

~ITALY (181)

[possibly from Latin, *vitulus*, calf]

- The boot-shaped peninsula extending out in a southeasterly direction from continental Europe into the Mediterranean Sea. From the Alps on the North to the big toe at the Strait of Messina in the South it is about 1,130 kilometers (700 miles) long.
- It varies in width from 160 to 240 kilometers (100 to 150 miles) and is bounded by the Adriatic Sea on the East and the Tyrrhenian Sea on the West. As a backbone down the middle of this peninsula is the Apennine mountain range, with fertile valleys running toward the coastal plains.
- The principal rivers are the Tiber and the Po. **Italy** is about the size of the Philippines.
- Originally, according to Antiochus of Syracuse of the **Fifth Century B.C.E.**, the name *Italia* applied only to the province of Calabria in the South where the *Itali* lived.
- This name seems to be a Grecized form of *Vitelia*, related to the Latin *vitulus*, meaning, **calf**. It was possibly applied to this region either because of its grazing lands and cattle or because its inhabitants supposed themselves to be descendants of their bull-god. By the **First Century C.E.** the name **Italy** had been extended to cover much the same territory as it does today.
- Over the centuries peoples of various origins migrated to this very fertile land. **Italy's** early history includes wars between those already there and waves of newcomers that periodically invaded the land. The peninsula thus served as a melting pot of languages, blood, and customs as these different national groups settled down and intermarried.
- Christianity was brought to **Italy** at an early date, for on the day of Pentecost, **33 C.E.**, Italian proselytes as well as Jews from Rome witnessed the outpouring of Holy Spirit and listened to Peter's explanation. No doubt some of them were among the about three thousand baptized on that occasion.
- Now while the day of the festival of Pentecost was in progress

- they were all together at the same place. (**Acts of Apostles 2:1**)
- And Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya, which is toward Cyrene, and sojourners from **Rome**, both Jews and proselytes. (**Acts of Apostles 2:10**)
 - Therefore those who embraced his word heartily were baptized, and on that day about three thousand souls were added. (**Acts of Apostles 2:41**)
 - Returning to **Italy**, they could have formed the nucleus of the Christian congregation in **Rome** to whom Paul some years later addressed one of his letters.
 - Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ and called to be an apostle, separated to God's Good News. (**Romans 1:1**)
 - Which he promised aforetime through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. (**Romans 1:2**)
 - Concerning his Son, who sprang from the seed of David according to the flesh. (**Romans 1:3**)
 - But who with power was declared God's Son according to the spirit of holiness by means of resurrection from the dead, yes, Jesus Christ our Lord. (**Romans 1:4**)
 - Through whom we received undeserved kindness and an apostleship in order, that there might be obedience of faith among all the nations respecting his name. (**Romans 1:5**)
 - Among which nations you also are those called to belong to Jesus Christ. (**Romans 1:6**)
 - To all those who are in Rome as God's beloved ones, called to be holy ones. May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (**Romans 1:7**)
 - Aquila and Priscilla may have been of that congregation in **Italy** when ordered by Emperor Claudius, sometime in the year 49 or early **50 C.E.**, to leave the country. They arrived in Corinth shortly before Paul got there on his first visit to that city on his second missionary tour.

- After these things he departed from Athens and came to Corinth. (Acts of Apostles 18:1)
- And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus who had recently come from Italy, and Priscilla his wife, because of the fact that Claudius had ordered all the Jews to depart from Rome. So he went to them (Acts of Apostles 18:2)
- Cornelius, undoubtedly an Italian and an army officer of the Italian band, had a home in Caesarea.
- Now in Caesarea there was a certain man named Cornelius, an army officer of the Italian band, as it was called. (Acts of Apostles 10:1)
- It was in Caesarea that Paul, at his trial before Festus, appealed his case to Caesar. He was then taken by boat to Myra, where, together with other prisoners, he was transferred to a grain boat from Alexandria that was headed for Italy.
- So when he had spent not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he sat down on the judgment seat and commanded Paul to be brought in. (Acts of Apostles 25:6)
- If, on the one hand, I am really a wrongdoer and have committed anything deserving of death, I do not beg off from dying, if, on the other hand, none of those things exists of which these men accuse me, no man can hand me over to them as a favor. I appeal to Caesar! (Acts of Apostles 25:11)
- Then Festus, after speaking with the assembly of counselors, replied; To Caesar you have appealed, to Caesar you shall go. (Acts of Apostles 25:12)
- Now as it was decided for us to sail away to Italy, they proceeded to hand both Paul and certain other prisoners over to an army officer named Julius of the band of Augustus. (Acts of Apostles 27:1)
- And we navigated through the open sea along Cilicia and Pamphylia and put into port at Myra in Lycia. (Acts of Apostles 27:5)

- But there the army officer found a boat from Alexandria that was sailing for **Italy**, and he made us board it. (**Acts of Apostles 27:6**)
- Shipwrecked on the voyage, they had to winter on the island of Malta. Then probably in the spring of **59 C.E.**, Paul first touched Italian soil at Rhegium on the toe of **Italy**, and shortly thereafter he disembarked at Puteoli on the Bay of Pozzuoli, Naples.
- Here, more than 160 kilometers (100 miles) South of Rome, Paul stayed for a week with the local congregation before going on up to Rome via the Appian Way, along which, at the Marketplace of Appius and Three Taverns, he was met by the brothers from Rome.
- Three months later we set sail in a boat from Alexandria that had wintered in the island and with the figurehead, **Sons of Zeus**. (**Acts of Apostles 28:11**)
- And putting into port at Syracuse we remained three days. (**Acts of Apostles 28:12**)
- From which place we went around and arrived at Rhegium. And a day later a south wind sprang up and we made it into Puteoli on the second day. (**Acts of Apostles 28:13**)
- Here we found brothers and were entreated to remain with them seven days, and in this way we came toward Rome. (**Acts of Apostles 28:14**)
- And from there the brothers, when they heard the news about us, came to meet us as far as the Marketplace of Appius and Three Taverns and, upon catching sight of them, Paul thanked God and took courage. (**Acts of Apostles 28:15**)
- When, finally, we entered into Rome, Paul was permitted to stay by himself with the soldier guarding him. (**Acts of Apostles 28:16**)
- Likely, toward the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment, or shortly after his release in about **61 C.E.**, he wrote the book of Hebrews while still in **Italy**.
- Give my greetings to all those who are taking the lead among you and to all the holy ones. Those in **Italy** send you their greetings. (**Hebrews 13:24**)

