The famous capital of the ancient world is situated on the ‘Fiber River, at a distance of about fifteen miles from its mouth.
The “seven hills” (Revelation 17:9) which form the nucleus of the ancient city stand on the left back of the Tiber River.
The city of Rome is mentioned in three books of the New testament:
- Acts
- Romans
- 2 Timothy
Ancient Rome was settled around 753 B.C. The Roman Empire came several centuries later.
Rome has sometimes called “The Eternal City” is because of its long and important history.
Augustus, the first emperor of Rome, had many beautiful buildings built. He is quoted as having said, “I found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble.”
It is believed that Rome once had as many as 300 temples.
Gibbon estimates that the population of Rome was approximately 1,200,000 of which about half of the population were slaves.
Large Jewish colonies were settled quite early in Rome, perhaps as a result of the conquests of Pompey Many of these Jews were made freedmen.
- Julius Caesar was kindly toward them, and they were also favored by Augustus.
- Tiberias showed kindness to them during the latter part of his reign.
Claudius drove all of the Jews from Rome. Acts 18:2
Acquilla and Priscilla were among the number who fled during this time.
This banishment did not last too long because at the time of Paul’s visit to Rome (Acts 28:17) large numbers of Jews resided in Rome.
Paul’s first Roman first imprisonment in Rome occurred between two famous epics in the history of the city, namely, its restoration by Augustus and its destruction by Nero.

Two famous sayings:
- “All roads lead to Rome”
- “When in Rome do as the Romans do.”

Rome was burned in 64 A.D. while Nero was the emperor. Rome was divided into 14 regions, and fire destroyed 3 of the 14 plus dividing and greatly damaging 7 others.

In 410 A.D. Barbaric hordes destroyed Rome. The Bible speaks of the Roman Empire ending.

The Roman Empire
- Judea became the subject to the Roman Empire in 63 B.C., and although it had its own rulers, it was required to pay tribute to the Roman.
- It was during the reign of Caesar Augustus that Christ was born.
- It was during the reign of Tiberias that Christ was crucified.
- In its height, the empire:
  - Extended 2,000 miles from north to south.
  - 3,000 miles from east to west.
  - Had a population of about 120,000,000.
- Through corruption within and attack from without, the empire began to decline until it was destroyed in about 476 A.D.
- The religion of the Roman Empire was pagan. Although, under its rule, Christianity was tolerated but persecuted.
- Under Constantine in the fourth century, Christianity was declared the religion of the state.
- Jews from Rome were present in Jerusalem at the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ when the church was established. Acts 2:10
- Aquila and Priscilla spent some time in Rome until all Jews were commanded to leave. Acts 18:2

Paul and Rome
- Paul had long purposed to visit Rome. Romans 1:9-13; 15:22-29
- Numerous sites in and around the city are especially connected with Paul’s life.
  - The Appian Way by which he approached Rome. Acts 28:15
  - The Palace. Philippians 1:13
  - The Mamertine Prison in which tradition says Paul was kept during his second Roman imprisonment and from which he wrote 2 Timothy.
- The Ostain Road where Paul supposedly met martyrdom.
- Paul’s journey for Palestine to Rome. **Acts 27 - 28**
- Paul’s first Roman imprisonment lasted for about two years. To this period belongs the prison epistles:
  - Philippians
  - Colossians
  - Ephesians
  - Philippians

It seems that after an imprisonment of two years or more at Rome, Paul was freed and spent some years in various journeys eastward and westward.
- Toward the close of this time he wrote the first letter to Timothy and his letter to Titus. These letters seem to have been written about the same time.
- Paul was arrested a second time. Whereas during the first Roman imprisonment he was treated as an honorable prisoner, this time he was treated as a felon. **2 Timothy 2:9** – “For which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.
- During this imprisonment Paul wrote 2 Timothy in which he expressed a confident expectation of a speedy death. **2 Timothy 4:6** — “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.”
- Nonetheless, he hoped Timothy might join him from Ephesus and “Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come -- and the books, especially the parchments” **2 Timothy 4:13**
- Timing was important. “Do your utmost to come before winter.” **2 Timothy 4:21**

**The Roman Forum**
- The Roman Forum was the center of the commercial, religious, and political concerns of the city of Rome and the Empire.
- In times of various fires, the forum was devastated.
  - 1st — At the beginning of the Republic of Rome.
  - 2nd — 64 A.D. during the reign of Nero.
  - 3rd — Under the Emperor Commodus.
  - 4th — Under the Emperor Carino in 283 A.D.
- Disastrous earthquakes and barbaric invasions contributed greatly to its destruction.
The Arch of Titus
- Was built to celebrate the victory over the Jews by the Emperor Vespasian and his son, Titus
- Their victory brought an end in 70 A.D. to the Jewish revolt that had begun in 66 A.D.
- The Arch of Titus was built during the periods in which Domiziano and Trajan reigned.

The Colosseum
- “Colosseum” come from the Latin word “colossus” which means gigantic.
- In shape, the Colosseum resembles a modern football stadium.
- The wooden floor of the Colosseum was covered with red sand to soak up and conceal blood.
- Underneath the floor were rooms to house men and animals.
- The Colosseum floor area could be flooded to enact naval battles.
- Vespasian began the Colosseum and Titus dedicated it in A.D. 80.
- It is oval shaped.
  - 615’ long.
  - 510’ wide.
  - 157’ high.
- Historians estimate that from 50,000 to 80,000 persons could sit in the Colosseum at once.
- The Colosseum has 76 entrances and can empty or fill in 15 minutes.
- A traditional saying: “As long as the Colosseum stands, Rome lives.”
- Note: The Colosseum was built after the death Paul.

The Catacombs
- Catacomb S. Domitilla
- 10 miles of catacombs under the city of Rome.
- Construction on the catacombs began near the end of the 1st century and continued until about 350 B.C.
- They were built for burial places.
- Christians used them as places of worship when the persecutions came.
- One guide said they were “sacred, not secret.”
- Constantine, in 313 A.D., recognized the Christian religion as the official state religion.

The Pantheon
- After the Colosseum, the Pantheon is the most interesting and best preserved monument of Augustan Rome.
- Pantheon is from the Greek and means “of all the gods.”
It was built by Marcus Agrippa in 27 B.C.
It burned and was rebuilt after the time of Christ.
Many former kings of Italy are buried there.
Raphael, the famous painter, is buried there.

**Vatican City**
- Vatican City is an independent state that houses the government of the Roman Catholic Church.
- It covers 108.7 acres and is the smallest independent state in the world.
- St Peter’s Square in front of St. Peter’s Basilica.
- St. Peter’s Basilica is the largest church building in the world.
- It is more than 450’ wide at its widest point.
- It covers an area of 15,500 square yards.
- The dome is more than 400’ high and measures 38 ‘ across.
- The Basilica was largely financed by the sell of indulgences.
- Vatican City and St. Peter’s Basilica contain many original works of Michaelangelo.
  - The Pieta
  - The Moses
  - The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.