



BIBLICAL

volume 45 number 1 fall 2018

ILLUSTRATOR

A ROMAN COLONY

Sins of the Flesh

How Wealthy Was Job?

LIFEWAY DECIDED A couple of years ago to relocate to a new building while still remaining in Nashville. Numerous employees worked with construction and planning teams throughout the process, ironing out every imaginable detail to make the transition into the new building as seamless as possible. The move occurred last November, and the new building has met and even exceeded expectations. We have had to make adjustments, but the new space works great.



Reading this issue, you'll see a variety of buildings and structures, including beehive houses at Haran (p. 12), which follow a design dating to the time of Abraham. You'll see the well-preserved ruins at Pompeii (p. 15). And you'll read about Herod the Great, who defied the thinking of his day to seek creative solutions in his massive building projects (InSites).

At Herod's palace in Jericho several years ago, one of the things I noticed was that many bricks were set in a diamond pattern. To create the pattern, called *opus reticulatum*, bricks were shaped like small pyramids, the points were inserted into concrete, and the exposed bases were set at roughly a 45-degree angle. This was considered a revolutionary design in its day. I saw that same design a couple of years ago at Pompeii; at Hadrian's Villa outside of Rome; and in Ostia, ancient Rome's port city. Details like this have always fascinated me. This design connected these places forever in history simply because architects and builders used it.

As you read through the issue, pay close attention to the ancient buildings—or their ruins. They can teach us much about ancient peoples, what they valued, and how they lived.

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

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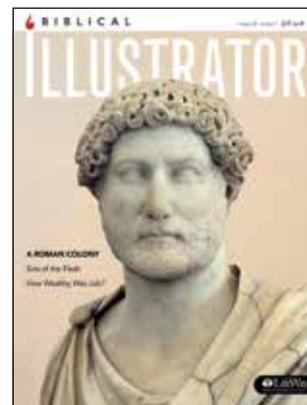
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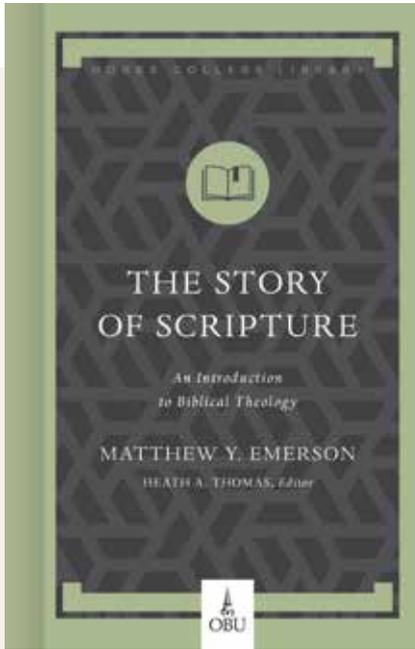
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About the Cover:
Bust of Emperor Hadrian, who ruled AD 117-138. Hadrian transformed Jerusalem into a Roman colony and renamed it *Aelia Capitolina*. During his reign, he made sure all traces of Jewish life were erased from the city.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BRENT BRUCE/ NAPLES ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM/ NAPLES, ITALY (173/B/2085)



MATTHEW Y. EMERSON wrote *The Story of Scripture: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*, which is the first installment from the Herschel H. Hobbs College of Theology and Ministry at Oklahoma Baptist University. The author's goal "is to see how the Bible fits together as one book about one person, Jesus Christ, God the Son in human flesh" (p. 18).

The book's introduction explores what the Bible and biblical theology are. It explains different approaches scholars have taken in their study and development of a biblical theology.

Chapter two introduces the overall arch of the story of Scripture: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration (or New Creation). This chapter also spotlights God's four-fold instruction to Adam and Eve: be fruitful, rule over the land, cultivate and keep the land, and obey His law. Emerson then highlights how God's punishments for fallen man are a direct response to man's disobeying His directives. This becomes one of the strengths of the book, showing common threads that reappear throughout the biblical story.

Chapter three continues the story of the Old Testament, beginning with the exodus and continuing to Malachi.

It tells how the Old Testament closes with the anticipation of a coming King who will redeem fallen humanity.

Chapter four looks at the New Testament and how Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of God's plan of redemption. Further, Emerson identifies how the church, the new Israel, is to fulfill the four directives God gave to Adam and Eve. The fifth chapter looks at two major themes of Scripture—covenant and kingdom. Further, Emerson explores lesser themes, such as creation and wisdom and mission, and shows how these relate to the overall story of Scripture.

The final chapter explores how people can incorporate a biblical theology into their personal lives and professions.

The way Emerson shows how smaller stories repeat the major biblical themes brings both insight and inspiration. He effectively highlights the unity of God's redemptive work throughout Scripture. His application into life, albeit brief, is helpful. Indeed, Emerson's volume can serve as a helpful primer into the study of biblical theology.

G.B. Howell, Jr is the content editor of *Biblical Illustrator*.

On a scale of 1-10, this book receives a rating of 9 camels.



The Story of Scripture: An Introduction to Biblical Theology by Matthew Y. Emerson; hardback; 96 pages; B&H Academic; ISBN: 978-1-4627-5875-3.

Book reviews are limited to those the *Illustrator* staff feels confident to recommend, based on ease of reading, quality of content, and doctrinal viewpoint. Each book is reviewed within LifeWay's doctrinal guidelines. The 1 to 10 scale reflects overall quality and usefulness.

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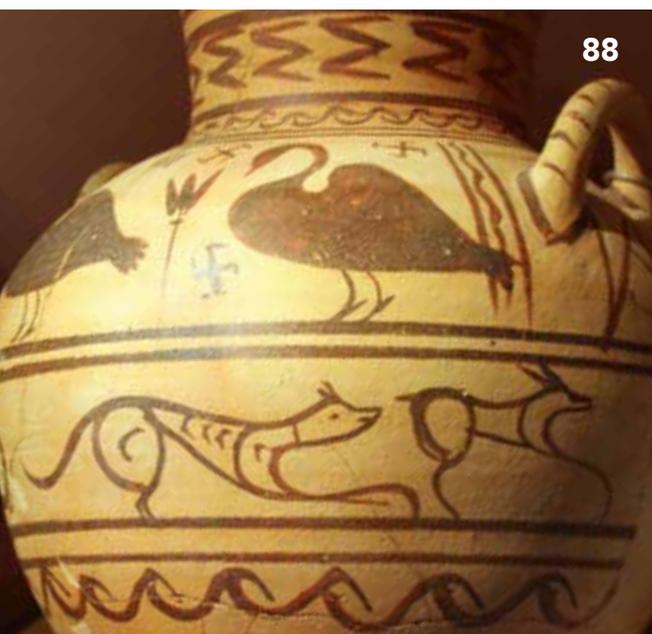
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A ROMAN COLONY

BY SHARON H. GRITZ



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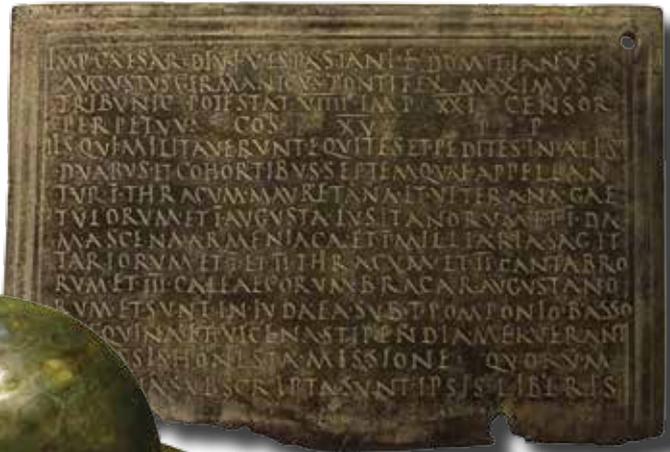
IN LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF PAUL'S SECOND missionary journey, he described how the apostle and his missionary team arrived at Philippi, a Roman colony (Acts 16:12). The New Testament identifies only Philippi as a Roman colony, although five other cities named in its texts also shared that status: Pisidian Antioch (13:14); Lystra (14:6); Troas—from which the missionaries sailed to reach Philippi (16:8); Corinth (18:1); and Ptolemais (21:7).¹ Rome's purpose in founding these and other colonies centered on strengthening its power and on "Romanization," spreading Roman values across the empire.

Definition of a Roman Colony

The Roman colony was a city or town, often created in a site where no settlement previously existed. The colony served as a planned defense to secure Rome's borders from enemies and to strengthen its power in weak areas. For new settlements, Rome brought in people from other parts of the empire, especially military veterans or freedmen (released former slaves). As Roman control expanded, however, Rome incorporated existing cities, "refounding" them as Roman colonies and bringing in Roman settlers. Philippi was such a colony since it had already existed as a Greek city.

Following a similar architecture and style, the colony cities resembled miniature Romes. Preexisting cities could not imitate this uniformity—unless they were destroyed. So, in preexisting communities, the Romans developed construction projects with distinctly Roman architecture to make these cities look like "mini-Romes."²

Roman colonies possessed both the right of self-government under Roman laws and freedom from direct taxation



mid-1st cent. AD.

Above: Upon retiring from Roman military, a soldier received an inscribed bronze plaque, a diploma, that decreed his

military discharge and citizenship. To receive such a diploma, the soldier had to serve in one of the Empire's provincial forces for at least twenty-five years; inscription is Latin; dated AD 90.



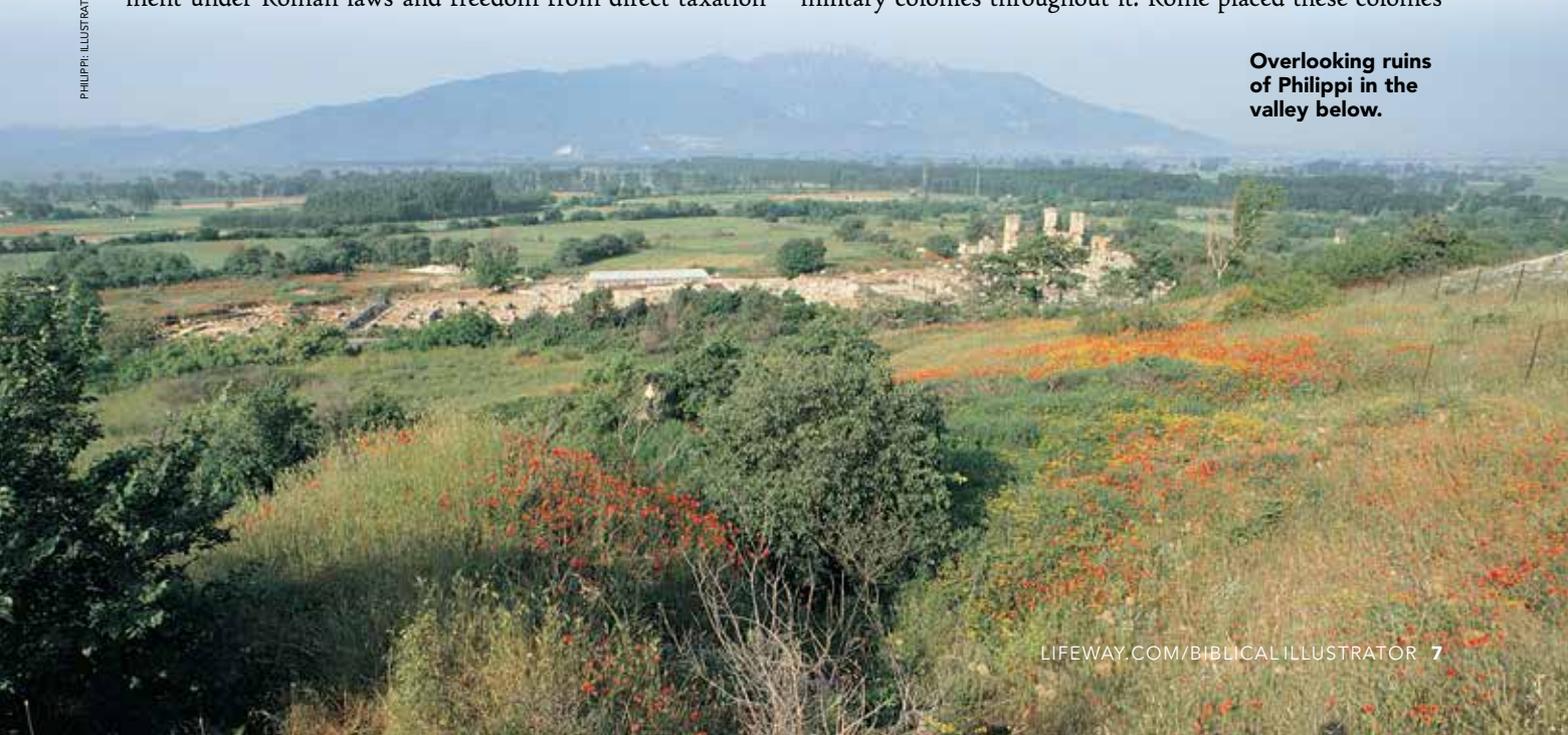
Above: Roman military helmet, bronze, dated to

of its citizens and lands. The citizens of Roman colonies had the same legal status as citizens and inhabitants of Rome, including Roman citizenship—a much-desired benefit.³

Origin and Purposes of Roman Colonies

In the earliest stage of Rome's history, the monarch period (ca. 753–509 BC), Rome established three colonies in Italy and settled them with Romans for protection from hostile Italian tribes. By 338 BC, the Roman Republic (began ca. 509 BC) had gained control of the Italian peninsula and established military colonies throughout it. Rome placed these colonies

Overlooking ruins of Philippi in the valley below.



in areas of weakness, near cities that had opposed Roman expansion. Often Rome confiscated the land these cities controlled, sometimes expelling the existing residents and distributing the land to settlers of the new colonies. The local resources then benefited the colonists—not the residents of the near-by conquered city. Rome also developed some colonies in underpopulated areas to aid in expansion efforts.⁴

Late in the second century BC, Rome established some colonies that focused on agrarian reform and thus provided land for the poorer citizens. This reform attempted to redistribute the large property holdings of wealthy nobles who had purchased lands made available by war. Rome required those who served in their military to be landowners; thus giving land served as a catalyst that opened the door for more to serve.⁵

Rome continued to expand during the late republic and early empire (began about 27 BC). In an attempt to build loyal communities in conquered, unwelcoming areas, Rome increasingly founded colonies outside of Italy. Initially most settlers were retired soldiers. Especially in the first century BC, these veterans received land grants in addition to or instead of financial benefits when they retired. They also retained their Roman citizenship. Later, colonies also provided a means to relieve unemployment and to relocate some of the teeming population of Rome, reducing overcrowded conditions.⁶

Julius Caesar (ca. 100–44 BC) founded at least twenty colonies, primarily outside of Italy in places such as Spain, France, North Africa, Greece, and Switzerland. These colonies provided homes in the provinces for nearly 100,000 Roman citizens. Most of Caesar’s colonies were commercial

or industrial in nature. Caesar’s settlement efforts provided employment for the jobless and homes for war veterans.⁷

Augustus (ca. 63 BC–AD 14), began founding colonies even before he became the first emperor of the Roman Empire in 27 BC. He focused on military colonies for the settlement of veterans with the strategic purpose of maintaining and securing conquered territories. Populating these settlements with war veterans provided areas of loyalty to Augustus. These colonies also became instruments of Romanization by spreading the use of Rome’s law and language (Latin). As “mini-Romes,” colonies promoted the superiority of Roman culture, religion, and values. In uncivilized regions, such as the Alps, Gaul, Spain, and Portugal, these military colonies maintained order. With the emperor establishing twenty-eight colonies in Italy itself and perhaps eighty beyond, Roman colonization “appears to have reached a peak under Augustus.”⁸

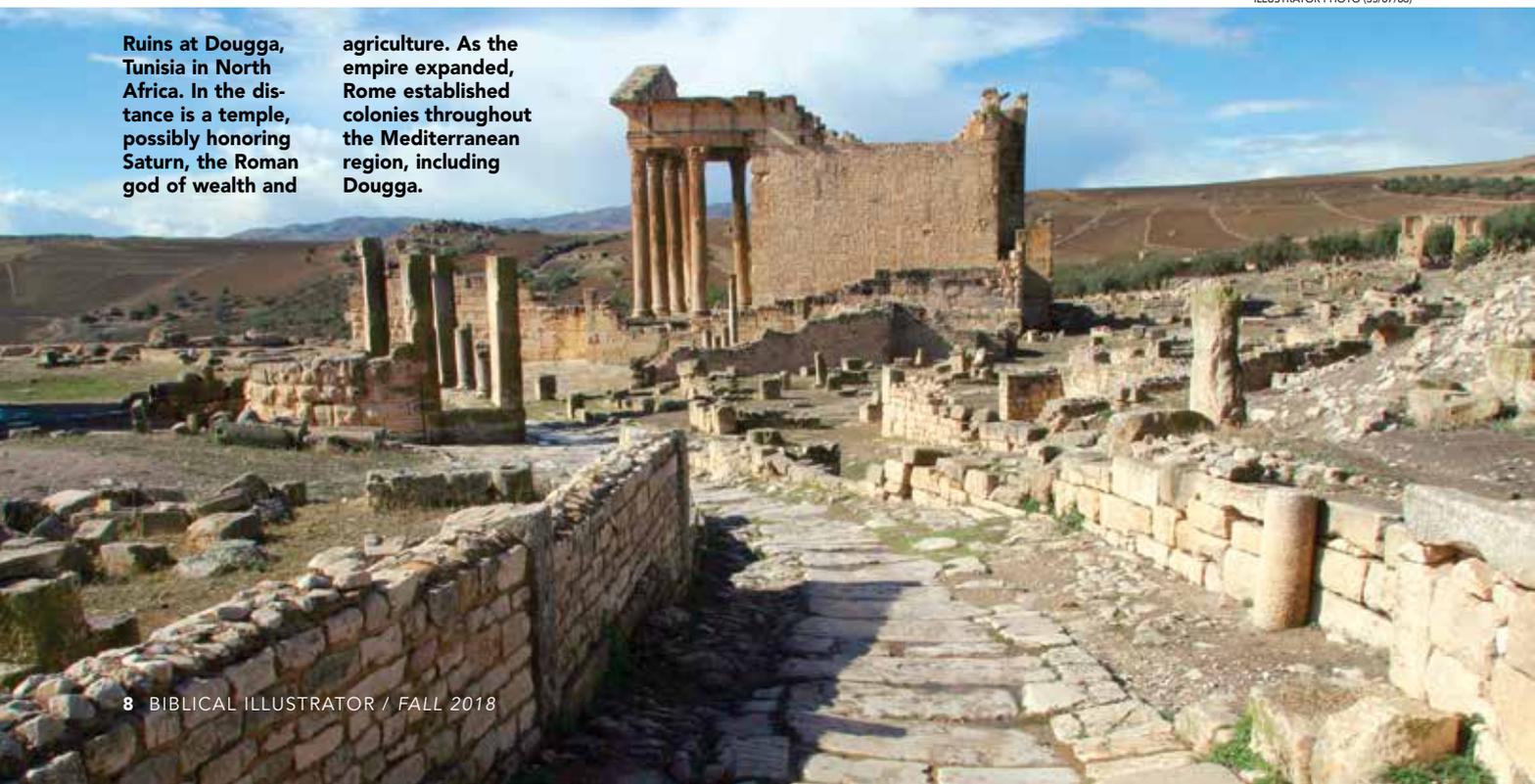
Roman Colonies in the Book of Acts

CORINTH—Rome destroyed the Greek city of Corinth in 146 BC. For 102 years, the city remained in ruins with few inhabitants. Julius Caesar refounded Corinth as a Roman colony in 44 BC. He built the new city on top of the former Greek city, using Roman architecture, character, and political organization. He colonized the city primarily with freedman, some of whom had dishonorable reputations. The determined new inhabitants, though, took advantage of opportunities for upward mobility. “The city... was soon transformed from ruin to riches.”⁹ Regaining its previously held prominence, the refounded Corinth became the capital city of the Roman province of Achaia.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO (35/87/86)

Ruins at Dougga, Tunisia in North Africa. In the distance is a temple, possibly honoring Saturn, the Roman god of wealth and

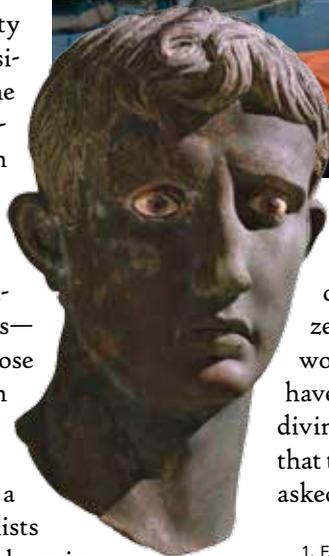
agriculture. As the empire expanded, Rome established colonies throughout the Mediterranean region, including Dougga.



Right: Modern harbor at Acco, biblical Ptolemais (Acts 21:7), on Israel's northern coast. Two major roads converged here—the north/south coastal road and the west-bound inland road, which led around the southern edge of the Sea of Galilee.

Lower right: Bust of Octavian, who defeated Mark Antony and Cleopatra in the Battle of Actium. With his victory, Octavian had control of all Roman territory, became "Caesar Augustus," and moved Rome from being a republic to an empire.

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PHILIPPI—After winning the Battle of Philippi in 42 BC, Mark Antony and Octavian (later known as Caesar Augustus) made the city a Roman colony, providing its residents with Roman citizenship. The two victors settled many army veterans in the city. When Octavian overcame Anthony in 31 BC, he refounded Philippi as a Roman military colony, rebuilt the city with a military outpost, and settled it with more Roman soldiers—both veterans of his wars and those of the defeated Anthony. Octavian also gave the city the status of *ius Italicum*, Italian citizenship—the highest legal privilege possible for a provincial city. This gave the colonists the same rights and privileges those born in Italy possessed, exempted them from poll and property taxes, and secured their loyalty to Rome.¹⁰

PISIDIAN ANTIOCH—Augustus refounded Pisidian Antioch as a Roman military colony. In contrast to the cities in the surrounding area, which maintained their Hellenistic personas, Pisidian Antioch used language, ideology, and administration that were almost identical to what one would have found in Rome at the time. Augustus settled veteran soldiers in this city. In the local social hierarchy, these former soldiers were at the top, original citizens came next, and people in non-colonized surrounding cities were below these.¹¹

LYSTRA, TROAS, AND PTOLEMAIS—Augustus also founded the Roman colony of Lystra. Because of limited space, many of the resettled Roman soldiers received property in the surrounding area rather than in the city itself. The emperor also gave Troas the status of a Roman colony. By the time Paul landed in Ptolemais near the end of his third missionary journey, this seaport had also been declared a Roman colony.¹²

Entering Philippi would not have intimidated Paul. He had preached the gospel in other Roman colonies. Even though the apostle was a Roman citizen, he valued far more his heavenly citizenship. Nor would the Philippian jailer—probably a war veteran—have daunted Paul. Paul wore spiritual armor and had a divine mission. His witness in Philippi was so effective that the former Roman soldier fell trembling at his feet and asked, “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30, CSB). 📖

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6. Heidel, “Colony,” 729; Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas*, 193–94.
7. Adkins and Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome*, 122, see also 77; Heidel, “Colony,” 729; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 1–2.
8. Fritz M. Heichelheim and Cedric A. Yeo, *A History of the Roman People* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 248.
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TGP: Genesis 12:1-4; 15:1-6; 17:1-10

ABRAHAM'S TRAVELS

BY DANIEL P.
CALDWELL

ISTOCK PHOTO

IT WAS A DAUNTING TASK. In a concise manner, God told Abraham to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house (Gen. 12:1).¹ Obedience to this command would require him to give up his community, his security, and his identity. Embarking on a journey of faith, Abraham left behind all he had ever known. Adding to the challenge, Abraham was seventy-five years old and Sarah was sixty-five at the time. This was a journey through unknown territories to a destination Abraham did not know. God ultimately led him to a land 1,100-1,200 miles from his place of birth.

Modes of Transportation

While the primary mode of travel in Abraham's day was on foot, history gives evidence of other forms of transportation. The Bible and extra-biblical sources mention a variety of animals people used for transportation and for transporting goods; the most common was the donkey.²

When God tested him, Abraham saddled his donkey and took Isaac with him plus two servants and the wood for the offering (22:3). During the seven years of famine, Joseph's brothers took donkeys to Egypt to carry the grain for their families (42:26).

Camels also provided a dual role in travel. Because of their wide and padded, sensitive hooves, camels were best suited for desert roads as opposed to the hard and rocky roads of the hills in Canaan.³ As early as Genesis 12:16, Pharaoh gave Abraham camels as

the patriarch entered Egypt. When Abraham sent his oldest servant back to his homeland to secure a wife for Isaac, his servant took ten camels with him, which carried choice gifts for Rebekah and her family (24:10). Rebekah and her servants even rode on these camels as she went to meet Isaac (v. 61).

Though other neighboring groups used them, horses were seldom mentioned in Israel's earlier history. Genesis 47:17 records the people of the land trading their horses for food during a famine. In the blessing of his sons, Jacob referred to Dan as the viper that bites the horse's heels, causing the rider to fall off (49:17). Aside from transportation, the single greatest use of horses was for combat (1 Kings 20:20-25).

In addition to using animals, people also used wheeled vehicles for transportation and to transport goods. After Joseph identified himself to his brothers, Pharaoh made provision for Joseph's family to live in

Below: Oasis at Baghdadi, Iraq, near the Euphrates River; local legend claims Abraham stopped here for water and a bath. A grove of date palms grows in the background.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/BRENT BRUCE WALTERS/ART MUSEUM/BALTIMORE (7/9/883)



Above: Dated to the 10th–9th centuries BC, this limestone plaque from northern Syria depicts a rider atop the hump of a dromedary camel, urging it on with a staff. Crossed bands securely fasten the saddle onto the animal. The camel was a primary means of transporting goods along Near Eastern trade routes at this time.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/TERRY EDDINGER (3/2/18)





ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BOB SCHATZ (25/10/5)



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Above, from left to right: Paddan Aram was a region in northern Mesopotamia, which included Haran. Shown are beehive mud houses at Haran; these preserve a

building model that may be as ancient as Abraham's time and are still occupied today.

Citadel of Aleppo, located in northern Syria.

Although the current structure dates to the 1200s AD, excavations indicate the site was used for worship as early as the 7th millennium BC and that a fortification has

stood on the site since the 3rd millennium BC.

The Beqaa Valley as it runs through eastern Lebanon.

Overlooking modern Damascus.

not say how long Abraham remained in Haran, he would spend some years there before God called him to depart to Canaan. Centuries later, in his speech before the Sanhedrin, Stephen declared that God spoke to Abraham “while he was still in Mesopotamia” to “leave your country and your people...and go to the land I will show you” (Acts 7:2-3, NIV). Stephen quoted portions of Genesis 12:1 but places the call experience in Mesopotamia (Ur) before Abraham was in Haran. God reflected this same thought when He made a covenant with Abraham: “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans” (Gen. 15:7, NIV). Stephen’s point was simply to show that God was guiding Abraham from the start.⁹

Egypt. He sent wagons loaded with gifts to Joseph’s family. The family used the same wagons to return to Egypt (Gen. 45:19-21; 46:5). Though not mentioned in the text, oxen were the animal of choice to pull wagons.⁴

Journey to Haran

Abraham’s journey began in Ur of the Chaldeans, the place of his birth. Ur means “flame” or “fire oven.”⁵ The city was in the lower Mesopotamian (“between the rivers”⁶) territory and was part of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley (in the southern portion of modern day Iraq, about 100 miles northwest of the Persian Gulf). Ur is identified with tell el-Muqayyar, which shows evidence of habitation beginning around 4000 BC. Archaeologists have discovered there numerous legal and economic texts. Ur flourished during the time of the patriarchs and was a main center for commerce and cultural life. As a citizen of Ur, Abraham would have been influenced by the culture and may have been both educated and wealthy.⁷

The exact time of Abraham’s departure from Ur is unknown.

According to Genesis 11:31, Abraham was married to Sarai when he left with his father and nephew and made his way to Haran (over 550 miles distance in a straight line) and then ultimately to Canaan. Even though the Arabian Desert to the west would have been the shortest route to the promised land territory (over 300 miles distance in a straight line), Abraham needed a route that provided adequate water and food resources. Thus, his travels would take him in a northwesterly direction through a region known as the Fertile Crescent. This region stretches northwest in a crescent-shaped arc from the Persian Gulf and then southwest to the border of the Negeb. Depending on the route Abraham chose, this first portion of his journey would be about 600 miles (following the Tigris River) or over 650 miles (following the Euphrates). The journey to Haran would have taken a minimum of thirty days.⁸

Journey to Canaan

According to Genesis 11:31-32, Abraham settled in Haran and suffered the loss of his father. Although Scripture does

Abraham’s journey from Haran to Canaan involved traveling through the southwestern portion of the Fertile Crescent (about 360 miles distance in a straight line). This region was rugged and contained mountains, desert, and waters (rivers and streams) to be crossed. It also provided thieves prime opportunity to take advantage of weary and unsuspecting travelers. Two main routes traversed the territory. One route involved traveling west to Aleppo and then south through the Beqaa Valley towards the western side of Canaan (around 450 miles).¹⁰ This route required travelers to negotiate the hilly spine of central Canaan.



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ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BOB SCHATZ (8/40/10)



ILLUSTRATOR MAP/ LINDEN ARTISTS/ LONDON

A second route (about 400 miles) would lead to Damascus and then southward to the eastern side of the land. It involved crossing the Jordan possibly at Succoth and heading west to Shechem. Either route would require over twenty travel days.¹¹

Once in Shechem, Abraham stopped at the oak (or *terebinth*) of Moreh. While this site's exact location is unknown, Abraham was certain God had led him there. God appeared to him and promised to give him "this land" (12:6-7). In response to God's leadership and promise, Abraham built an altar to God. After some time he moved farther south between Bethel and Ai and built a second altar to God. Abraham continued

to travel south to the Negeb. After a brief excursion to Egypt (12:10-13:1), Abraham returned to Canaan and spent his days in the Negeb or in the northern hills of Judah and Ephraim.

Abraham's commitment to God made the daunting task of traveling the 1,100-1,200 miles from Ur to Canaan a possibility. His devotion to God became the great example of faith for Paul (Rom. 4:13-16; Gal. 3:6-18) and gave the patriarch a prominent place of distinction in the roll call of faith (Heb. 11:8). 📌

HBD, 1365.

3. Matthews, "Transportation and Travel" in HBD, 1365.

4. *Ibid.*

5. David M. Fleming, "Ur" in HBD, 1385.

6. "Mesopotamia" in HBD, 952.

7. *Ibid.*; H. I. Hester, *The Heart of Hebrew History: A Study of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1980), 55. For Abraham's status, see also Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 92.

8. Carl G. Rasmussen, *Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 36.

9. John B. Polhill, Acts, vol. 26 in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 189.

10. For a map of this route, see Arnold and Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, 92-93.

11. For a map of this route, see Rasmussen, *Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible*, 37.

1. God changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's to Sarah (Gen. 17:5,15); for clarity this article uses "Abraham" and "Sarah" throughout.

2. "Ass" in *Holman Bible Dictionary* [HBD], gen. ed. Trent C. Butler (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 117; Victor H. Matthews, "Transportation and Travel" in

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SINS

OF THE
FLESH

By Hal Lane

PAUL WROTE A SCATHING REBUKE TO the churches of Galatia for deserting the one true gospel for a false gospel that promised salvation by keeping “the works of the law” (Gal. 1:6-7; 2:16).¹ Paul declared that all who sought to establish their righteousness by observing the Law were under a curse (3:10). Further, Paul stated that only through faith in Christ, who became a curse for us, can we be justified and forgiven of our sins (v. 13). The apostle was reminding the Galatians that they had received the Holy Spirit not by the works of the Law but by faith (v. 5).

In Galatians 5, Paul addressed a common criticism of the gospel of grace through faith in Christ alone. Opponents accused Paul of preaching cheap grace that encouraged sinful behavior without consequence. Paul strongly refuted this accusation and contrasted “the deeds of the flesh” (5:19, NASB) with “the fruit of the Spirit” (v. 22). In his

Below: Aerial view of the ruins at Pompeii, which was destroyed when Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79. Although the number is debated, some have estimated that Pompeii had 35 brothels in it. That would mean about 1 brothel

for every 75 men in Pompeii. Others believe the number of brothels was actually higher!

Upper right: An incantation bowl. Spells were written on the inside and outside of the bowl. These bowls served two purposes: first,

people believed such spells could ward off evil spirits. Second, the bowl, which typically was turned upside down on the ground, served as a trap for any demons that came near. Sorcery was one of the sins Paul mentioned to the Galatians.



description of the deeds of the flesh, Paul catalogued a list of sins or vices that originate in the hearts of people. The purpose of this article is to provide a historical context for this list of vices in secular and religious literature of the first century AD. We will also look closely at the use of such lists in the New Testament and consider how these lists inform us about conduct in today’s world.

In Secular and Jewish Literature

Lists of virtues and vices were familiar to educated persons in the Greco-Roman world of the first century AD from the writings of moral philosophers such as Aristotle, Seneca, Cicero, and Epictetus.² While some of the virtues and vices in their lists overlap those in the New Testament, the secularists’ views of morality were fundamentally different from the biblical view. We will examine two critical differences in secular and biblical morality when we focus on Paul’s lists of vices.

Lists of virtues and vices are part of non-canonical Jewish writings. Sources include Philo of Alexandria (Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, *Sacrifices* 32), the Apocrypha (*Wisdom of Solomon* 14:25-26), the Pseudepigrapha (2 Enoch 10:4-5), and documents from the Qumran community (1QS 4.9-11).³

ISTOCK PHOTO



In the Gospels

Matthew 15:19-20 and Mark 7:20-22 provide lists of vices that Jesus declared originated within the hearts of sinful people and defiled them. Jesus contrasted physical defilement through contact with objects causing ceremonial uncleanness (the emphasis of the legalistic religious leaders who opposed Him) with the more serious moral defilement of sinful thoughts and deeds.

Jesus' lists of vices, like Paul's, were defined by violations of God's revealed moral will in the commandments of Old Testament revelation. Those who knew the Word of God had no need to draw from secular or pagan religious writings to inform their moral positions. They drew their morality from God's revealed principles in Scripture.

In Paul's Writings

Paul frequently used lists of moral vices in his letters (Rom. 1:29-32; 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 12:20-21; Col. 3:5-9; Eph. 4:17-19; 5:3-5; 1 Thess. 4:3-7). Paul's concept of morality, as stated previously, had fundamental differences with secular moralists. The focus of our study is not to list the various theories of the origin of human vices in secular moralists' writings. Rather, our focus is on the perspective of Paul, who reflected the unique viewpoint of biblical morality. In Romans, Paul explained the origin of sinful behavior

Below: Votive relief made of pentelic marble depicts a drunk Heracles reclining on the lion's pelt beneath a tree. He holds a two-handed wine cup known as a *skyphos* in his left hand and snaps the fingers of his raised right hand,

setting the rhythm for the young musician nearby. Paul listed drunkenness as one of the sins of the flesh.

Right: Farmland in Israel's Shephelah region. Jesus warned against greed: "Watch out and be on

guard against all greed, because one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15, CSB). He immediately followed this warning with the parable of the self-sufficient farmer who wanted to build larger barns.

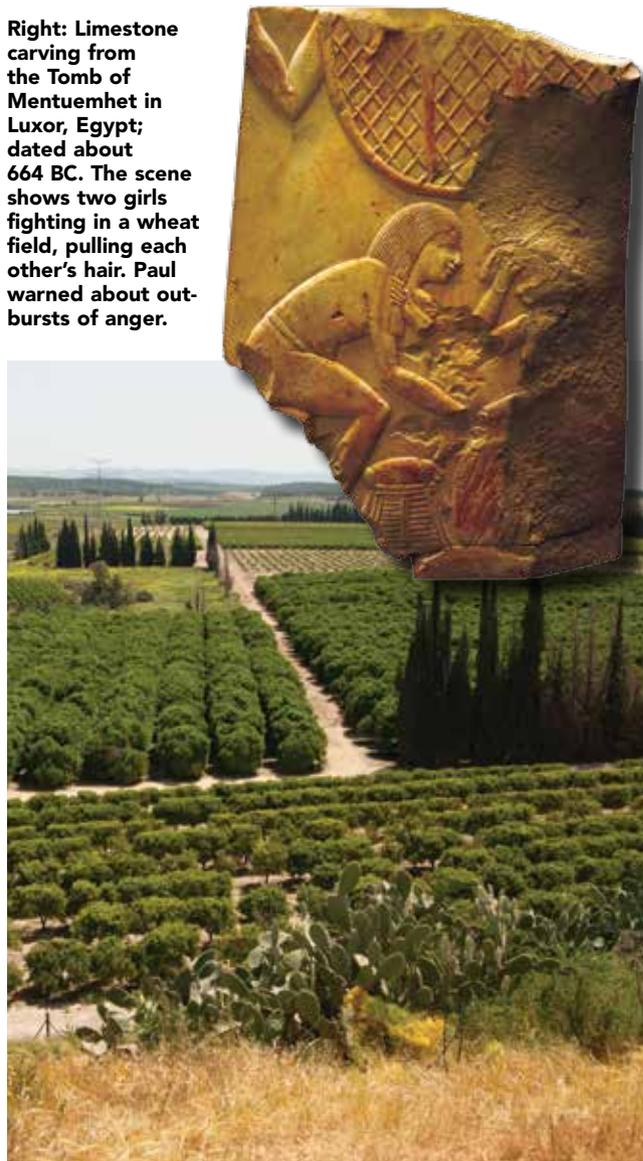
by all human beings. He pointed to man's rejecting God as the source of sinful behavior (Rom. 1:18-32). Later, he explicitly linked the sinfulness of the human race to the sin of Adam (5:12). The result of Adam's sin was a legacy of disobedience and rebellion that infected every descendant of Adam (v. 19). The only exception was Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:34-35).

Paul labeled the vices in Galatians 5:19-21 as "the works of the flesh." The Greek word translated "flesh" can refer literally to human or animal skin (1 Cor. 15:39) and symbolically to all humanity (Acts 2:17). Paul, however, also used it as a technical term for the sin nature (Rom. 7:5,18; 8:3-9; Gal. 3:3; 5:16-17). Unlike moralists of the first century AD, Paul did not believe that the sinful human nature ("the flesh") could be reformed.⁴ Paul saw the sinful human nature as a power

Right: Limestone carving from the Tomb of Mentuemhet in Luxor, Egypt; dated about 664 BC. The scene shows two girls fighting in a wheat field, pulling each other's hair. Paul warned about outbursts of anger.



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ G.B. HOWELL/ ATHENS ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM (85/123)



ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ BRENT BRUCE/ ORIENTAL MUSEUM OF CHICAGO (70/9274)

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ KRISTEN HILLER (43/1123)



View of the Parthenon at night. Rising over 500 feet at its highest point, the Acropolis, which means “upper city,” initially served as

a safe place for women and children of Athens during times of battle. Eventually, though, the site had a strictly religious purpose and was the loca-

tion of several temples, the most prominent being the Parthenon, the temple that honored Athena, the patron goddess of the city.

ILLUSTRATOR PHOTO/ TOM HOOKE (66/14/18)

to be crucified through faith in Christ (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:24). Paul contrasted the “works of the flesh” (5:19) with the “fruit of the Spirit” (v. 22). He taught that virtue did not reside and could never be cultivated in sinful flesh. Virtue only flows through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, given to all who come to faith in Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 5

Paul named fifteen sinful behaviors and attitudes as works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. The list was not meant to be comprehensive as he indicated with the phrase at the end of the list—“and anything similar” (v. 21). Commentators have sometimes catalogued these vices into four groups.⁵ The first grouping (v. 19) involved sensuality. “Sexual immorality,” “moral impurity,” and “promiscuity” cover a wide range of sexual sins that were prevalent in the Greco-Roman culture of the first century AD. Paul’s mentioning these vices in his warnings to churches (1 Cor. 5:1; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3) indicated that some Christians were guilty of returning to these sins after salvation. The second group (v. 20), which included “idolatry” and “sorcery,” involved pagan worship practices. The polytheists of the Greco-Roman world did not consider themselves idolaters and did not use this word of other religions. Paul’s biblical perspective, however, properly identified any worship not directed to God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ as idolatry. The Greek word translated “sorcery” pointed to the use of drugs for poisoning or to other pagan rituals. The third group (vv. 20-21)—which included “hatreds,” “strife,” “jealousy,” “outbursts of anger,” “selfish ambitions,” “dissensions,” “factions,” and “envy”—pointed to failures

of the command to love others. The large number of vices in this category may indicate this was a serious problem in the churches of Galatia. The fourth group (“drunkenness,” “carousing,” v. 21) referred to the behavior of a person who lacked self-control. Paul warned that those who pursue such behavior “will not inherit the kingdom of God” (v. 21; cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Paul then followed the chaotic list of vices (plural—“works of the flesh”) with the unified and singular nine-fold “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23). Paul’s following admonitions to believers urged them to crucify the flesh and follow the Spirit (vv. 24-25).

Paul’s list of vices is as relevant today for Christians as it was for those living in the first century AD. Technology has changed the present world from the past in significant ways, but human nature remains the same. The vices of the ancient world are the vices of today. The only hope for deliverance from the sinful natures with which we are born is the transformative power of the gospel. All other attempts at moral improvement and change are doomed because only faith in Jesus Christ can bring salvation and sanctification through the Holy Spirit. 🔥

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

2. Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30 in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 389–90.

3. James D.G. Dunn, *Black’s New Testament Commentary: The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 302.

4. Timothy George, *Galatians*, 390.

5. *Ibid.*, 392.

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