the risk of offending the elders. But, consent was quickly given. Why?

An explanation for Joseph of Arimathea's bold confidence and Pilate's willingness is found in the fact that he was Christ's relative (His great uncle, Mary's uncle) and virtual guardian since the death of Mary's husband (Joseph), the supposed father of Jesus. Both Roman and Jewish law laid it down as a duty for the nearest relative to dispose of the bodies of the deceased members of their families.

Both Luke's and Mark's Gospels state

that Joseph of Arimathea was a "counsellor." The term "counsellor" is known to mean a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the great ruling body for the Jews. It was at this Council that Joseph was attempting to prevent the planned murder of Jesus Christ.

It is also interesting to note that Jerome in his translation of the Scriptures in the Vulgate calls Joseph a "decurion" which would imply that he had a voice in the Roman government over Judea as well! "Decurion" is a Roman official title which ranked even higher than membership in the Jewish Sanhedrin.

Commercial Ties With British Isles

This now brings us to a most amazing and vital point--the commercial ties between Palestine and British Isles! That a lively commerce existed between Phoenicia (ancient Palestine) and Britain is well attested to by history. Herodotus as early as 445 B.C. speaks of the British Isles as the "Tin Islands" or Cassiterides.

Pytheas, about 350 B.C., describes the tin trade. So does Polbyius around 160 B.C. Diodorus Siculus gives a detailed description of this trade. Tin was mined in ancient Cornwall, beaten into squares, and shipped to the southern coast of England. From there it was shipped across the Channel. It was then taken overland on pack horses to Marseilles on the Mediterranean coast in southern France. From Marseilles it was again shipped to Palestine (Phoenicia). It is even said that "...the British mines mainly supplied the glorious adornment for Solomon's Temple." Also lead, copper and other metals were mined. The mines of Cornwall were the source of the world's supply of tin in ancient times.

Indeed, Palestine was not cut off and isolated from the rest of the world. You will be dumfounded to discover who was in control of the Palestine commerce for the Romans in early New Testament times! It was Joseph of Arimathea!

Joseph-- A Tin Merchant!

There exists a number of entirely independent traditions both in France and Britain that Joseph of Arimathea was a well-to-do tin

merchant! The richest tin mines in the world at that time were in Cornwall. Stories of Joseph exist at separate places all along the ancient trade routes.

A story is told that "...at Marazion in Cornwall of St. Joseph coming there to trade with tin miners!" (See *Glastonbury--Her Saints*, p. 66, by L.S. Lewis).

Again, "...there is a traditional story that Joseph of Arimathea was connected with Marazion when he and other Jews traded with the ancient tin miners of Cornwall" (*The Coming of the Saints* by John W. Taylor, p. 180).

Marazion means "bitter Zion". The origin is said to come from the fact that it was a colony of Jews who traded in tin. "Jew's houses, Jew's tin, Jew's leavings, Jew's pieces" were all common terms in the Cornish tin mines. The oldest pits containing smelted tin were called "Jew's houses" (See *Glastonbury--Her Saints* by L.S. Lewis, p. 66).

From the records it is seen that Joseph made repeated visits to the British Isles in order to look after his extensive commercial interests there. It is stated in some reports that he controlled 51% of the tin trade in his day! His reputation in the tin trade has continued even into modern times.

L.S. Lewis states that "...amongst the old tin workers, who have always observed a certain mystery in their rites, there was a moment when they ceased their work and started singing a quaint song beginning 'Joseph was a tin merchant!'" (*Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury*, pp. 23-24).

Even recently it is said that "...in north London during the making of tin sheets for organ pipes, before the molten tin was poured, a man said every time: 'Joseph was in the tin trade!'" (*Quarterly Review of the Benedictines of Caldey*, 1916, pp. 135-136).

Notice further what J.N. Taylor states about Joseph and his descendants. "St. Joseph of Arimathea is never represented as coming to Britain alone, but as accompanied by other Hebrews, and notably by his son Josephus'. These companions and relations are said to have intermarried with the families of the British kings and chieftains, and from them, by direct descent, in something like four hundred years, and said to have arisen the greater heroes of King Arthur's Court-- the Knights of the Round Table!" (*The Coming of the Saints*, p. 175).

It must also be remembered that since Joseph of Arimathea was the younger brother to Mary's (Christ's mother) father Heli, that Joseph was a blood-line descendant of King David!

We now come to a most astounding point in our account of the early history of Christianity in Britain. We have already seen that Joseph of Arimathea was a powerful man in the tin trade in Britain. On his frequent trips to the British Isles he had been accompanied by various ones of his relations. We have also seen that since he was the nearest relative and great uncle to Jesus Christ, he took it as his responsibility to bury Christ after His crucifixion. The question now comes up: Did Jesus Christ ever accompany Joseph on his journeys to the British Isles?

Did Jesus Ever Visit Britain

Many have thought that it would be ridiculous to even consider that Jesus Christ would have travelled outside Palestine. Yet, there is strong evidence that He did--more than once!!

What of the "missing years" in the life of Christ? Eighteen years of the life of Christ are missing--from age 12 to age 30 when He began His public ministry. Biblical history is an absolute blank. As shocking as it may seem, there are indications that Jesus Christ spent some of that time in the British Isles! Early New Testament history does not cover these years in the life of Christ. If it had, the whereabouts of the lost House of Israel would have been made public knowledge.

Unexplained traditions point to the fact that Jesus accompanied His mother's uncle, Joseph of Arimathea, on at least two trips, to the British Isles! In no other area of the world do we find traditions of Christ's presence except in Palestine and England! Both areas being occupied by the Children of Israel.

There is a very remarkable statement in a letter written by St. Augustine to Pope Gregory. Augustine had arrived in Britain from Rome in A.D. 597 bringing with him Roman Christianity. While there he came into contact with persistent traditions which he deemed worth to mention in his letter to the Pope. This is what he wrote:

"In the western confines of Britain (the areas of Cornwall and Somerset) there is a certain island of large extent (Glastonbury), surrounded by water, abounding in all the

beauties of nature and necessities of life. In it the first Neophites of Catholic Law (Joseph and his company who arrived in 38 A.D.), God beforehand acquainting them, found a Church constructed by no human art, but divinely constructed (or by the hands of Christ Himself), for the salvation of His people" (*Did Our Lord Visit Britain as they say in Cornwall and Somerset?* by C.C. Dobson, p. 24).

Notice that! Augustine was implying the presence of Jesus Christ and of His having constructed a dwelling! This is in agreement with persistent traditions and legends throughout that area!

The account of such a visit can be summarized as follows:

"As a boy (Christ) was brought merely for a visit by Joseph of Arimathea on one of his voyages. Later as a young man He returned and settled at Glastonbury for the purpose of quiet study, prayer, and meditation. There He erected for Himself a small house of mud and wattles."

"If our Lord was brought as a boy by Joseph of Arimathea on one of his voyages to Cornwall it is perhaps natural to seek some explanation or pretext for his doing so."

"Most authorities agree that the Virgin Mary became widowed while our Lord was still a youth, and that the Holy Family moved from Nazareth to Capernaum. By Roman Law, and we believe also by Jewish Law, guardianship of a fatherless son devolved upon an uncle. If Joseph of Arimathea was an uncle of the virgin Mary, then he would be the one upon whom the guardianship would be most likely to rest. This fact would provide a simple explanation for his taking Our Lord with him to Britain on one of his voyages" (*Did Our Lord Visit Britain* by Dobson, p. 23).

Four Ancient Traditions

There are four independent ancient traditions in different parts of Cornwall and Somerset which state that Jesus Christ spent some time in Britain:

1. The first is found in Cornwall and is recorded in S. Baring-Gould's *A Book of Cornwall* on page 57 where he writes that "...Joseph of Arimathea came in a boat to Cornwall and brought the child Jesus with him, who taught him how to extract the tin and purge it of its wolfram.

When tin is flashed they shout 'Joseph was in the tin trade.'"

2. The second is found in Somerset of the coming of Christ, again as a youth, and Joseph in a ship of Tarshish, and how they came to the Summerland (Somerset) and sojourned in a place called "Paradise." Paradise was also the old Ordinance Survey maps of the area. Such expressions as "Secret of the Lord" and "Home of God" are also attached to Glastonbury by the great historian William of Malmesbury.

These statements, together with what Augustine wrote, lend great weight to the presence of Christ in Britain.

3. The third tradition is found in the little village of Priddy on the top of the Mendip Hills to the effect that Jesus Christ and Joseph of Arimathea stayed there!

4. The final traditions are those which associate Christ with Glastonbury. It is in connection with Christ's visit to Glastonbury that He returned to the British Isles as a young man shortly before beginning His public ministry. This absence of Christ from Palestine no doubt explains the Bible's silence regarding the early manhood of Christ.

(For a more complete account of these four traditions of Christ visiting Britain, consult works *Did Our Lord Visit Britain?* by C.C. Dobson and *Christ in Cornwall?* by H.A. Lewis!)

In view of the above facts, we can understand why, after his expulsion from Palestine in 35 A.D., Joseph of Arimathea, accompanied by others who had been close associates of Christ, sailed from Caesarea to Marseilles, France, then travelled overland and on to the British Isles. He had made the trip many times as a wealthy tin merchant! He had, very possibly, been accompanied, at least several times, by Jesus Christ!!

**James dead, Peter imprisoned,
Apostles scattered--44 A.D.**

We need once again to return to Palestine and see what was befalling the early Church.

In Acts chapter 8 we have Luke's account of the great persecution in 35 A.D. which drove Joseph of Arimathea and the other loyal supporters of Jesus Christ from Palestine.

"Now about that time Herod the king

stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also" (Acts 12:1-2).

This occurred in 44 A.D. This date is vitally important because it marks the disappearing of most of the Apostles to their assigned fields in preaching the Gospel to the "Lost Sheep of the House of Israel!"

(For an account of where each of the Apostles travelled, consult the article "Where Did the Twelve Apostles Go?" by Herman L. Hoeh, *The Plain Truth*, May, 1964.)

Did any of the Apostles join Joseph of Arimathea in the British Isles in preaching the Gospel to the "Lost Sheep of the House of Israel?"

The answer is Yes! And more than one. We will find that a number of Biblical personalities eventually find their way to Britain!

Peter to Antioch, then Britain

The Apostle Peter went to Britain! Metaphrastes, the Greek historian reports: "Peter was not only in these Western parts"--a term that denotes far Western Europe--"but particularly that he was a long time in Britain, where he converted many nations to the faith" (See marginal note, p. 45 in *Cave's Antiquitates Apostolicae*).

Not only was Peter in Britain but the bulk of his ministry was there!

In Acts chapter 12 we have the account in 44 A.D. of the arrest and imprisonment of Peter by King Herod. An angel miraculously released him. Due to the danger Peter was in Luke merely states that "...he departed, and went into another place." He is not heard from for the next five years when he shows up in Jerusalem at the Church Council in 49 A.D.

Where did Peter go in those intervening years? To remnants of the House of Israel in northern Turkey!

Indications from the early writings of Origin and Epiphanius are that Peter went to northern Asia Minor, the same area to which he later wrote his epistles (See *Smith's and Hasting's Bible Dictionaries*, article, "Peter").

It would then follow that he left for the British Isles sometime after the Church Council in 49 A.D. mentioned in Acts 15 which he

attended. After a brief stop in Antioch and his encounter with the Apostle Paul (Acts 15:35 and Gal. 2:1-15) Paul disappears from Biblical history. The bulk of this time from 50 A.D. to the time of his death at Rome in 67 A.D. Peter was with Joseph of Arimathea and the others preaching the Gospel in the British Isles!

James and Simon to Britain

Another Apostle who arrived in the British Isles was James, the son of Alphaeus!

William Cave, in his *Antiquities of the Apostles*, p. 148, states the following: "The Spanish writers generally contend, after the death of Stephen he came to these Western parts, and particularly into Spain (some add Britain and Ireland) where he planted Christianity."

Also arriving in Britain toward the end of his life was the Apostle Simon Zelotes. Borotheus, Bishop of Tyre around A.D. 300, stated that "...Simon Zelotes traversed all Mauritania, and the regions of the Africans, preaching Christ. He was at last crucified, slain, and buried in Britain" (Page 203 of *Cave* and p. 151 of *St. Paul in Britain* by R.W. Morgan).

This however does not end the list of individuals named in the Bible who influenced the growth of early Christianity in Britain. We will now see that the Apostle Paul also had a major ministry in the British Isles shortly before his martyrdom!

The Conversion of Saul

In chapter 9, of Acts we read of the sudden and dramatic conversion of the ringleader of the persecution, Saul, who became the Apostle Paul. For three years he was taught of Christ in Arabia and then preached in Damascus (Gal. 1:18 and Acts 9:23). When the Jews took counsel to kill him, Paul was assisted in his escape by disciples letting him down the city wall in a basket. He then travelled to Jerusalem where Barnabas presented him to the Apostles. For fifteen days he was "coming in and going out at Jerusalem" with the Apostles. Again attempts were made on his life and for his own safety he was sent to Tarsus where he would be out of danger (Acts 11:28).

Paul to the British Isles

The story of the Apostle Paul's journey to and imprisonment at Rome is well known to all who have read the New Testament. But many have misunderstood Paul's real intention of going to Rome. Most have assumed he intended to go to Rome for his major ministry and then be martyred. This, however, was not the case! Paul had something else in mind when he determined to go to Rome by appealing to be heard by Caesar (See Acts 25).

Notice what Paul really had planned. He mentions it in his letter to the Romans.

"But now there is no more work for me in this part of the world (in Asia), and I have had a great desire for many years to come to see you, when I go to Spain I hope to see you on my way there, and to have you see me off on my journey, after I have enjoyed being with you for a while. ...I will start for Spain, and come to you on the way..." (Romans 15:24-28 Goodspeed Translation).

Paul had intended to go to Rome, stop there only temporarily, and then go on to his next major work assignment in Spain! God intervened and changed his plans. Paul was to be detained in Rome much longer than he expected. The Gospel needed first to be firmly planted in Rome. In 61 A.D. Paul was finally released from prison.

Where did he go then? He completed his planned journey to the West! He went to Spain, then, to the British Isles. His last six years of ministry were spent with the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel! Historical evidence of this is abundant!

The historian Capellus stated: "I scarcely know of one author, from the times of the Fathers downwards, who does not maintain that St. Paul, after his liberation, preached in every country in Western Europe, Britain included!" (Quoted from *The Origin and Early History of Christianity in Britain* by Andrew Gray, p. 24).

Theodoretus in A.D. 435 testified: "Paul, liberated from his first captivity at Rome preached the gospel to the Britons and others in the West" (Quoted from *St. Paul in Britain* by R.W. Morgan, p. 188).

Many other authors could be cited to affirm that all knew of Paul's ministry to Spain, Western Europe, and the British Isles.

Aristobulus, Bishop of Britain--57 A.D.

When was the letter to the Romans written? In middle or late 57 A.D.

Notice verse 10 of chapter 16. "Salute them which are of Aristobulus's household." It is important to notice that Paul does not salute Aristobulus himself. Why? Because Aristobulus had recently left Rome!

Where did he go?

Alford's *Regia Fides*, Vol. I, p. 83 gives us the answer.

"It is perfectly certain," writes Alford, "that before St. Paul had come to Rome Aristobulus was absent in Britain!"

The *Martyrologies* of the Greek Churches mention that: "Aristobulus was one of the seventy disciples, and a follower of St. Paul the Apostle, along with whom he preached the gospel to the whole world, and ministered to him. He was chosen by St. Paul to be missionary bishop to the land of Britain..."?

The agreement that Aristobulus should go to the British Isles must have been made while both men were still ministering to the Eastern Churches. Remember that Paul himself was making plans to journey soon to Britain.

Haleca, Bishop of Augusta, states: "The memory of many martyrs is celebrated by Britons, especially that of St. Aristobulus, one of the seventy".

Dorotheus, around 300 A.D., recorded: "Aristobulus, who is mentioned by the apostle in his epistle to the Romans, was made bishop in Britain (The above quotations can be found in Morgan's *St. Paul in Britain*, pp. 152-153 and Andrew Gray's *The Origin and Early History of Christianity in Britain*, pp. 20-21).

The Greek writers Nicephorus and Dorotheus both record that Aristobulus went into Britain and that he was consecrated by Paul the first bishop of that country (See Usher's *Primordis*, pp. 9, 744, 745).

It was also commonly understood in these early times that Aristobulus and Barnabas, Paul's early companion (See Acts 4:36, 9:27), were brothers! And that Aristobulus was the Apostle Peter's father-in-law!! It was Aristobulus's wife then (Peter's mother-in-law) that Jesus Christ healed of a severe fever! (See Matt. 8:14).

When did Aristobulus leave Rome for Britain?

We have already seen that when Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans he (Aristobulus) was already gone. Since Paul wrote his epistle just before journeying to Jerusalem for the last time (Romans 15:25,31) the epistle must have been written sometime in the middle or late 57 A.D. After arriving in Jerusalem Paul was arrested and detained for two years (late 57-59 A.D.) at Caesarea. In late 59 A.D. Paul arrived in Rome and was held prisoner for another two years (until late winter of 61 A.D.) before he was released.

As we will see later, 57 A.D. is also the year that Bran, a British captive in Rome, returned to England. Thus it is almost certain that when Bran was released from prison by the Romans in 57 A.D., he and Aristobulus went to Britain together. This was just before Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans.

CHRISTIANITY IN ROME

The Gospel Goes to Rome

The question now comes up: Who first preached the Gospel in Rome?

Surprisingly, by the time the Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Roman Christians in 57 A.D., the Gospel was already well known! Who had preached the Gospel? We will soon see that a number of influential Romans and Britons were already Christians. Later in this work we will see the names of other prominent persons who became converted to the Gospel.

Notice now a surprising statement about the fledgling Christian church in Rome.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world!" (Rom. 1:6). Read that again. Already, by 57 A.D., the reputation of the Roman Christians had spread throughout the then civilized Roman Empire! Of course, the Christian Church at Rome included many notable and important figures. They were close associates of Caesar himself!

Aristobulus, Five Years in Rome--52-57 A.D.

Who, then, preached the Gospel first to the Romans? Aristobulus for one!

We have already seen that Aristobulus was sent from Rome to Britain (57 A.D.) with

Bran, a British priest. He was known to have been one of the Seventy disciples of Christ. He was already a Christian, well-versed in the Gospel, even before his household arrived in Rome. He too, may have been driven from Palestine by Saul's vehement persecution. Aristobulus would have been able to minister for over five years to the Christians at Rome.

But this is not all.

Turn now to Romans 16: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus; Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house!"

In 52 A.D., the year that Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome, Priscilla and Aquila fled from Rome to Corinth. This was about the same time when the Jewish Royal Family of Britain was sent as captives to Rome. In Corinth Aquila and Priscilla became helpers of the Apostle Paul. A church of Christians even then, as well as later in Rome, met in their house. Within several years Jews were permitted to return to Rome--Priscilla and Aquila among them. Aristobulus, as well as Aquila and Priscilla, were now in Rome and were able to minister to those who were beginning to accept the Gospel (See pp. 104 105, *Primitive Church of the British Isles* by William Hales).

It must be emphasized again that the "Church of God in Rome" had not yet been formally established by the preaching of an Apostle. This assignment from God was soon to be carried out by the Apostle Paul. It was the preaching of Paul that grounded the Christians in the Gospel. Previous to his arrival and preaching in Rome, the Church had been confused on many points!

Simon Magus Appears in Rome -- 45 A.D.

A vital point to be kept in mind at this time is the arrival in Rome of the Simon Magus who is mentioned in Acts chapter eight. Simon Magus became the arch-heretic in the days of the Apostles in that he attempted to blend pagan doctrines and concepts with some of the teaching of Christ in order to form a "universal" religion. He was rebuked and admonished to repent by the Apostle Peter (Acts 8:20-23). Simon eventually fled to Rome in 42 or 45 A.D. where he later

had tremendous success! He was eventually defied by the Roman Senate! It was this Simon--Simon Magus-- who spawned the seeds of a counterfeit Christian religion which centuries later evolved into the Roman Catholic Church!!

According to Cardinal Caronius, the respected Vatican Librarian, the birth of the Roman Church was in A.D. 45! (Footnote, p. 6, *The Origin and Early History of Christianity in Britain* by Andrew Gray).

This statement agrees with the time that Simon Magus arrived in Rome with his doctrines of a false Christianity. Simon continued his powerful sway over the city of Rome by the use of demonical "signs and wonders" (See II Thess. 2:9-10).

According to Baronius, Simon continued his influence for some years into the reign of Nero which began in 54 A.D. Apparently Simon died several years before the arrival of the Apostle Paul!

We now turn to the epistle to the Romans written by Paul.

Church at Rome Established by Paul

It is very clear from what the Apostle Paul states in his epistle that no other Apostle had ever been to Rome. The Apostle Peter did not go to Rome in 42 A.D. as is alleged. The Book of Acts still has him in Palestine at this time. It was the other Simon--Simon Magus-- who left Palestine and headed through Greece to Rome!

Notice what Paul tells the Roman believers:

"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11). If Peter (or any other Apostle) had been there since 42 A.D., the Church would already be established! No Apostle had yet been in Rome to organize them into an established Church. True, some of the people were getting together in meetings, but, they were not yet established in sound doctrine by an Apostle.

Notice now chapter 15, verse 20. "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

This makes it clear. Peter had not been to Rome to found that Church.

Notice also chapter 16. Here Paul personally addresses over thirty individuals by name. He does not mention Peter. It is inconceivable that if Peter were in Rome that Paul would not have greeted him.

ROMAN CONQUEST OF BRITAIN

The Roman Empire and Great Britain

Since the days of Julius Caesar, the might of the Roman Empire had been attempting to conquer the British Isles. By the time of Augustus Caesar, 30 B.D., the Roman Juggernaut had subjugated the bulk of Europe, Northern Africa, political concessions. Since certain members of the ruling families of Britain had been educated at Rome and had frequented the palace of Augustus, the warlike mood of Rome was recognized. Roman demands were politely but firmly rejected. The British forces began preparations for a defensive war. August moved half of the disposable forces of the Empire to the Channel coast. He did not want all-out war yet. Through diplomacy, friendly relations were restored for a number of years.

Augustus was succeeded by Tiberius Caesar, and Tiberius by Caligula. This brings us to the year A.D. 37, a year marked by the birth of Nero and Josephus, the Jewish historian. This date also brings us into the early years of the New Testament Church!

British King Caratacus, a Descendant of Judah

A most significant event occurred in the year A.D. 36 which was destined to have a vital effect on the Christian Church at Rome! In that year Bran, King of Siluria in ancient Britain, resigned his crown to his son, Caradoc, to become the Arch-Druid of the College of Siluria. The educational system of the Druids in ancient Britain had for generations great influence throughout Western Europe. More will be said on this later.

It is important at this time to note that Bran, the father of the famous British King Caradoc (Caratacus) was a direct descendant of the Trojan Brutus, who was a descendant of Zarah, son of Judah! Bran, Caradoc, and other members of his family were Jews, descendant of the Royal Line of Judah! They were also related

to King David, since Lear, the father of Bran, had married one of David's descendants (See *Pantilwydd Manuscripts of Llansannor* and *The Royal House of Britain* by W.M.H. Milner).

Roman Invasion of Britain

In 41 A.D. Claudius became Caesar. Within a year it was decided to invade Britain and the Roman troops began gathering for the all-out attack (43 A.D.). Plautius was placed in command of the 50,000-man invading force. Assisting him was a wealthy, young Roman senator named Rufus Pudens. As the invasion became imminent, Caradoc was elected to lead the British forces. Arviragus, another princely ruler, also became instrumental in leading the British army.

The knowledge of these various names is vitally important. Amazing as it may seem, they will become linked with Biblical personalities! The stage is now set for some shocking revelations that will deepen our knowledge of the early years of Christianity!

A mighty struggle ensued between British and Roman forces and absorbed the undivided military attention of the Roman Empire. The brunt of the arms of the Empire were trained against Britain for nine years--42 A.D. to 51 A.D.

Daughter of Claudius Weds British King Aviragus

In 44 A.D. the British forces suffered a major defeat. Just prior to this victory, Roman forces under Plautius had suffered a surprise rout by some daring maneuvering at the hand of Caradoc. Claudius Caesar, alarmed at what had taken place, set out for Britain with vast reinforcements supported by trained elephants in order to offset the British chariot charges. As a result Caradoc suffered his first major defeat. A partial peace treaty was agreed upon between Emperor Claudius and Arviragus, one of the British Kings. To seal this unpopular treaty, Claudius is said to have given his daughter in marriage to Arviragus. Feeling the war would now be won by his generals, Claudius returned to Rome. Other problems in his Empire, especially in Judea, needed his personal attention.

Daughter of Arch-Bruid Bran Weds Roman General--47 A.D.

It is important to insert here an event that took place about 47 A.D. A temporary truce was concluded for six months between the Roman and British armies. During this time Plautius, the Roman General, was recalled to Rome. As part of the truce Plautius had married Gladys, the sister of Caratacus (Caradoc)! Gladys, who is better known in the writings of Tacitus by the name of Pomponia, accompanied Plautius back to Rome. Also visiting Rome during this truce was the British King, Caradoc. With the end of the truce, Caradoc returned to his command. He was totally defeated in 51 A.D., as recorded by Tacitus. According to the records, he was betrayed by the Queen of the Brigantes and seized while asleep in her palace. Shortly before the capture of Caradoc, his wife and daughter Claudia also fell into the hand of the conquerors.

King Caradoc and His Family Captive

Upon hearing of the capture of the British Imperial Family, Emperor Claudius ordered Caradoc and all the captive family to be escorted to Rome as prisoners. In this group of British prisoners were Lear, the grandfather of Caradoc (Lear had married a daughter of the House of David so that Caradoc and his family were not only Jews but also bloodline descendants of King David! See W.M.H. Milner's *The Royal House of Britain*); Bran, the Arch-Druid of the College of Siluria and the father of Caradoc; Caradoc himself; his wife; his daughter, Claudia; a son, Linus; and two other sons and another daughter whose names are not important.

These members of the British Imperial Family, as we shall see later, became the backbone of the Church at Rome! They are directly referred to by the Apostle Paul in his writings!

Trial of Caradoc in Rome--51 A.D.

The British King, Caradoc (Caratacus) was put on public trial before the Roman Senate. Caradoc acquitted himself so well in a speech which "...Tacitus thought it worthy to be reported and immortalized by his pen..." that his life was spared. A residence of seven years in "free

custody" (*Libera Custodia*) at Rome was imposed on him. He was given the freedom of the city of Rome while his father, the famous Bran, was held hostage in his place. Caradoc took up his residence in the Palatium Britannicum at Rome". Caesar Claudius himself recognized the dignity and intelligence of his captive guests!

We have already seen that King Caradoc of Britain was to be held in "free custody" for 7 years--51 A.D. to 57 or 58 A.D. Now notice what the famous British Triads say about Caradoc's captivity in Rome, about Bran, his notable father, and about Aristobulus's departure to Britain.

"Bran, the son of Lear, first brought the knowledge of the Christian faith to the Cymry (Britain) from Rome, where he had been seven years, as hostage for his son Caradoc (Caratacus), whom the Romans had made captive..." (Triad 35, quoted from William Hales *Primitive Church of the British Isles*, p. 102).

Aristobulus Accompanies Bran to Britain--57 A.D.

In late 57 A.D. former King Bran, who had later become Arch-Druid of the College of Siluria, was released from captivity to return to the British Isles. But he did not return alone. Notice further what the records reveal.

The Genealogies of the Saints of Britain state that: "These came with Bran the Blessed from Rome to Britain--Arwystli Hen (Senex), Iliid, Cyndaw, men of Israel; Maw, or Manaw, Son of Arwystli Hen." "According to the genius of the British tongue, Aristobulus becomes Arwystli" (*St. Paul in Britain* by Morgan, p. 154) (See also John Williams *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of the Cymry*, pp. 53-57, 195-197). Williams gives a complete account of the important Triads. (Also *The Religion of Ancient Britain* by George Smith, p. 144).

Bran returned immediately home to Britain after his captivity and Aristobulus accompanied him! Aristobulus departed for the British Isles at the direction of the Apostle Paul! It seems certain, then, that by this time Bran, Caradoc and other members of the British Imperial Family at Rome had embraced the Christian faith.

PAUL IN ROME

Paul Preaches in Rome--59-61 A.D.

Luke records that "...Paul dwelt two whole years (59-61 A.D.) in his own hired house (while captive in Rome), and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31).

During this time Paul wrote his letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and a personal letter to Philemon.

Now will come to light some of the most surprising information yet! You will be amazed to discover the identity of those who eventually made up that early Church at Rome!

The Trial of Pomponia--57 A.D.

During the stay of the Apostle Paul in Rome, a number of notable people were converted to the true gospel. We have already seen that some of these belonged to the British Royal Family which had been sent to Rome after the subjugation of Britain by the Roman forces. Certain of these, we have already seen, had married high Roman officials close to Caesar's household! Paul mentions them directly. Notice it!

"Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household! (Phil.4:21-22).

The reason Paul singles out those of Caesar's household as especially saluting the Philippians is that he was more thoroughly acquainted with them! They were his hosts! They were recognized even by Paul as being Jews of the Royal Line of David!

Let's now recall a point that we discovered earlier in this account of the origin of Christianity in Britain. We saw that the Roman general in charge of the war against Britain was named Plautius--Aulus Plautius as he was known in Rome. Then he returned to Rome he brought a newly acquired bride with him--Gladys, or, as she was better known in Rome, Pomponia. She was the sister of the still fighting King Caradoc (Caratacus). This occurred about 47 A.D. Notice now what the Roman historian Tacitus has

to say about this famous personage. She had been put on trial for her "religious superstition!"

"This lady," according to Tacitus, "was accused of embracing the rites of a foreign superstition and ever after led her life in deep sadness and continual melancholy.' "For forty years she made use of no habit but what was sorrowful, and expressed no sentiment but what was mournful.' 'Nothing could alleviate her affliction.'" "These being the well-known characteristics of a primitive Christian, as a pagan would express them, there can be no doubt but the 'foreign superstition' was Christianity" *Tacitus, Annal. lib. XIII., C. 32.* Quoted from *The Origin and Early History of Christianity in Britain* by Andrew Gray, p. 32.

William Hale's account of Pomponia is even clearer. Notice on pages 105 and 106 of his work, *An Essay on the Origin and Purity of the Primitive Church of the British Isles and Its Independence upon The Church of Rome:* "This distinguished woman was arraigned on account of the foreign superstition, (as Christianity was then styled at Rome), and permitted to be tried by her husband, according to the ancient custom. He therefore, in the presence of her relations, tried her cause, in which her life and character were at stake, and pronounced her innocent" *Annal. XIII 32.* This celebrated trial, in which other Christian converts at Rome might naturally have been implicated, happened in the year 57 A.D.; and the news of it might easily have reached St. Paul in Syria, at the time he wrote his epistle to the Romans, ...and if so, we find therein a marked allusion to this very trial, in his warm and affectionate congratulation to the Saints at Rome: "I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8).

So Pomponia, one of the Christians of the household of Caesar, was acquitted. She had remained faithful to the true teachings of Christ.

Paul's Kinsmen at Rome

Turn now to the surprising 16th chapter of the Book of Romans.

In this chapter the Apostle Paul greets many of the Christians in Rome. Most of them he knew personally. Some of them had been his intimate fellow-laborers. Others had been his close friends. Still others were Paul's own

relatives!

We will now see that Paul's family, even though scattered, was very influential in the New Testament Church!

Paul states in verse 7, "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen...!" Kinsmen here obviously means literal blood relatives. It could not be meant spiritually since others greeted by Paul are certainly Church members, but only special ones are addressed as his "kinsmen". The Greek word used means blood relative.

Let us notice further what is said about these two relatives of Paul. Paul mentions that they "...are of note among the apostles...!" The only way they could have become of note among the Apostles would be if they had lived for some time in Palestine when the Apostles were still there--sometime before 44 A.D. They must have been stable, influential people in order to have gained the respect of different Apostles. Just prior to Paul's coming to Rome, Luke stated that "Paul's sister's son" heard of a plan to kill Paul (Acts 23:16). While some of Paul's relatives lived in Rome, others were still in Jerusalem!

Their Early Conversion

This is not all. Paul also stated of Andronicus and Junia that they "...were in Christ before me." Paul was converted about 35 A.D. Before that time virtually all Christians were residents of Jerusalem. Thus Andronicus and Junia must have been converted in Jerusalem prior to 35 A.D. and sometime afterward traveled to Rome. Since they were converted in Jerusalem and were of note among the Apostles and were no doubt leaders in that early Church, did they come under the persecution led by a member of their own family, Paul? Does this explain why they later are found in Rome?

Another relative is mentioned in verse 11 of Romans 16. "Salute Herodion my kinsman." Here is another kinsman or relative of Paul. Some say that he later became a minister (bishop) at Tarsus.

Rufus--Paul's Brother

In verse 13 Paul mentions a man called Rufus. It is most important that we realize who he was. It is truly amazing!

Note this carefully.

"Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine!"

Here is a man who is designated by Paul in a special way. The phrase "chosen in the Lord" reflects a special and significant calling. He is more than just one of the elect.

Notice again that Paul said to salute "...his mother and mine!" Here again there is no reason to believe Paul is speaking allegorically or spiritually. We have already seen, most surely, that Paul means it literally when speaking of his kinsmen. Paul, here too, is actually saying that the mother to Rufus was also his mother!!

Here is how R.W. Morgan in his *St. Paul in Britain*, p. 127 explains it. "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine--does this mean a natural or spiritual relationship? We are inclined to believe the former. A spiritual father or mother is, in Gospel phraseology, the person who converts another to Christ. St. Paul's conversion was effected by Christ Himself by a direct miracle. With respect to him the terms could not be applied to any human being. Was, then, the mother of Rufus the mother also of Paul? Were Rufus and Paul half-brothers--the latter, the elders, by a Hebrew, the former, the younger, by a second marriage with a Gentile, or a proselyte Roman? This mother was a Christian, living with Rufus, and is termed also his mother by St. Paul."

This verse, taken literally, established that Paul and Rufus were brothers--or half brothers--being sons of the same mother!

Senator Rufus Pudens

Now we propose a fascinating possibility. Is this Rufus--Paul's half-brother--the same as Rufus Pudens, the Roman soldier who assisted General Plautius in his defeat of the British army and who later married Claudia, daughter of the defeated British king, Caradoc?

We will now see another fascinating point commonly understood in the early years of Christianity in Rome--that the influential Roman Senator, Rufus Pudens, was identical with the Pudens of II Timothy, chapter 4!

In his book *St. Paul in Britain*, R.W. Morgan assumes the two Pudenses to be identical (See p. 127). Both names are linked to Rome. Both are close acquaintances of Peter and Paul at the time of their martyrdoms in Rome. The

Roman soldier, Rufus Pudens, was known in Rome by both names--especially by the name Rufus.

While the point is not exactly proven there are additional indications. If the soldier Rufus Pudens were identical with the Rufus of Romans 16:13 and the pudens of II Tim. 4:21, it would explain more fully why Paul cited him as having been "chosen in the Lord." He would have been a high Roman dignitary and Paul's half-brother as well, and filling both rolls could be influential in the progress of the Gospel.

(Remember, names cited in the Bible are of special importance. If the Bible fails to tell more of their activities, history often does!)

This is not all the evidence. Other ancient writers concur in that Rufus and Pudens were the same person.

Daughter of King Caradoc Weds Rufus

Another marriage was destined to have an effect on the Church at Rome and the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

It will be remembered that the Roman general (Aulus Plautius who about 47 A.D. married Gladys, called Pomponia) who prosecuted the war against the British army was assisted by a young wealthy Roman senator by the name of Rufus Pudens!

And it is this same Rufus Pudens who in 53 A.D. marries the daughter of Caradoc, Claudia. (It was the sister of Caradoc, Gladys, who married the Roman general.)

These names will shortly be linked to the New Testament!

Four children resulted from the marriage of Rufus Pudens and Claudia; two daughter, Pudentiana and Praxedes, and two sons Novatus and Timotheus (not to be confused with the evangelist Timothy to whom Paul wrote several epistles).

"Now a celebrated citizen of Rome, at this time, called Rufus, was afterwards married to a British lady, called from the custom of having names from high Romans, Claudia from Claudius; and this Rufus distinguished for wisdom and virtues, and gentleness, the name of Pudens; by this name distinguished as a Christian convert, first called Rufus, as in the epistle to the Romans, 'Chosen in the Lord'. Let any thinking man weigh this singular circumstance. Without

the remotest design, Rufus is mentioned by St. Paul in the epistle to the Romans; and in the epistle to Timothy. Pudens is joined in the same sentence with Claudia, and that Claudia was married to Rufus, called afterwards Pudens and that she was a Briton, is clear from the lines of Martial: and thus one line of a contemporary poet proves accidentally two things, both remarkable--that Claudia was a British lady married to Rufus, and therefore called Claudia Rufina, and that this Rufus was afterwards called Pudens" (*The Chronicles of the Ancient British Church*, pp. 33-34, by James Yeowell).

Other ancient writers add information on the Apostle Paul's close association with Rufus or Pudens and his wife Claudia. Robert Parsons tells of the role of Claudia as hostess to the Church in Rome.

Claudia Rufina, British Princess

"True it is, that our writers of the English nation, namely Holinshed and Cambden, do affirm that one Claudia Ruffina a noble British lady living then in Rome and being the wife as they say of one Pudens a Roman Senator and mother of two famous christian virgins Praxedes and Pudentiana, did send divers books and messages unto her friends in Britany, and thereby helped much their conversion. And this may appear (say they) as well by the salutation sent from her by St. Paul's pen to Timothee, when he said, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the bretheren do salute you, as also for that she was the first hostess or harborer both of St. Peter and St. Paul at their coming to Rome; it may be conjectured that she was one of the first christians of that city" (*Three Conversions of England*, pp. 15-16).

William Prynne in his *Records* adds some important information as to what prompted the Apostle Paul to go to Britain immediately upon his release from this first imprisonment from Rome:

"And this some write he (Paul) did at the instigation of Claudia, a noble British woman, (Who received that name from Claudius Caesar) married to Rufus a noble Roman Tribune and Senator (as they prove out of Martials' *Epigrams*) surnamed Pudens for his modesty, who being converted with his wife Claudia Rufina to the Christian faith by St. Paul, (particularly

mentioned by him in his Epistle, II Tim. 4:21) did at their request preach the gospel to the Britaines, not only to their family at Rome but likewise in the Island itself, if not immediately in proper person, (as most affirm) yet immediately by his British converts at Rome, who brought his epistle into Britaine,..." (p. 6).

Simon the Cyrenian's Son

Further information on Rufus is given by John Kitto, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature*, article "Rufus": "A person of this name was one of the sons of Simon the Cyrenian, who was compelled to bear the cross of Christ (Mark 15:21): he is supposed to be the same with the Rufus to whom Paul, in writing to the Romans, sends his greeting in the remarkable words, 'Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine' (Roman. 16:13). The name is Roman but the man was probably of Hebrew origin. He is said to have been one of the seventy disciples!"

The People's Bible Encyclopedia, article "Rufus" states: "It is generally supposed that this Rufus (of Romans) is identical with the one mentioned by Mark (Mark 15:21)..."

Smith's Bible Dictionary states that according to some traditions "...both Rufus and Alexander (his brother, also mentioned in Mark 15:21) appear as companions of Peter in Rome." Since the only time the Apostle Peter appears in Rome is just shortly before his death in 67 A.D., here is proof that Rufus, Paul's half-brother, was still in Rome at that time.

The *Greek Menologies* and *Roman Martyrologies* generally agree as to the data of death of the major persons mentioned in this paper. It was commonly recognized that Rufus Pudens died in 96 A.D., his wife, the British princess died in 97 A.D. The brother to Claudia was Linus, who became recognized as the first bishop of Rome. He is recorded to have suffered martyrdom in 90 A.D. Of the four children of Pudens and Claudia all suffered martyrdom. Timothy, shortly after his return from Britain where he had baptized King Lucius, died about 139 A.D. Novatus, his brother, is reported to have died about the same time. Praxedes also died about 139 A.D. The other daughter Pudentiana suffered martyrdom earlier in 107 A.D. Whether any of the second generation children of Pudens and Claudia died in the true

faith is doubtful.

Paul's Hosts at Rome

Turn to Paul's second letter to Timothy. This letter was written shortly before Paul's martyrdom, probably in 67 A.D. It was written from Rome. Paul knew the true Christians at Rome intimately. We have already seen that some of them were his own relatives.

Concluding his epistle to the evangelist Timothy, Paul states: "Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren" (II Tim. 4:21).

These last three names mentioned by Paul are well known in Roman history!

The Spanish poet-historian, Martial, resided in Rome from 49 to 86 A.D. He personally knew Pudens, Linus, and Claudia. They are referred to in his writings. They are wealthy and acquainted with Caesar's household. Early English church tradition is overwhelmingly in support of the fact that the Pudens who hosted Paul in Rome is identical to the influential Roman Senator! (See *Religion of Ancient Britain* by George Smith, pp. 145-148 and *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of the Cymry* by John Williams, pp. 59-60).

The Titulus--Palatium Britannicum

It will be remembered that the captive Imperial British Family took up its residence in the Palatium Britannicum. This residence later became known as the first Christian church at Rome. It was also called the "Titulus" or the "Hospitium Apostolorum."

The Vatican librarian, Baronius, stated this about the famous "Titulus": "It is delivered to us by the firm tradition of our forefathers that the house of Pudens was the first that entertained St. Peter" (and Paul) "at Rome, and that there the Christians assembling formed the Church, and that of all our churches the oldest is that which is called after the name of Pudens!"

Baronius is writing from the Catholic point of view. Peter did not organize the Church at Rome. His arrival in Rome is just prior to his martyrdom. It was at this time that he was hosted by the distinguished Pudens at the Titulus.

That the palace of Claudia and Pudens

was the residence of the Apostles while in Rome appears agreed upon by all ecclesiastical historians. Robert Parsons admits that "...Claudia was the first hostess or harbinger both of St. Peter and St. Paul at the time of their coming to Rome" (*Three Conversions of England*, Vol. 1, p. 16).

This Claudia, the wife of the Senator Pudens is also mentioned by Sir Richard Phillips in his *Million Facts*. This is what he stated. "The British lady Claudia, ...is supposed to be the very Claudia mentioned with Pudens and Linus, in Paul's second epistle to Timothy. She is believed by Cambrian (British) writers to be of the family of Caratacus, and perhaps, the first Christian!" (Vol. 8, p. 1835).

Linus--Bishop at Rome--67-78 A.D.

It is important that we now turn our attention to Linus, also mentioned by Paul in his letter to Timothy. Who was he? What does history say about him? What part did he play concerning the Church at Rome?

Linus was the son of Caratacus, King of Britain. He had been brought to Rome with the other members of the captive Royal Family. In Rome he was converted to Christianity through the ministry of the Apostle Paul. It is not impossible that he had become acquainted even earlier with the Gospel while still in Britain through the preaching of Joseph of Arimathea.

The last Biblical reference to Linus (II Tim. 4:21) was made by Paul writing from Rome just prior to Paul's martyrdom in 67 A.D. This, however, does not mark the end of mention of Linus's name. He is famous in Catholic history! For Linus is listed as the first Pope of the Catholic Church after the deaths of the Apostles Paul and Peter!

Here is what William Smith states: "That the first bishop of Rome after the apostles was named Linus is a statement in which all ancient writers agree. The early and unequivocal assertion of Irenaeus, corroborated by Eusebius and Theodoret, is sufficient to prove the identity of the bishop with St. Paul's friend!" (*Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Linus").

It is commonly asserted that Linus had been appointed to be in charge of the Church at Rome upon the death of Paul and Peter in 67 A.D. Irenaeus states emphatically that "...the

apostles having founded and built up the church at Rome, committed its supervision to Linus. This is the Linus mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to Timothy" (*Irenaci Opera*, Lib. 111., c. 1).

Influence of Simon the Magician

Baronius states that Linus was in charge in Rome from 67 to 78 A.D. It was during the lifetime of Linus that the Simon Magus brand of paganized Christianity rapidly took over the "Christian movement" in Rome. Linus evidently did not belong to it. He remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostle Paul. Centuries later, however, his name was adopted by the organizers of this false Christian movement and put at the head of the list of the so-called popes of Rome. But he had nothing to do with the counterfeit system of "Christianity" which was destined to engulf the entire Western world!

Clement's Bisopric--91-100 A.D.

Notice now Philippians 4:3. Here Paul makes reference to Clement. Of this Clement some vital points are known.

According to Eusebius and Irenaeus and most early writers, Clement was listed as the third bishop (therefore Pope) of Rome after the Apostles. The spurious "Epistle to the Corinthians", written about 90-95 A.D., is ascribed to him. This epistle strongly shows the development of the Catholic mind! (See article "Clement", *Encyclopedia of Biblical Literature* by McClintock and Strong).

Clement's bishopric dates either from 91 or 92 A.D. to 100 or 101 A.D. It was during these years that the Church at Rome lost its "first love." The confusion over the second bishop of Rome (Cletus or Anacletus) and his time as bishop indicates that from the death of Linus in 90 A.D. or the end of his time in Rome (78 A.D.), the true Church of God in Rome quickly disintegrated. The Catholic Church--a totally different church--with its developing Papacy was soon to emerge! This is just what the Apostle Paul had prophesied.

Paul's Warning of Apostacy

Notice Paul's dire warning: "So now you

know what it is that is holding him (the emerging counterfeit Christianity) back from making his appearance before the appointed time arrives. For disobedience is already secretly at work, but only until he who is now holding it in check (the Apostle Paul and his ministry) is gotten out of the way (Paul's death). Then the embodiment of disobedience will make his appearance..." (II Thess. 2:6-8, Goodspeed Trans.).

Paul had been placed in charge of the ministry of the Gospel to the Gentile areas of Asia (Turkey), Greece and Rome. He worked diligently to strengthen the Churches in these areas. Just before his death he warned the evangelist Timothy about this coming departure from the true teachings of Jesus Christ. "Preach the word ... reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ... they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables ..." (II Tim. 4:1-5).

The Trial of Paul

Is there any evidence that some members of the Church in Rome did not remain faithful; that some did not resist the false apostles with their perverted gospel; that some may have adopted a blend of paganism and Christianity?

Notice carefully what Paul reveals to Timothy in his letter. Remember that Paul is on trial for his life, having been arrested by the Roman authorities and brought to Rome.

Paul states to Timothy: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me..." (II Tim. 4:16-17). Not one of the members of the Church in Rome mentioned by name in Paul's letter to the Romans came forward to support him during the first phase of his trial!

It must be remembered that in 64 A.D. Emperor Nero initiated a horrible persecution against the Christians. He accused them of attempting to destroy Rome by burning the city to the ground. It was Nero himself who had set fire to the city, then blaming it on Christians. Many Christians had been arrested, then burned alive in Nero's gardens as entertainment.

The attempt to prove that Paul had taken

64
part in the burning of Rome failed. No doubt Paul was able to prove he was not in Rome in 74 A.D. He was still condemned by the Roman authorities for preaching an illegal religion!

As Paul's trial progressed only Luke came to his assistance. Paul stated to Timothy that "...Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world..." and that "...only Luke is with me" (II Tim. 4:10-11). The other Christians at Rome, even though we have seen that some of them were influential and even of Caesar's household, chose not to come forward to strongly support the Apostle Paul! The prophesied Spiritual weakening and falling away was beginning to occur!

Persecution and Apostacy

We have already seen that some of those converted to the Gospel were of the Royal Family of Britain. Notice what is said of the two daughters of Rufus and Claudia; Pudentiana and Praxedes. Historians preserve a record of strange and unusual actions of the part of these two.

"In the Antonine persecution (138-161 A.D.), Praxedes and Pudentiana spent their patrimony (inheritance or wealth) in relieving the poor and buying the martyrs" (Maitland's *The Church in the Catacombs*). Furthermore, it is recorded by Baronius that they used the palace of their parents--the house which the Apostle Paul had used for his ministry in Rome (See Acts 28:30) for a cemetery!

(Editor's Note: It would seem that Maitland is referring to earlier persecutions such as the Domitian in 96, the Trajan 98-117 and the Hadrian 117-138 A.D. rather than the Antonine, for the *Greek Menologies* and the *Roman Martyrologies* quoted earlier give the following dates for the family of Rufus Pudens and Claudia Rufina; Claudia's brother Linus in 90, Rufus in 96, Claudia in 97, their daughter Pudentiana in 107, and the three children Praxedes, Timothy and Novatus in 139 A.D. It is the burial within the home that is unusual for this is in total contrast to the tradition of God's people up until this time).

This is what Baronius recorded: "In this sacred and most ancient of churches...formerly the house of St. Pudens, the Senator, and the home of the holy apostles, repose the remains of three thousand blessed martyrs, which Pudentiana and

Praxedes...with their own hands interred!" (*St. Paul in Britain* by R.W. Morgan, p. 125).

Such burials in a dwelling itself or in a religious, edifice were of pagan origin!

This and other acts attributed to them strongly indicate that the second generation of Christians at Rome were losing their "first love" and were adopting pagan practices!

A Falling Away in Britain, Baptism of King Lucius

An event in the life of Timothy, the son of Rufus and Claudia (not to be confused with the evangelist Timothy who lived 100 years earlier-who is recorded to have gone to Britain) points again to the deterioration in the Spiritual condition of the true Church.

We had seen earlier that from 38 A.D. a number of the Apostles and acquaintances of Jesus Christ had preached in the British Isles. A century had passed. Lucius was now King in Britain. The date is now late in the second century and by this time the light of the Gospel had all but become extinguished.

But now read of an event in the life of King Lucius, the same King who had been baptized in earlier years by the son of Rufus and Claudia, Timothy.

Britain Appeals to a Roman Pope

Adam Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History* states that when Eleutherus was Pope in Rome (177-192 A.D.) "...Lucius, King of the Britons, sent a letter to him (Pope Eleutherus) entreating that by him he might be made a christian!" (Chapter IV of *Bede* and p. 200 of *Coming of the Saints* by John W. Taylor).

Whether Timothy, who reportedly had baptized King Lucius, himself remained faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ cannot be determined. The teachings of the early Church of God that Lucius may have known were now lost. He and the people of the British Isles had now been deceived into accepting the authority of pagan Rome!

The true Gospel was no longer being preached and its precepts were no longer being adhered to. The so-called Christians of Britain at the end of this second century were now appealing for guidance by the Catholic Christianity of Rome. (An account of Lucius's

letter to Pope Eleutherus can be found in Appendix K of *The Coming of the Saints* by Taylor.)

For this time on in history the knowledge of the true Gospel was lost to the people of the British Isles. And from that time forward until the beginning of the organized preaching of the Work of God in our own day the Gospel as understood by the members of that early Church of the first century has not been heard by the people of Britain.

Once again the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its fullness is being witnessed to these famous Isles of antiquity--to the Children of Israel--just before the close of the age and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

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