

The Roman Empire

by E.H. Broadbent

The Roman Empire's attack on the churches in the 1st century marked a significant turning point in the history of Christianity, with the apostles and early church leaders facing persecution and martyrdom.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:7

Topics: "Early Church", "Apostolic Era"

Description

E.H. Broadbent discusses the gradual attack of the Roman Empire on the churches, leading to the martyrdom of key Apostles like Peter and Paul. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 highlighted the lack of a visible head or center for the churches on earth. As time passed, there was a noticeable decline in writings that were not included in the canon of inspired Scriptures, showing a departure from the divine principles of the New Testament. The first Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, written during the Apostle John's lifetime, provides insight into the churches at the end of the Apostolic period, emphasizing perseverance through persecutions and a humble attitude towards duty and faith.

Transcript

The Roman Empire was gradually drawn into an attack on the churches; an attack in which eventually its whole power and resources were put forth to crush and destroy them.

About the year 65 the Apostle Peter was put to death, and, some years later, the Apostle Paul. * The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (A.D. 70) emphasised the fact that to the churches no visible head or centre on earth is given. Later, the Apostle John brought the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to their close, a close worthy of all that had gone before, by writing his Gospel, his Epistles, and the Revelation.

There is a noticeable difference between the New Testament and the writings of the same period and later which are not included in the list or canon - see glossary of the inspired Scriptures. The inferiority of the latter is unmistakable even when the good in them is readily appreciated. While expounding the Scriptures, defending the truth, refuting errors, exhorting the disciples, they also manifest the increasing departure from the divine principles of the New Testament which had already begun in apostolic days and was rapidly accentuated afterwards.

Written in the lifetime of the Apostle John, the first Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians gives a view of the churches at the close of the Apostolic period. %% Clement was an elder in the church at Rome. He had

seen the Apostles Peter and Paul, to whose martyrdom he refers in this letter. It begins: "The church of God which sojourns at Rome to the church of God sojourning at Corinth". The persecutions they passed through are spoken of with a calm sense of victory: "women . . ." he writes, "being persecuted, after they had suffered unspeakable torments finished the course of their faith with steadfastness, and though weak in body received a noble reward." The tone is one of humility; the writer says : "we write unto you not merely to admonish you of your duty, but also to remind ourselves." Frequent allusions are made to the Old Testament and its typical value and many quotations are given from the New Testament.

{*"The church in Rome in the First Century" George Edmundson M.A. }

{%% "The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers" Vol.1 of the Ante Nicene Christian Library.}

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