

Paul's 4th Journey

1. Turn to Philemon

- a. Opening comments.

2. READ Phil. 22-25

- a. **Phm 1:22** *But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.* **Phm 1:23** *There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;* **Phm 1:24** *Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.* **1:25** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*
- b. Now let's go backwards. Let's start with the last verse and work our way back to *prepare me a lodging*. In vs. 25, Paul writes, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.* What did he mean by that? Didn't we get all the grace we're going to get this side of glory? I think he means that he hopes they'll continually allow His grace to influence them in their walks, that all the grace given from the God of all grace will motivate them, inspire them to act as a light of grace, and I've no doubt that would be Paul's prayer for all of us. Then we have the five names, which I've already covered. Then we have in vs. 22 the line, *for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.* You can only do one of two things with that prayer request. You can use it to make the case for divine intervention or make the case that it's an apostolic exception, that this was only a request Paul could make because he was an apostle. But I want to talk about *prepare me a lodging*, because I'm dying to tell you about Paul's 4th journey. **This is totally epic.** Paul's 4th journey isn't some interesting bit of Bible trivia. Paul's 4th journey is a story about Paul committing civil disobedience while also keeping himself subject to the powers that be. Paul's 4th journey is where we find Paul being a model to us of proper civil disobedience while also keeping ourselves subject to the powers that be. So let's hit the ground running!

3. Paul's 4th Journey

- a. **SS** - Luke charts in the book of Acts three apostolic journeys of Paul. At the end of Acts, he's in custody in Rome awaiting his trial before Caesar. He wrote the prison epistles. And in those prison epistles, he repeatedly expressed confidence about his release. He told the Philippians in **Php 2:24** *"But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly,"* and he even went so far as to tell Philemon to *"prepare me a lodging."* I think Paul was released and went on a 4th apostolic journey that lasted roughly 2-3 years before he was arrested again. **SS** – So after he was released, I think the first place Paul went was Crete and left Titus there. He said in **Tit 1:5** *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:"* Nowhere in Acts did Paul ever visit Crete. In Acts 27, he sailed by Crete. The ship sank, and they landed on an island off of Crete, but he never

went into Crete. **SS** - After that, I believe he went straightway to Laodicea to see Archippus. We know he told Philemon, *prepare me a lodging*, but after the earthquake, I think the lodging was destroyed. Remember how we covered in my first message that Laodicea had a terrible earthquake in 60 AD. Paul wrote Colossians 60-61 AD, and was probably released after that, no later than 62 AD. It was important to go visit Laodicea because of that earthquake and because their pastor, Archippus, was struggling in the ministry. **Turn to 1 Tim. 1. SS** – After that, I think Paul went to Troas, a coastal city north of Ephesus. The intent was to take a boat from Troas to Philippi. It’s in Troas that I think he met Timothy, because Paul wrote in **1Ti 1:3** “*As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.*” It was always Paul’s custom in his journeys to go into Macedonia by way of a boat out of Troas, and he probably sailed to a port city called Neopolis, which was right next door to Philippi. The fact that he told Timothy “*As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia” likely means that it was while he was in the process of going to Macedonia out of Troas, as he had always done, that it was there in Troas, he told Timothy *to abide still at Ephesus*. This must mean that Timothy was already pastor at Ephesus at the time he met Paul at Troas, which must mean that it was when Paul was a prisoner in Rome that he told Timothy to be the pastor of the church in Ephesus. **SS** – So Paul departs to Macedonia. I think he went straight to Philippi. He told the Philippians in **Php 2:24** “*But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.*” **SS** - From there, he likely went around the coast to visit the Thessalonians, then down to Athens, then to Corinth.*

- b. We know that Paul at some point went to Corinth, because he wrote in **2Ti 4:20** that *Erastus abode at Corinth*. This phrase, *Erastus abode at Corinth*, tells you a lot of information. You have to think about it. This means that Paul, at some point talked to Erastus. Erastus made promises about going to Rome to help Paul after he’s arrested. Paul had to have told this to Timothy. So when Paul told Timothy that *Erastus abode at Corinth*, it means that this was bad news. It means that Timothy already knew that Erastus made promises to leave Corinth to help Paul, but now he’s chosen to stay in Corinth. So in light of all this, I think Paul had to have seen Erastus in Corinth and it only makes sense that he went to Corinth after he made his way through Macedonia. It’s just a natural, logical stop he would make after he worked his way south through Macedonia. I think that by the time Paul arrived at Corinth, it was spring or summer, 64 AD, and I think it was there in Corinth that Paul learned about the great fire in Rome, and he learned that Nero had singled him out, as well as all the Christians and Jews, to make them all scapegoats for that fire. I think this for a bunch of reasons.
- c. **Let’s start with the fire in Rome. SS (4x)** - The great fire in Rome took place in July 64 AD. That is a well-established fact in many books. We know the fire lasted 6 days. There were 14 districts in the city of Rome. 10 of those districts were

damaged by the fire, 3 of which were completely burned to the ground. 7 of those districts were greatly damaged by the fire. This was a massive conflagration in the heart of Rome. There were stories circulating that soldiers were blocking people from putting out the fire and saying they were doing this on the orders of Caesar. As soon as that fire was put out, Nero almost immediately began building his golden palace right where the fire took place, and the whole city was an uproar against Nero. All of Rome was irate at Nero. Nothing Nero said or did could squash the rumors that he ordered the fire to take place to build his golden palace. So Nero needed to blame someone for that fire. And he chose the Christians. And he ordered to round them up beginning with Paul. Why did Nero choose Paul and the Christians? Because he remembered Paul from his previous trial. The only reason Nero even knew about the Christians was because of Paul's testimony during his first imprisonment. Not only that, I think Nero absolutely hated Paul. Why? Because Paul converted much of his own household. Remember how Paul told the Philippians "*All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household*" ([Php 4:22](#)). I think that infuriated Nero. In his mind, there was no other god but Nero. I think Nero couldn't wait to have an excuse to kill Paul just to prove to his own household that he was the great Roman god of that world, and he'd prove it to them by wiping out Paul and the Christians. So I think Paul was still in Corinth in the fall of 64 AD when he learned about the fire in Rome, and he learned about it from Erastus. Why? You remember Erastus? We'd learn in [Rom 16:23](#) that *Erastus was the chamberlain of the city*... Erastus was basically the mayor of Rome. He was high up in the government of Rome, an administrator over the entire city, and he left the Roman government to go into the ministry. Now Erastus lived in Corinth. It's reasonable to think that the former mayor of Rome would have quickly heard the news about the fire. I'm sure Erastus was still corresponding with many of his colleagues in the Roman government. I've no doubt that Erastus would've had a great interest in that fire in Rome, and he would've corresponded with many about what happened. Not only that, I'd say it's also reasonable to think that his political connections in Rome would've heard the rumors that Nero was out to get Paul and they would have, out of concern, warned Erastus about the coming persecution. They would've warned Erastus about his association with Paul. Because they knew that Paul and anyone associated with him was going to be killed. So out of concern for Erastus, I'm sure many of his old colleagues wrote to him and said, "Look, I know you're friends with Paul, but don't be anywhere near him. Nero is dropping the axe on the Christians, and no one will be spared. Save yourself." Naturally, Erastus tells all of this horrifying news to Paul. And we even know the very charge Nero leveled against them. **Tacitus** wrote that the Christians were never convicted of arson but for "hatred of humanity." In other words, Nero was accusing Paul that everything he taught was "hate speech," and that Paul's "hate speech" in his teachings was what indirectly led to the fire in

Rome. Some things never change, right? Hate speech is literally one of Satan's oldest tricks! So Nero was out to kill Paul and the Christians, and everyone in Rome knew it was all lies, it was all politics, so Nero could save face.

- d. **You just consider the gravity of this moment.** Put yourselves in Paul's place. You've just been told that the city of Rome burned down and now the emperor of Rome is blaming you and he's coming after you. Is this not the worst news Paul heard in his entire ministry? **It's in this moment** in the fall of 64 AD that Paul learns that the federal government of Rome had set itself against him and all the Christians. They've condemned and outlawed the very doctrines Paul taught under the guise of "hate speech" and they were going to kill him. **It's in this moment, in the fall of 64 AD, Christianity became outlawed.** This would be the beginning of 300 years of persecution. 300 years of the streets of the Roman Empire running red with blood from the murder of millions of Christians!
- e. **Turn to Titus 3. But back to Corinth.** Paul has learned about the great fire at Rome. He's learned that Nero is out to get him, which means that Rome itself has literally outlawed Christianity. Then you consider that we have those guiding principles in Romans 13 to be subject to the powers that be, but now, Rome has literally outlawed his faith. What's Paul to do? Does this mean that because of Romans 13, Paul must stop sharing the gospel and stop teaching the sound doctrines of grace? Of course not. Paul would commit civil disobedience by continuing to teach the very doctrines Rome had outlawed and then he would submit himself to the powers that be. So what's the first thing Paul does? While still in Corinth, he writes Titus. And he would tell him in Titus 3:12-13, "*When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.*"
- f. **SS (2x)** - Nicopolis was not far from Corinth. It was on the coast northwest of Corinth, which is another reason I think he wrote Titus while he was in Corinth. But why did Paul go to Nicopolis? Because it was no longer safe for him to stay in Corinth. If the Roman authorities found Paul in Corinth, they just might arrest him and all the other believers in the Corinthian church. It was safer for everyone that Paul went to Nicopolis. So why does Paul ask Titus to bring Zenas the lawyer? We now know why. Because Erastus told him about the fire, told him that a storm was brewing in Rome, and that Nero was out to get him from which there may be no escape. So the first thing Paul does is write Titus and ask for Zenas the lawyer. **There's a lesson in that.** If you're being wrongly accused of a crime you didn't commit, you should first seek all valid legal options to defend yourself. So then Paul goes to Nicopolis. He meets Zenas the lawyer. And I'll bet you the question he had for Zenas the lawyer was, "What legal options do I have when the emperor himself has singled me out to be the scapegoat for a crime I didn't commit?" And the answer to that question would've been obvious. In that Roman system, there was no hope. If the emperor himself is out to get you,

there is nothing that can be done to stop it. So Paul had better get all his affairs in order before Rome arrests him again, because Nero will kill him. So Paul's heart turns to Timothy. While in Nicopolis, Paul pens 1st Timothy to address a myriad of problems in his church at Ephesus. And he tells Timothy he's coming to see him. Paul would write in **1Ti 3:14** *"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 1Ti 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God..."* The question wasn't if Paul would see Timothy. The question was *how soon*, and the epistle of 1st Timothy was meant to give him direction until he could see him in person.

- g. **Turn to 2 Timothy 4. Now all the charts about Paul's 4th journey end with him in Nicopolis** and the assumption has always been that he was arrested before he saw Timothy. But the story doesn't end there. We would learn in 2nd Timothy, that Paul had been on the move after he wrote 1st Timothy. **2Ti 4:13** *The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.* And look at verse 20. **2Ti 4:20** *Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.* We know from these verses that after he wrote 1st Timothy, he had at least gone to Troas and Miletum. So, first, let's start with Miletum. **SS (3x)** - I think Paul went from Nicopolis to Miletum, because he wrote, *Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.* Why would Paul go to Miletum? I think he met Timothy there just as he had met the Ephesians elders there years before in Acts 20. Because if Paul goes to see Timothy in Ephesus, and the Roman Empire was on the hunt for Paul, you'd naturally not want to be in Ephesus because Timothy and perhaps many other saints in that church would be arrested. So Paul would naturally want to meet Timothy in secret away from Ephesus, which was probably Miletum. The conversation would be fairly predictable. Timothy learning from Paul all the news about the fire, Nero, and Paul getting caught up to speed with everything in Ephesus while encouraging and exhorting Timothy about everything he told him in his letter. I think Paul also told Timothy that Erastus had made promises to him that he'd go to Rome, pull all his political strings, and try to help him as much as possible, which was encouraging, I'm sure, for both of them. And then Paul sends Timothy away because he doesn't want Timothy to be with him if he gets arrested. He tarries in Miletum while he waits for a boat. Trophimus is sick. His sickness worsens. Paul has no choice but to leave him there, which had to be heartbreaking. Trophimus was an old warhorse for the grace message. He goes back with Paul all the way to his third journey in Acts 20. He was with Paul in Jerusalem in Acts 21. He stayed with Paul all throughout his first imprisonment. And he was with Paul every stop of his 4th journey. And now their relationship has come to an end. Trophimus is too sick to carry on. Paul can't heal him because the spiritual gifts have now faded away. He has no choice but to leave him and tell Timothy about it in his 2nd epistle so he'd look after him.

- h. **What does Paul do next? SS** - He takes a boat north to Troas, because of vs. 13. [2Ti 4:13](#) *The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.* Why did Paul go to Troas? I'd suggest that this verse about the cloak is the most important verse in the whole story about Paul's 4th journey. The cloak unlocks a great mystery. Pastors love to mention how Paul wanted the books, especially the parchments, **but I love the cloak**. By the time we get to Paul's day, the cloak had replaced the toga. **SS** - The Roman cloak was called the Pallium. This was a very special cloak. The cloak, the books, and the parchments all went together. I think Paul had pockets sewn into his cloak so he could carry his books and parchments with him everywhere he went. If the cloak was in Troas then so were his books and parchments. Now what were those books and parchments? I'll bet the books were OT writings and the parchments were copies of most, if not all, NT writings. Paul didn't go anywhere without his Bible. He carried them with him everywhere he went, which were kept inside pockets sewn onto his cloak. Paul wasn't just asking Timothy to get his cloak. He was asking Timothy to go get his Bible, which was in his cloak. Look at what he says in vs. 13 - *The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.* His cloak with his books and his parchments were all with Carpus in Troas. Why did Paul go to Troas and why did he give Carpus his Bible and his cloak? There is only one explanation. Troas was a wealthy Roman port city. Called "Colonia Alexandria Augusta Troas." This port city was so wealthy and technologically advanced, like Ephesus, that Constantine once considered making Troas the capital of the Roman Empire. So Troas is a place where there'd be a lot of Roman officials and military. I think Paul went to Troas to turn himself in to Roman authorities. But before he did that, he gave his cloak and all his books to Carpus for safe keeping. Why? Because all those items would've been confiscated and lost forever because everything Paul taught and written had become illegal! It's only natural to think that the Romans would destroy his parchments because his teachings were now illegal! Paul made a choice here. He was going to submit himself to the powers that be. He was going to face the emperor of Rome like a true soldier for Christ. He would subject himself to whatever punishment they wanted to inflict upon him. But first, he was going to hide his Bible and collect it later if the circumstances improved. Paul had to have turned himself in at Troas because there's no other reason why he would go there and leave his most precious possessions with this unknown guy named Carpus, who is only mentioned here and nowhere else. Why didn't he leave all that stuff with Timothy? Because Timothy was a known name in Paul's writings. They may have been looking for Timothy, but nobody knew about Carpus. So Paul felt that his Bible was safer in the hands of an unknown man in Troas.
- i. **Let's go back to Erastus**. Why does Paul tell Timothy about Erastus in vs. 20? Because this is newsworthy. Erastus had to have promised Paul that he would go

to Rome to help him. Paul told Timothy. Paul turns himself in at Troas. He gets to Rome. And then he learns that Erastus changed his mind and he's not coming. So Paul tells Timothy *Erastus abode at Corinth*. Erastus saw the writing on the wall for the great apostle, and he didn't want to be anywhere near him when the axe would fall. Erastus abandoning Paul meant that there was absolutely no hope for Paul. His death was certain. I sometimes wonder if Timothy, while reading 2 Timothy 4, was still in denial. "No, you can't die. There has to be a way out of this. What about Erastus? Can't he fix this?" And this is why Paul tells him *Erastus abode at Corinth*. "There is no hope, Timothy. My death is certain. You need to hurry up and get here before winter. We're running out of time."

- j. **Erastus would be** the first in a long line of men who would abandon Paul to save themselves. Demas. Crescens. Titus. And others. But I don't judge those men. You have to put yourself in their place, because the question they had to ask themselves was, "What's better? Taking a stand with Paul and being killed just for being associated with him OR forsaking Paul in order to continue in the ministry on his behalf after he's gone and get souls saved?" That's a tough question. And do you know what Paul's reaction to that was? He said, "*I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.*" He didn't want the Lord to hold that decision against them at the Bema Seat but reward them for their work of faith.
- k. **But I always had this question.** Why would Paul put Timothy's life at risk to go all the way up to Troas to get his cloak and his Bible and bring them to Rome? Why put his life at risk like that? Not only Timothy but John Mark, too! Why put their lives at risk when they could so easily be arrested and killed just for being associated with Paul? This is why the cloak unlocks a great mystery.
- l. **There is a program online** called [ORBIS](#), which is the Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World. Basically, it's Google Maps for the Roman Empire. You'd input the city from and the city to that one would be traveling and you'd input the time of year, and the system would calculate how long that trip would take. So a boat trip from Miletus to Troas would've taken 3 days. A boat trip from Miletus to Rome would've taken two weeks. So think about it. Timothy had to give up an entire week so he could travel for 3 days by boat to Troas to pick up Paul's cloak and his parchments, and then travel by boat for 3 days back to Ephesus. That's a lot of hassle for one little cloak. And then get on a boat for a 2-week journey to Rome! And for what purpose? So Paul could be warmed by his cloak? Luke was still with him. He could've gone into Rome and bought him a new cloak! Why did Paul want his cloak? Is it really only so he could be warmed and read his Bible before he's killed? Would he really risk Timothy's life for all that? Or that he could have one last moment of fellowship with him? The fact is that whole trip was hugely important and it was worth risking Timothy's life!
- m. **They needed that cloak because they needed the parchments. And they needed those parchments** because they were already working underground in Rome making as many copies of the NT writings as they could. This is why Paul

said *but especially the parchments*. The cloak was a ruse. The parchments was what he really wanted. Nothing was more important than those parchments! Why? Because those parchments were needed in their secret efforts to make a multiplicity of copies. That work was worth risking Timothy's life! Because we're talking about nothing less than the preservation of the Word of God! I also think that whole operation was headed up by Priscilla and Aquila, which is why Paul told Timothy to go see them first. Those parchments were going to be handed over, not to Paul, but to Priscilla and Aquila, so they could undertake the hard work of making copies. This is why he asked for John Mark, because he wanted John Mark to help in that operation of making copies. Their faith may have been outlawed, but they were not going to stop making copies of all the parchments because they're going to make sure the Word of God will be readily accessible to all the people. These were all acts of civil disobedience. Do you think Nero would've killed anyone who's making copies of the very teachings of Paul that he had just outlawed? You know he would! But this mission was worth risking Timothy's life, because this was about the preservation of the Word of God. And in 2 Tim. 4, Paul couldn't be upfront about an underground operation, because if the Roman authorities had learned about them secretly making copies of Paul's letters, they would have gone out of their way to shut them down.

- n. **I'm reminded of** how Paul said in [2Ti 2:9](#) *Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound*. Is not Paul hinting at the reason he needed those parchments? Because the Word of God will not be bound. He was already in that mindset of making as many copies as possible because *the word of God is not bound*. He's saying, "They can imprison me, but they cannot imprison God's Word. They can shackle me, but they cannot shackle the truth. They can stop me from proclaiming the Word, but they cannot stop God from preserving and disseminating His holy Word." How could Paul even make this point if they weren't already making copies? Paul knows his death will not keep us from getting a completed Word of God. He knows Nero outlawing the Christian faith will not keep us from getting a completed Word of God, because God *will* preserve His Word. The Word of God will not be bound. It is, as Doug Dodd used to call it, God's unbound book. So, by this point at the end of Paul's life, the gospel had already gone out into all the world. People were already secretly making tons of copies of Paul's letters and all the other letters in our so-called NT. And 300 years of persecution by the Roman Empire wasn't going to destroy the Bible, or kill the gospel, or stop people from embracing the truth. And here we are, over 2,000 years later, and we're still embracing by faith the same gospel of grace Paul proclaimed! God's Word will not be bound!

4. Conclusion

- a. **To sum it up.** Paul was first released from prison after Acts 28 around 60 - 62 AD. He was free roughly two-three years. The fire in Rome was in July 64 AD. Paul turned himself in at Troas early spring 65 AD. Nero was anxious to get the critics

off his back about that fire. So he moved fast to prosecute Paul to make him and all the Christians scapegoats. I'll bet Paul appeared before Nero almost as soon as he arrived in Rome. I suspect Paul made at least two, maybe three, appearances before Nero in quick succession before he was sentenced to die, which is why he said in [2Ti 4:16](#) "*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me...*" Paul had to have made more than one appearance before Nero. So all of that would probably be summer 65 AD. Whereas Paul waited years for a trial during his first imprisonment, Nero moved at lightning speed during his second imprisonment, which was a bad sign. Paul knew, just as everyone knew, that the trial was a total farce, and that he would be condemned to death no matter what he said to Nero. And Paul was put to death winter of 65 AD. This is why Paul told Timothy, "*Do thy diligence to come before winter.*" If Timothy was too late, Paul would already be dead. Just think about that. It'd take over two weeks for Paul's letter to get from Rome to Ephesus. Then Timothy had to go up to Troas and back. That's another week. Then two more weeks for Timothy to get to Rome. You're looking at maybe six weeks from the time Paul wrote 2nd Timothy until Timothy would finally be in Rome. Six weeks! So if Paul had written 2nd Timothy in the summer of 65 AD, then Timothy had to truly *do his diligence* to quickly get to Paul before winter, otherwise, he'd be dead.

- b. **I want to close with this.** The big picture point of Paul's 4th journey is that Paul himself was a model of civil disobedience. When his faith became outlawed, he carried on in the ministry, and yet, he still subjected himself to the powers that be by turning himself in at Troas. And even while he was shackled in the Mamertine Prison off the Roman Forum, he still kept himself engaged in a secret ministry of making copies of the Scriptures so we can have a Bible today.
- c. **I'm reminded of [2Ti 4:17](#)** and Paul writing how, after everyone had abandoned him, he said, *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.* And the point has to be made that Paul never told Nero and the leadership of Rome that they needed political reforms so the people can have religious freedoms. Paul never said that. What did he do? He kept everything in its proper spiritual perspective. He stayed focused on the gospel. Regardless of the system, there will always be corruption while we're living in a sin-cursed world. The solution isn't a new system. The solution is a new man. This is why the Lord stood with Paul so *that by me the preaching might be fully known*. The Lord stood with Paul to encourage him to give the gospel to the very people and the very emperor who had just outlawed the gospel! This may well be the greatest act of civil disobedience in the entire Bible! Paul gave the gospel to the very people who outlawed the gospel and the Lord stood with him to encourage him to do that! Do you see the big picture? To get wrapped up in politics is to get lost in the weeds of earthly things. The big picture is not politics or civil liberties. The big picture is the gospel of grace and

God's eternal purpose to glorify His Son by the church for all eternity! So rather than changing the system, Paul stayed focused on changing the people through the gospel even when it was against the law. Rather than being upset about the loss of all his civil liberties, Paul was more concerned about losing souls to an eternity of condemnation in a Lake of Fire. What was more important in Paul's day? Reforming an empire that'll only last another 400 years OR saving souls who'll be with Christ for all eternity? What was the bigger picture? Helping to make changes to a temporary system of government or helping people receive the free gift of eternal life? What's better? Temporary earthly liberties or eternal rewards while reigning with Christ? We have to look at Paul here and ask ourselves, "Are we keeping everything in its proper spiritual context? Are we keeping ourselves focused on the big picture of God's eternal purpose?"