
Troas

Troas was a city in Turkey on the Aegean shore, 10 miles (16.1 kilometers) south of the ancient site of Troy, scene of the Trojan War immortalized by the poet Homer. Both the ancient city of Troy and the Roman city of Troas are on the Troad Plain, an area about 10 miles (16.1 kilometers) in length bordering the sea. Paul sailed from Troas into Macedonia in response to the call “Come over to Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:9).

The Seleucid king Antigonus founded the city about 300 BC and named it after himself. Later, the name was changed to Alexandria Troas in honor of Alexander the Great, who had passed through it in pursuit of the Persians. The city became a Roman colony when Roman influence replaced that of the Greeks. According to some scholars, Julius Caesar envisioned Troas as his eastern capital, and Constantine considered making it his capital before deciding on Byzantium instead. It was an important seaport during the time of Paul because it was the easiest and shortest route from Asia to Europe.

On the second missionary journey, Paul and Silas came to Troas after being forbidden to preach the Word of God in Asia (Acts 16:6). Although this trip to Europe is not stressed in Acts, many scholars think this short voyage was as important historically as Caesar’s invasion of Britain. After this vision, Paul and Silas embarked, passed the island of Samothrace, and landed at Neapolis (modern Kavalla), their first stop in Europe (v 11).

We know that a church must have been established in Troas because of events that are described later. After his mission in Ephesus was finished, Paul stayed and preached the gospel in Troas (2 Cor 2:12). On his way to Jerusalem for the last time, Paul stopped in Troas, where he preached until after midnight, causing one of the young men to fall asleep and fall from a window to his death. But Paul called him back to life and continued on with the meeting until morning (Acts 20:6–12). Paul visited Troas again and left behind a cloak and parchments, presumably when he was arrested there. In a letter to Timothy, Paul asks him to

bring these to him at his prison in Rome (2 Tm 4:13).

Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). Tyndale Bible dictionary. Tyndale reference library (1275). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.
