

EXCERPT

IVP Academic

A Week in the Life of Rome A Week in the Life Series

Available February 19, 2019 | \$16, 223 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-2482-3

From the overcrowded apartment buildings of the poor to the halls of the emperors, this gripping tale of ambition, intrigue, and sacrifice is a compelling work of historical fiction that shows us the first-century Roman church as we've never seen it before. Illuminated with images and explanatory sidebars, we are invited into the daily struggles of the church at Rome just a few years before Paul wrote his famous epistle to them.

New in IVP's Week in the Life Series

In the Suburra, behind the firewall that separated the Forum of Augustus from Rome's most notorious neighborhood, Philologus opened the wooden shutters, letting a hazy stream of light into the dark apartment. He was grateful for summer days when they didn't have to choose between letting the light in and keeping the cold out. He smiled at the wildflowers Julia had transplanted into the window boxes, and he dipped his hand into the fire bucket to pour a bit of water on them. "I hardly slept," he said to Julia. "People shouting 'Fire!' and the yelling of the fire brigade woke me up, and I couldn't get back to sleep. Third time in four days. I always feel guilty for being so happy when I realize it's not our building."

Julia smiled at him. "No need to feel guilty for being concerned about the safety of our children. Being on the fifth floor. . ." She shuddered to think of how difficult it might be to get her family out of the building if there were a fire. It made her extra careful as she warmed some stale bread over the small copper brazier.

"At least being on the fifth floor means we get light in the mornings." Philologus looked at the children. The youngest ones were already up. The twins, Nereus and Nerea, always got up together, since the first one to wake always woke the other. Anastasia, the youngest, was sitting on the end of her parents' bench bed as Julia brushed her hair. The older two were another story: Prima, the oldest, and Olympas. Philologus gave their mats a nudge with his foot. He looked at his children. "Well, I may be tired, but at least I won't have to climb any scaffolds today." He tried to sound positive, but he was wondering how he was going to feed his family. Today was a new reality for him. He had woken up with a nagging uncertainty about himself. He had no guild, which meant no work and no patron. No identity, and no way to provide.

Outside the city wall, in the quiet neighborhood along the Tiburtinian Road, Urbanus and his wife, Sabina, were waking up in their separate bedrooms. A slave had rung the bell announcing that dawn was coming soon, and for Urbanus, that meant he needed to get ready to receive his clients. Sometime during the night he had been too hot and had thrown off his knee-length linen tunic and slept only in his loincloth. He pulled himself out of his large wood-and-ivory bed, found the tunic among the blankets and down pillows on the floor, and pulled it on over his head. He found his leather belt on a chair and wrapped it around his waist. Then he put on his house shoes and sat down at his desk to work on some correspondence as a slave brought in a tray with bread and water spiked with a little wine. Two slaves stood by quietly with candles until Urbanus was finished with his letters, and then they began the meticulous process of wrapping Urbanus in his toga.

Sabina was already seated in her makeup chair—an armless chair with a backrest and ivory inlays, and one of her most prized possessions. She was wearing her cotton corset and ankle-length cotton tunic. One slave was weaving a tiara into her long black hair while another applied white foundation to her face and arms. A fortuneteller read her horoscope and tried to show her a zodiac chart as the hairdresser attempted to wave her away. Sabina sighed at the knowledge that the fortuneteller never really told her anything useful, let alone true.



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James L. Papandrea (PhD, Northwestern University) is a teacher, author, speaker, and musician. He is professor of church history and historical theology at Garrett-Evangelical Seminary at Northwestern University, as well as a consultant in the area of adult faith formation and a regular speaker in parish and lay formation programs in the Chicago area. He is the author of *The Earliest Christologies*, *The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome*, and *Reading the Early Church Fathers*.

Sabina also had a tray of bread and water—one-fifth wine to four-fifths water. Her hairdresser plucked her gray hairs as red makeup was applied to her cheeks and lips, and black on her eyebrows and around her eyes. Sabina always insisted on brushing her own teeth, with toothpaste made of ground-up animal horn, and then applying white paint to the top teeth in the front. She looked at her wavy reflection in the copper mirror and squinted to see her teeth. She was proud to have so many of them left.

After putting on her belted dress tunic, another slave helped her choose necklaces, rings, anklets, earrings, bracelets, and a brooch for her most colorful shawl. The last thing to go on was an amulet, which Sabina hoped would give her good fortune. It was a silver pendant with the image of an eye on it. The “seeing eye” looked back at anyone who might cast the evil eye in Sabina’s direction, thereby distracting the evil eye or reflecting it back toward the envious observer.

The hairdresser then packed up all of Sabina’s makeup and accessories into a portable travel kit to be ready to go to the baths in the afternoon. Sabina put on her house shoes and headed out of her room, making her way to the kitchen to start the day by directing the household slaves. She could see her husband’s clients beginning to line up to pay their respects and ask for favors. Although it was not yet dawn, she knew Urbanus would begin seeing them, one by one, until he had met with them all, including the widows of clients who had died.

—Taken from chapter 2, “The Day of Mars”

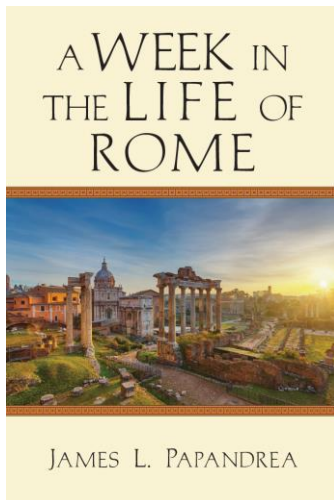


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DETAILS

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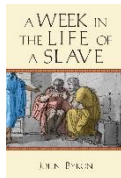
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A Week in the Life Series from IVP

Ever wanted a first-century view of the world of the Gospels? The volumes in A Week in the Life Series capture a view of Jesus' world from the outer framework looking in. Splashed with informative sidebars and images, it is entertaining historical fiction.

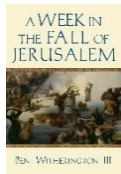
In these imaginative and absorbing narratives, New Testament scholars lead us behind the veil of centuries to see and experience the historical and social realities of this important era. Allowing the light of what we know to conjure possible events, these books are a fun and informative journey into the wrinkles and folds of lost stories.

In addition to the new release, *A Week in the Life of Rome*, titles in the Week in the Life Series include:



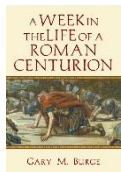
A Week in the Life of a Slave by John Byron, Available July 2, 2019, 132 pages, \$16, 978-0-8308-2483-0

From the pen of an accomplished New Testament scholar, this vivid historical fiction account follows the slave Onesimus, fleshing out the lived context of first-century Ephesus and providing a social and theological critique of slavery in the Roman Empire.



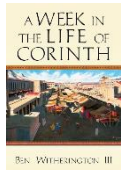
A Week in the Fall of Jerusalem by Ben Witherington III, August 22, 2017, 160 pages, \$17, 978-0-8308-5173-7

It's AD 70, and Jerusalem is falling to the Romans, its temple being destroyed. As Jews and Christians try to escape the city, we travel with some of them through an imagined week of flight and faith. In this imaginative and entertaining narrative, Ben Witherington leads us behind the veil of centuries to experience the historical and social realities of this epochal event.



A Week in the Life of a Roman Centurion by Gary M. Burge, April 6, 2014, 192 pages, \$20, 978-0-8308-2462-5

In this fast-paced, fictional account, we follow Appius, a Roman centurion, and Tullus, his Jewish slave, from battles to the gladiator arena and finally to the village of Capernaum where they encounter a Jewish prophet from Nazareth.



A Week in the Life of Corinth by Ben Witherington III, March 30, 2012, 159 pages, \$18, 978-0-8308-3962-9

In this work of historical fiction, Ben Witherington III provides a one-of-a-kind window into the social and cultural context of Paul's ministry.



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