

Paul in Spain

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To the church in Rome, Paul wrote from Corinth, assuring them that he had no ambitions in that city, but would soon be passing through on his way westward:

Rom 15:23 . . . having these many years a longing to come unto you, [24] whensoever *I go unto Spain* (for I hope to see you in my journey . . .

Rom 15:28. When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit,¹ *I will go on by you unto Spain*. . .

To a Mediterranean, “Spain” was the extreme point, where land ended and sea began; the furthest imaginable missionary field. Paul did reach Rome in 59, but as a prisoner. It was presently claimed that he had freely preached there, to all comers:

Acts 28:30. And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, [31] preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

Being released after two years (no witnesses against him having appeared), he went on to preach in the lands to the west. As for Spain, it was later thought useful to accept that intention as having been realized; it added to the retrospective prestige of Paul. Wrote Clement, the fourth Bishop of Rome, to the church at Corinth in the year 97,²

1 Clem 5:5 . . . Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, *had preached in the East and in the West*, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, [6] having taught righteousness *unto the whole world and having reached the farthest bounds of the West*. . .

The end of the century was a time of contention, and Peter’s partisans were also in the field, arguing that he, not Paul, was the proper spokesman for the New Christianity.³ The others who stood to benefit from the idea that Paul had reached Spain were the Spanish churches themselves, but their claims were made too late to be accepted.⁴

Works Cited

E Bruce Brooks. *Apostolic Alignments*. Alpha v1 (2017) 196-197

Paul B Duff. *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*. Alpha v2 (2022) 212-218

Otto F A Meinardus. *Paul’s Missionary Journey to Spain*.

Biblical Archaeologist v41 #2 (1978) 61-63

¹The contribution being collected in Jerusalem; see Duff **2 Corinthians**.

²For these further claims, we must go outside the canonical texts.

³Brooks **Apostolic Alignments**. 1 Clem 5:4 gives almost equal praise to Peter.

⁴See Meinardus **Missionary**.