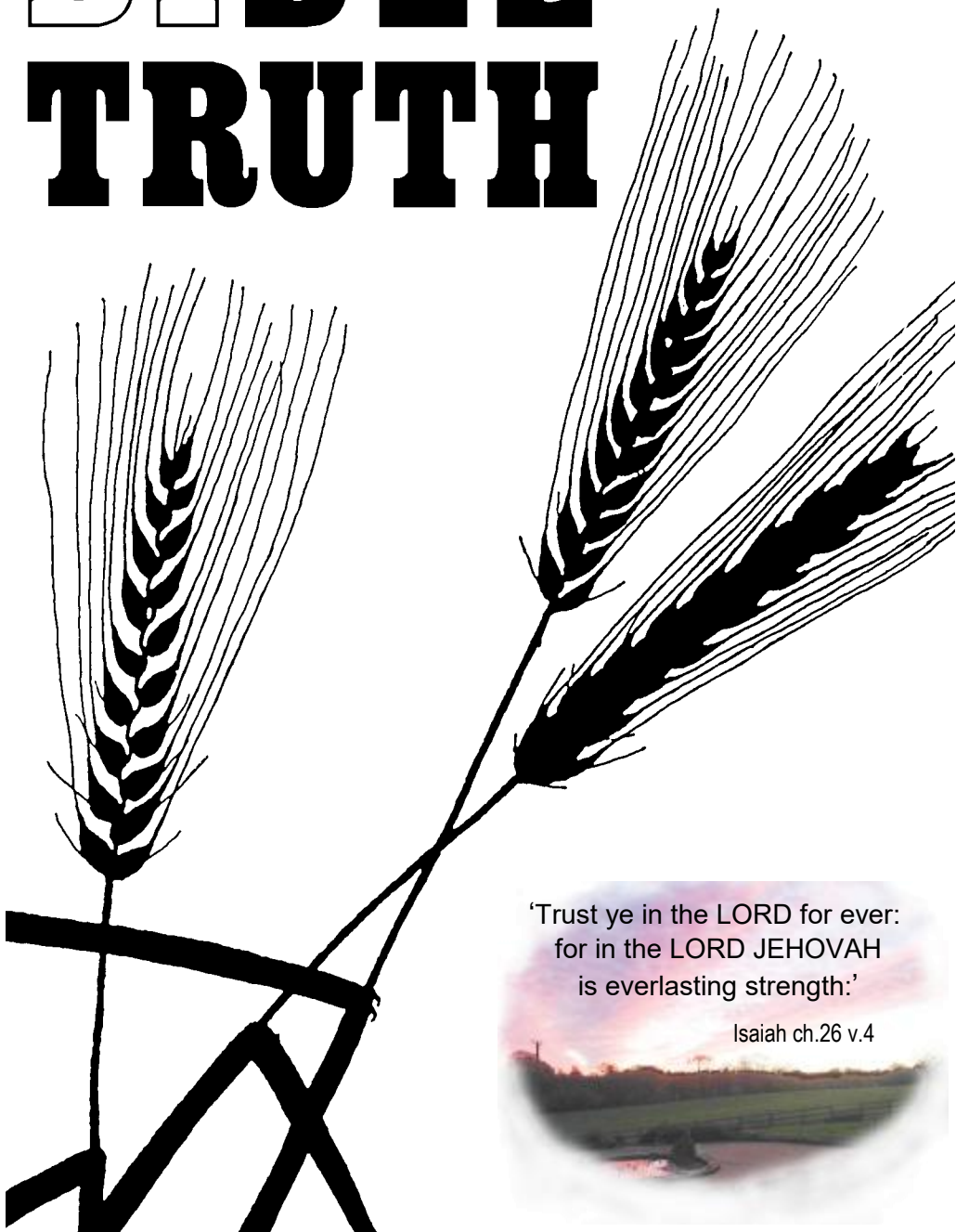


# BIBLE TRUTH

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'Trust ye in the LORD for ever:  
for in the LORD JEHOVAH  
is everlasting strength.'

Isaiah ch.26 v.4



# The Apostle Paul and His British Friends

By

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**You might well be met with a look of incredulity or doubt if informing the average Christian that the Apostle Paul had ‘British’ friends, or that the first Christian church in Rome was founded by believers from the ‘British Isles’. Yet surprisingly, scholars inform us, that supposition is indeed an historic fact.**

We read of a number of people that the Apostle Paul specially greeted in his epistles. Here are some of them.

‘... Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. ... Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.’

Romans ch.16 vv 10 &13

In his final words to the brethren in Second Timothy, Paul says,

‘... Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren’.

2 Timothy ch.4 v.21

Scholars tell us that Eubulus is a short form of Aristobulus, similar to our use of Rob for Robert or Jim for James. But who were all these people? All were Christians, and in fact the last four named above were all Britons, as we shall see.

You might never be able to learn the identity of Paul’s friends mentioned in his epistles depending on which Biblical commentary you refer to. In researching this, I consulted over two dozen standard Christian Bible commentaries, with greatly differing results. Over half of them basically said, ‘have no idea who these people were’, but the rest did their homework and revealed the British connection.

For example, the respected *Jameson, Faucett and Brown Bible Commentary* states this.

‘Pudens ... Claudia — afterwards husband and wife (according to Martial [Epigrams, 4.13; 11.54]), he a Roman knight, she a Briton, surnamed Rufina. Tacitus [On Agriculture, 14], mentions that territories in southeast Britain were given to a British king; Cogidunus, in reward for his fidelity to Rome AD 52, while Claudius was emperor. In 1772 a marble was dug up at Chichester, mentioning Cogidunus with the surname Claudius, added from his patron, the emperor’s name; and Pudens in connection with Cogidunus, doubtless his father-in-law. His daughter would be Claudia, who seems to have been sent to Rome for education, as a pledge of the father’s fidelity. Here she was under the protection of Pomponia, wife of Aulus Plautius, conqueror of Britain. Pomponia was accused of foreign superstitions, AD 57 [Tacitus, Annals, 3.32], probably Christianity ... in Martial and in the Chichester inscription, appears as a pagan; but perhaps he or his friends concealed his Christianity through fear.’

To clarify and correct the information in the above Bible commentary, the Chichester Stone was discovered in 1723 at Chichester (Roman Regnum) in Sussex, England, whilst excavating a cellar at the corner of St Martin’s Lane, North Street, and a cast is preserved in the Chichester Museum.

Also to further clarify this, we need a little brief historical background. In AD 43 the Roman Emperor Claudius (ruled AD 41-54) invaded Britain with 40,000 troops and several elephants. The British tribes were disunited and often distrusting of each other, allowing the Roman troops to make a headway. The queen of the Brigantes tribe at Caer-Evroe/York, Cartismandua, conspired with the Romans to capture the British general, Caradoc (Latinized, Caratacus or Caractacus), who with his family were taken to Rome as prisoners. In a famous speech before the Roman Senate, Caradoc asked that his life be spared as ‘example, at least, of Roman clemency’, whereupon the Roman legislators rose to their feet and applauded. The British prisoners had their lives spared on condition that they would spend seven years of exile in Rome and not take up arms against Rome again. Caradoc’s family, included his son Lleyn (Latin-Linus) who became the first Christian bishop of Rome with daughter Gladys (who was adopted by Emperor Claudius and took the name, Claudia, both are greeted by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy ch.4 v.21 quoted above.

While in Rome, Claudia married Rufus Pudens, a wealthy Roman senator, and had four children who were all martyred in the persecution that began under Nero, Claudius' successor. Despite the opinion of some commentaries, historic evidence reveals that the British family was already Christian before their forced Roman exile. Claudia converted her husband, Rufus Pudens, to the faith. The first Christian church in Rome was known as 'Ecclesia Pudentiana', which means 'Church of Pudens', who owned the property.

Aristobulus or Eubulus is mentioned by several historians. Dorotheus (AD 303) said, 'Aristobulus, who is mentioned by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans, was made bishop in Britain'. The *Martyrologies of the Greek Churches* says, 'Aristobulus was one of the seventy disciples, and a follower of Saint Paul the Apostle ... He was chosen by Saint Paul to be the missionary bishop to the land of Britain, a very warlike and fierce race. By them he was often scourged and repeatedly dragged as a criminal through their towns; yet he converted many of them to Christianity. He was there martyred, after he had built churches and ordained deacons and priests for the island'.

Regarding Linus, Irenaeus (3:111, 3) says, 'When the apostles, therefore, had founded the Church [of Rome] they entrusted the office of the episcopate to Linus, of whom Paul makes mention in his Epistles to Timothy'. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, Ecc. 3:2) says, 'Linus was ordained the first Bishop of Rome after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter' (see also, § 4 of the same book).

The *Jameson, Faucett and Brown Bible Commentary* further informs us, 'Paul himself, says Clement "visited the farthest west [perhaps Britain, certainly Spain], and was martyred under the rulers at Rome", who were Nero's vicegerents in his absence from the city'.

This is enlightening because scholars tell us that there were six years of Paul's ministry unaccounted for in the Book of Acts. The *Jameson, Faucett and Brown Bible Commentary* quoted here says that Paul's missionary journeys took him to the farthest west, 'perhaps Britain' and 'certainly Spain'. This is verified by the Apostle himself in Romans ch.15 vv 24 & 28, 'Whensoever I take my journey into Spain ... When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain'.

Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus near Antioch in Syria (AD 390) and learned church historian, said, 'Saint Paul reached Spain and brought salvation to the Islands of the Sea' (Bishop Edwards of St. Asaph, *Landmarks in the History of the Welsh Church*, p.4). Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers (born AD 530) wrote that Saint Paul journeyed 'crossing the ocean' and visited 'Britain in the extreme West'.

Gildas, the famed early British historian (AD 520-560) states that Christianity came to Britain in the last year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, AD 37, only four years after the crucifixion, 'We know that Christ, the true Sun, afforded His light to our island in the last year of Tiberius Caesar'. Publius Discipulus stated, 'the church of Avalon in Britain no other hands than those of the disciples of the Lord themselves built'. Sir Henry Spelman added, 'It is certain that Britain received the faith in the first age from the first sowers of the Word'.

Bible commentaries that also verify the basic facts concerning the British founding of the first Christian church in Rome include Matthew Henry, the *Pulpit Commentary*, Adam Clarke, Thomas Coke, John Trapp, *Barclay's Study Bible*, *Kelley Commentary* and others. For further information, an excellent reference is the classic book by historian R.W. Morgan, *Paul In Britain*, first published in 1860 and still available in print today at [www.migrations.info](http://www.migrations.info). (Caradoc's famous inspiring speech before the Roman Senate is given in full on pages 115-116). I also presented two lectures dealing more in-depth on this subject and the Apostle Paul's visit to Britain, which were recorded recently and may be viewed at YouTube.com, search - Capac Bible Church.

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