

## **Paul the Missionary**

### **By Jeffrey A. D. Weima**

Welcome to this presentation on Paul the missionary. Some people don't have positive opinion of the Apostle Paul. They think that he's a hardliner, always running around telling people what to do. He's against women, he's against this group of people. Well, if you fit into that camp, I hope that this presentation will change your mind. You'll walk away from here a lot more impressed with the apostle Paul, not only what he accomplished, where he went, but also his character. It is true that Paul sometimes could be harsh and strong. But it's also true that Paul could often be soft and gentle, It all depended on the circumstances and what was needed. But in any case, let's explore more clearly and in greater detail, this important figure in the New Testament Church, the Apostle Paul.

Now, in answer to the question, Why study the life of Paul? Raymond Brown, an influential Catholic scholar wrote this:

“Next to Jesus, Paul has been the most influential figure in the history of Christianity. Although all the New Testament writers are working out the implications of Jesus for particular communities of believers, Paul, in his numerous letters does this on the widest scale of all. That range, plus the depth of his thought and the passion of his involvement have meant that since his letters became part of the New Testament, no Christian has been unaffected by what he has written, whether or not they know Paul's words, well, through what they have been taught about doctrine and piety, all Christians have become Paul's children in the faith.”

I'm struck by especially that last phrase, “all Christians have become Paul's children in the faith.” Do you think of yourself that way? I mean, you have your own family, you think of yourself as a child of a mom or a dad, but do you think of yourself as a child of the Apostle Paul? Well, let's explore his life more clearly so we can better understand our spiritual father.

Now to do that, the sources we look at are threefold.

One, we have what are often called primary sources, and these are the letters of the apostle Paul himself. Then we have

Secondly, another source, a well-known one to Christians, the Acts of the Apostles, and it is especially rich in sharing information about the life and the travels and the activities of the apostle.

And in third, there are non-canonical writings, writings outside the Bible. And we have to use those sources though, with some care.

Now, I've divided Paul's life up into about 13 or so categories, in order to make it more manageable. Of course, these categories aren't all of equal length, but they are, hopefully, a helpful way for us to better grasp the Apostle Paul and his life.

The first category that we're going to talk about is actually a rather important one and one that perhaps we don't give enough attention to. And that's Paul's early years. What do we know about the apostle before he became a Christian? What do we know about his life before he became a follower of Jesus Christ? Well, we know actually quite a bit and a number of those information or data is crucial for understanding things that Paul did or happen to him later on in life.

So for example, we learned something about his birth, he was born in the city of Tarsus, in the province of Cilicia. You can see there are a number of texts from the New Testament, where Paul claims to have originated from Tarsus of Cilicia. Now the city of Cilicia, is described by Paul in one of his texts as "no ordinary city." That's a special phrase used in the ancient world to describe the city of Athens. Athens, you would agree, is a no ordinary city. Have you ever thought of yourself as that way? Have you thought about your hometown and described your hometown as no ordinary city? Well, that's the claim Paul made about his hometown Cilicia and he wasn't exaggerating. Cilicia may not rank up there in the common knowledge of important cities like Alexandria, and Rome, and so forth. But Cilicia was an important city in the first century. It was an important commercial center. It was also an important university town. And Paul grew up in that particular place, and no doubt was influenced by that particular historical context.

Now in terms of his education, he went to Jerusalem to study. It's somewhat ambiguous whether you went there as a little boy or, more likely, as a young man, but he went to what I would like to call the Harvard School of Judaism in other words, he studied at the feet of Gamaliel. And Gamaliel was the most famous Jewish teacher of that day. Harvard is not an easy school to get into today, you have to have connections, you have to have often money, and to become a student of Gamaliel was the same thing. And so the fact that Paul was a student of Gamaliel, says something not only about the promise that he already showed, then in terms of education and learning, but probably also reflects something of his family, and maybe the influence and wealth and power that they must have had, even though they were Jews living far away from Palestine, in the city of Cilicia.

And Gamaliel, was indeed an influential Jewish leader. The Bible itself acknowledges that fact in Acts 5:34, it says, "Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people." And so Paul, at a young age, likely as a young man, moved from the province of Cilicia, the town of Tarsus, and moved to the Harvard School of Judaism, he became a student of Gamaliel.

Now, in terms of his religious orientation, we have to identify him as a Pharisee. Now, don't make the mistake that many Christians do nowadays, and kind of lump the Pharisees, the Sadducees all together. These were all distinct groups within Judaism. I mean, on one hand, they had a lot in common in terms of a belief in the one God and the importance of the Torah and things like that. But there was within Judaism, a variety of groups with their own passionate beliefs and distinctive identity. And Paul belonged then to the Pharisees. And he appealed to that a number of times in his life, for instance, when he was, toward the end of his life, brought before the Sanhedrin. And the Sanhedrin is that Jewish body made up of primarily two groups, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And Paul didn't want to be tried by them, because if he was tried by them and found guilty as he almost surely would have been, he would have been punished with death. And so Paul desperately wanted to be freed from Jewish authorities and

brought back under Roman control. And so he very cleverly appealed to his Pharisee background. He nodded all innocently with all calculation, he stood in front of this mixed body of the Sanhedrin and said, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees, and I stand on trial because of my hope and the resurrection of the dead Acts 23:6. You have to realize, of course, that Sadducees, the other half of the Sanhedrin, denied the bodily resurrection. And so Paul was clever in saying this and dividing the group against itself. And thus Paul was spit back into Roman control.

So Paul was indeed a Pharisee. But you know what the word Pharisee means? It means the separated ones. Just think about that for a minute. That says something important about the mentality that Paul and other Pharisees had. They were separated not only from Gentiles, lots of Jews wanted to do that, but they wanted to separate themselves, even from their fellow Jews. Because, you see, the Pharisees were a conservative group of people. And they were upset with their fellow Jews who didn't follow the rules of holiness, to the degree that they ought. After all, God had commanded his covenant people already at Mount Sinai to be a kingdom of priests, right, and a holy nation, a kingdom of priest. And so the Pharisees, even though they weren't priest, they said, We're going to live as if we're priests, we're going to follow the rules of holiness, just as if we were priests. And so they were ultra conservative. And so Paul belonged to that particular group, the Pharisees, those who had a very conscious identity of being separate even from their fellow Jews whom they did not consider to be holy enough.

And Paul is not just a Pharisee conservative that way, he is, by his own admission, a zealous fellow Pharisee. You can see there a text from both Acts 22 and Galatians 1, where he talks about he was zealous for God, he was zealous for the traditions of my father, and as for zeal, he persecuted the church. And that word zealous or zeal is a key term to for understanding the apostle Paul, because the word zeal or zealous automatically makes you think of an Old Testament story, the story of Phineas, it was a well-known embarrassing story in Israel's history, when the men of Israel were sleeping where they were having sex with the women of Moab, and in fact, we read there in numbers 25 there was one Israelite who kind of in a brazen way, took a woman Midianite woman and brought her in In front of all the elders and took her to his tent. And then we read in numbers 25, that Phineas was filled with something. He was filled with zeal. And he took his spear and he put that spirits for both the man and the woman in the tent. And then the interesting thing is, how does God evaluate this action? How does the Bible record this action? Well, we read the Numbers 25:13, that Phineas and his descendants will have a covenant of everlasting priesthood. Why? Because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites. That's an important phrase, that means that, that almost any act if it's done under the motivation of zeal for God, well, that's a positive act, even murder isn't murder, if you're zealous for God. Our text says that, that Phineas made atonement for Israelites, he, he, in a sense, paid for their sins with this act. And so if you're armed with this mentality, you become an extremely dangerous person, a person who's not only ultra conservative, but one who is zealous and really believes that you can do almost anything and you're free from impunity, as long as you are zealous for God.

Actually, we have a modern example of this kind of attitude. Not so many years ago, it was the sad event of the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated, he won a Nobel Peace Prize, but within his own country, especially among the the Zionists, he was perceived as

being a betrayer. And he was assassinated by what kind of person? Well, it wasn't some just dumb, hick person, you know, who was manipulated by some leaders to commit an act. No, this was a well-educated, trained lawyer, and his family wasn't embarrassed or felt bad about what he had done. No, he was, in a sense, zealous for God in this assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. And if you think about Paul, now, this way, you have a better appreciation for the kind of guy he was, in those early years. He was a bad guy for the church. I mean, it's an intimidating thing to have Paul, after you in those early days, he was gifted, he was well connected and maybe worst of all, he was zealous, he was zealous for God. And he was willing to do almost anything in the mistaken belief that he was doing the will of God.

Well, not surprisingly, then he also became then a persecutor of the Christian church. Armed with that kind of mentality, he naturally reacted with anger and hostility toward the early church. And very early on, you can see, Paul is introduced in Acts as kind of approving of the first martyr Steven in his stoning. And then he himself took a leadership role in persecuting the church, and he freely admits to that, for instance, in Galatians 1, he says, You have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, not just how I persecuted but how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it... They only heard the report, The man who formally persecuted us had ...

In Philippians, and First Timothy 2, he talks about being a persecutor and a violent man.

What did Paul look like? That's maybe not such a crucial question, but it may be an interesting one for us to consider. And it does have some other intriguing possibilities. Paul, of course, and nowhere else in the scriptures is this explicitly identified but Paul has this statement in Second Corinthians 10. That's a bit interesting to think about. Paul says "For some say his letters are weighty and forceful, but in person, he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." You have to understand that this is especially true because remember, these are the Corinthians So so the Corinthians the some people saying are people in Corinth that well, you know, he writes pretty well. You know, we admit that Paul's letters are pretty powerful. But you know, in person right in in public speaking, you know, he's not very impressive.

You see, public speaking in the first century was a public sport. People went to school and studied hard to talk good. I actually, you know, that's not right, right to talk well, and it wasn't just rules for speech by which you could impress people and then hopefully, they would hire you to teach their children or maybe you'd be hired by a city to serve as some kind of ambassador or to make their case before the Roman Empire or the governor or something like, like, like that. But you had to not only talk well and make sure your speech was impressive, but you had to be impressive in person too. We read about how these public speakers would, would do things like shave the hair off of all of their body, and they would maybe rub their body with oil because they had to look impressive as well as speak impressively.

And Paul, apparently, from this text, not only spoke in an unimpressive way, but it says in person, he was unimpressive. So there's not a lot there. But there's at least a strong hint that Paul wasn't a stud, we would say he wasn't the best looking guy.

And the iconography seems to bear that out. Now, the iconography, of course, is not always reliable. But it is interesting that the images of Paul are fairly consistent, and those images had to come from somewhere. And we always see Paul the same way as you see this on the screen, maybe not so different for me with the receding hairline, and other features as well. Now, we do get a description of Paul, not from the biblical account, but from post-biblical accounts so we have to be careful how we use this source. It was obviously written by a Christian it goes like this:

And he saw Paul coming man small in size, bald headed, bendy lay kind of noble mean with eyebrows meeting rather hook nose. But then we get the Christian description, but full of grace, sometimes he seemed like a man and sometimes he had the face of an angel.

There is a organization and Investigation Bureau in Germany that use computer technology, and what leather limited sources, we have to reconstruct a picture of Paul, and this is their proposal, which may be helpful for you, as you picture, Paul, in your mind as you have an image of the apostle.

Well, when we think about Paul's early years, we also have to think about his legal status, the fact that he was a Roman citizen, that too is an important key to understanding Paul's life. Now, you need to know that only a small percentage of the people of that day enjoyed Roman citizenship. And there were three ways you could become a Roman citizen:

You could receive it as a ward as a reward if you did something important for the Empire. And they would give it to you as a gift as a payback.

You could buy it but only at a great, great price. Maybe remember what the Roman commander in Jerusalem, this is at the end of Paul's third missionary journey, and there was kind of a riot in the temple, and the soldiers stationed there, in a sense, rescued Paul. And in the conversation, the commander said, Oh, I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship.

Or the third way is you could inherit it through birth. And that was the way that Paul inherited his citizenship, his parents had citizenship. And this is another clue that Paul likely came from a rich and powerful or well-connected Jewish family.

Now, Paul made good use of his citizenship during His ministry. The story in Philippi is one example of how once Paul, once the authorities in Philippi found that Paul was a Roman citizen, they realized they hadn't treated them right. And they were ready to, to send them go was like, Oops, you know, our bad, you know, let's just pretend this thing didn't happen. But Paul said "Not so fast," because Paul wants to make sure that the Christians who are left behind in Philippi didn't have any negative strike against them. He was concerned that from a legal point of view that Christianity, and this movement was in a sense, exonerated from any kind of charges.

Jerusalem, it also became helpful for Paul, that's the story I just told you about, at the end of the third missionary journey, when Paul was accused of doing something that he didn't really do, of bringing this Gentile into the inner court of the temple. And the mob that descended on Paul surely would have done him harm but the Roman soldiers stationed there, because if you want to

control Israel, you want to control the temple and so there was a garrison right there. They, in a sense, rescued Paul. And during that conversation, Paul mentioned and appealed to his Roman citizenship, and that, in a sense, guaranteed his safety.

And maybe the best known example of Paul appealing to his Roman citizenship is when he was in Caesarea. He was in Caesarea under house arrest for two years, and just when things were looking bad for him, that's when he appealed to Rome. That's what he could do as a Roman citizen. And so then that led to his long trip to Rome, and his ultimate appearance before the Roman Emperor himself. So Paul's Roman citizenship is also an important part of Paul's life.

It also impacted the nature of his imprisonment, because he was a Roman citizen, he didn't get thrown into any old jail and what's more, actually, the Romans didn't spend a lot of time and effort on prisoners. It was too expensive to do so they would just knock them off. They would just kill them rather than feed them and take care of them. But because Paul was a Roman citizen, both in Caesarea, where we just said he was for two years, and in Rome where he was for two years, he technically wasn't in prison. We often talk about Paul's imprisonment but, to be more accurate, he was in house arrest. So he was limited in terms of his movement, but he had some freedom. So for instance, in Caesarea, Acts 24 says that they were to give Paul some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs. And similarly in Rome, we read, and now Luke is with him so he uses the first person, he says, "When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier to guard him. For two whole years, Paul stayed there in his own rented house, and welcomed all who came to see him."

So Paul's Roman citizenship helped him a lot because he could carry on his ministry even while he was in house arrest, he could receive representatives from the various churches that he had founded, and others who came to him for guidance and question. He could write letters still while he was under house arrest, and he could have helpers whom he could send and carry out his ministry in that way.

Finally, in terms of Paul's early years, we need to talk about his trade or his skill, the fact that he was a leather worker. And this isn't surprising given Paul's Jewish and rabbinic training, because it was common for Jewish teachers to have some kind of practical skill to provide for themselves. And we read, for instance, in Corinth, how he connects with Priscilla and Aquila, this Jewish couple who got kicked out of Rome, and for a period went to Corinth, and Paul worked with them and Acts says because they were tent makers. Now, because tents were often made with leather, that's why it might be better and more accurate to call Paul, a leather worker. And therefore he made tents, but maybe some other kind of leather goods as well.

And Paul's skill or his trade was also an important part of his life and his ministry. It was important for Paul because he used it to avoid the accusation that he was involved in the gospel ministry only for money and selfish reasons. And he must have been sensitive to this because it comes up in a number of times during his life. For instance, when he talks to the Ephesian elders, toward the end of his life, or at least, he thought it was the end of his life, although he still had a few years after that. He said to them, Acts 21, "I have not coveted anyone silver or gold or clothing, you yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions." Right, Paul sounds like he's a bit defensive there. He says, you know,

despite apparently what other people are claiming that I haven't been greedy, I haven't coveted other people's money or their possessions, but rather that I work with my own hands and supplied my own needs.

And Paul does the same kind of defensive argument in First Thessalonians Two. He says, we work night and day in order not to be a burden to any of you while we preach the gospel to you. And the larger context of chapter two is Paul is defending himself in terms of false motives that Paul was only a charlatan, he was kind of like a used car salesman in the ancient world. This idea of preachers or speakers or philosophers who go from place to place and it will say anything and do anything in order to win over the praise or the money of people. Paul was aware of that stereotype, and he used his work in order to guard against it.

And he also uses his work as an example for other Christians to follow. In Second Thessalonians he deals with the problem of the idlers, these are people in the church who are sponging off of the generosity of fellow Christians. Instead of working, they were just living for free or, or, you know, taking advantage of whatever food or other gifts that fellow Christians might give. And the problem, even though Paul dealt with it at the beginning of His ministry in Thessaloniki, and briefly dealt with it again, in his first letter, the problem got worse instead of better. And so in the second letter, he has to have a whole long section, Second Thessalonians three from verse 6, all the way to 15. And during that time, he says, you know, he not only tells the church how they ought to discipline these members, but he says, we provided an example for you, right, you should follow my example working night and day in order not to be a burden to any of you. And so Paul's ministry, pardon me, his skill, his practical working day job, so to say, was an important part of Paul's ministry and understanding his life.

While we leave that first category of the early Paul, we move to the next category, which I've entitled Paul's Conversion.

## **Transcript of Video Part 2**

The second category that I've identified in Paul's life can be entitled Paul's conversion. Now, obviously, this is not a long period of time, but it certainly was a significant event in Paul's life. It's described three different times in the book of Acts and you might want to read those accounts more carefully. But Paul also appeals to it in his own letters. And it was an important point with him, for instance, writing to the Galatians, he's pretty animated, because you see some in Galatia, some opponents of Paul who come from Jerusalem, said, you know, Paul only got the gospel second hand, he only got it indirectly, when he spent time with James and with Peter. And so Paul, at the very beginning of the body of Galatians, the first thing that he talks about when he gets to the heart of the letter is, he says, pretty strongly I did not receive it, namely, the Gospel from any human source, like Peter, or James or anyone else, nor was I taught it, rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. So it was crucial for Paul that his calling his apostleship, was grounded not in any kind of group or human activity, but it was grounded in his call from Jesus Christ Himself.

And Paul appeals to it in another context to for example, in First Corinthians nine, Paul is in a sense, defending his apostleship over against Peter. Apparently, the Corinthians were impressed with the apostle Peter and provided shelter and food for him and his wife and now they didn't do the same thing for Paul and Paul's argument to them as well. Haven't I seen the Lord? And this is a question asked in a certain way, which means, yes, I have, right. I'm just as privileged or entitled to that kind of respect from you, as you gave to Peter.

And then in chapter 15, when Paul is defending the resurrection and the different people to whom Jesus appeared, he says, And last of all, He that is the Lord Jesus appeared to me, also. And so Paul's conversion was a big part in his life, and especially for remember the kind of mentality he had in his early life, which we talked about in our previous session. That kind of zealous, Pharisee mentality that he had, we can only begin to imagine how dramatic how earth shaking, it must have been for him to encounter Jesus and have to rethink his orientation and his allegiances and his commitment.

The next category that we need to talk about is entitled early missionary activity. I want to highlight for something for you at this point, notice the years they're 33 to 47. In other words, there are a lot of years, there are some 14 years here that we generally speaking, we know very little about. We're going to get to what we wrongly call in a little bit, Paul's first missionary journey. But we're going to see already now that when Paul engaged in his first missionary journey, it really wasn't his first missionary journey. He had actually been a Christian for quite a while and had been involved in missionary activity for quite a while. And so I want to stress for you that we have this large chunk of Paul's life about which we don't know that much - this 14, possibly 17, but most likely 14 year period. So this early missionary period, 14 years, can be divided into about three different timeframes.

The first timeframe is the three year Arabia and Damascus ministry. When Paul was converted in that dramatic encounter with Christ, then we read that he spent three years in Arabia. Now because the Bible doesn't say much about this, scholars start postulating Well, what did he do and where did he go? And sometimes a picture is painted of Paul of as kind of going to Arabia in the desert and he had to have a kind of mastic experience. He had to, you know, he had to kind of rethink things. He had to reframe his way of thinking. so dramatic was his conversion, and his new perspective from his former way of life.

I think, though, that's a bit of a romanticized and unjustified conclusion. When we read about Arabia, that's not the Arabian Peninsula, but it more accurately is the Nabatean kingdom, the Nabatean kingdom. And I don't think that Paul was engaged in some kind of monastic self reflective experience the whole time, for two reasons.

One, it doesn't fit the character of Paul. Paul is always an active person who in a sense, challenges others with the gospel and thereby quickly gets into trouble. And so we don't have a picture of Paul kind of receding like a wallflower into the desert and doing nothing for us. long period of time.

And what's more, the second reason I think this is because of a brief comment that Paul makes in his second letter to the Corinthians 11, verse 32. There we read that the king of Damascus, King



Aretus was out to get Paul. Now a couple of important things about this brief text. First of all, Damascus, a big city is in the region of Arabia. So that would fit the explanation that I've given you that Arabia is not just wilderness wandering for Paul, but it's actually living in communities and engage in some kind of missionary activity. And because we read that the king of the city was after Paul, well, that presupposes that Paul had done something to get the king's attention and more than that, to get the king ticked off with him, such that he wanted him arrested. And this fits exactly what Paul does later in life. When you preach the gospel, when you preach Jesus Christ crucified, resurrected, and returning, especially, that's a challenge to the existing political authorities and structures that gets you as a preacher often in trouble. And so that suggests that this three year Arabian Damascus ministry, even though we know very little about it was probably a time when Paul was involved in some kind of missionary activity.

Well, after the three years, remember this whole periods about 14 years, after the three year period, we have a brief period in which Paul travels then to Jerusalem. And we call that the conversion visit, I only stress that because Paul makes later visits to Jerusalem and I don't want you to confuse those later visits with this one. It's called the conversion visit because this is the first visit of Paul to Jerusalem after his conversion. And at first, none of the disciples wanted to meet him. It's like you meet with Paul, who I don't want to meet with. Well, you meet with Paul, you see, some of them thought it was just some massive ploy on Paul's part, to kind of pretend to be a Christian and maybe infiltrate the Christian groups. And maybe this fear is indeed justified if we know the kind of zealousness that Paul had in his pre-Christian, you know, period, how aggressively he opposed the church. But then we read about Barnabas, and I stress that because that explains why Barnabas connects with Paul later in life. Barnabas is the guy who brings Paul to the disciples. And they find out that Paul's conversion was a genuine one.

But Paul's presence again, creates controversy. And things get a little too sensitive for the Christian church with Paul around. And so the apostle say, Paul, you know, it would be better for us, you know, if you would maybe leave town, things are a little too tense and hot for us because of your presence. And notice where they send him. You're not surprised if you've been following this series on Paul's the missionary, they send him to Tarsus, well, that makes sense. They send him to his home town. So where is Paul now? Well, he's in Tarsus in the province of Cilicia. And he's there for about 10 years, right, a long period of Paul's life about which we know virtually nothing. I mean, he does say in Galatians, I went to Syria and Cilicia. So he does acknowledge where he went, which confirms the testimony of Acts. And though we don't read anything about this, we can only imagine that Paul does what he cannot help but do namely, preach the gospel. That's what he writes later to the Corinthians, "Woe to me unless I preach the gospel." So we imagine that Paul was involved in some kind of ministry, in his hometown, and maybe in the larger region of Cilicia.

Now, during this 10 year period, okay, then toward the end, something happens, namely, Barnabas comes into the picture. Now Barnabas is the guy who introduced Paul to the apostles and Paul's conversion visit. So he's one of the leading Christians working with the Apostles in Jerusalem. But the church in Antioch in Syria to the North was growing, partly because Christians had to flee some persecution, and partly because of the missionary activity in which they were engaged. And so the Christians in Antioch and the north said, you know, we're in trouble over here. And so they asked the apostles and leaders in Jerusalem to send for send some

help. And so Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem, up to Antioch to minister there. So Barnabas is ministering in Antioch in the north, and he himself is busy and he suddenly remembers Paul. He suddenly remembers this very gifted fellow, right, who is now also a convert of the gospel, who's not so far away and Tarsus. And so we read about in Acts 11. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him brought him to Antioch so for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with a church and great numbers of people. So hopefully in your mind, Paul is in the city of Antioch. And he's working as a helper to Barnabas. And this then brings that 14 year period that we know very little about a 14 year period, which you probably haven't even thought of before, unless you've carefully read the scriptures or maybe examined Paul's life, but we call that the early missionary activity.

Well, we move to the next period. And we can one more thing sorry, in the early missionary period, and that is the famine relief visit to Jerusalem. So while Paul was in the north in Antioch, working with Barnabas word came that there was a famine in the area of Jerusalem and Palestine and so the church in the north and Antioch decided to have a offering for the needy Christians down there. And I just want to make sure you don't confuse this relief gift and this trip with something that Paul did later in his life. Later on in Paul's life, we'll talk about the kind of The Collection, where Paul hit upon a number of his Gentile churches for a gift to needy Christians in the Jerusalem and Palestine area. But this is now a specific offering from the Church of Antioch and someone had to deliver it, and the people who delivered it were Barnabas, and Paul. So this would then be Paul's second or next visit to Jerusalem, not his conversion visit, we call this the Famine Relief visit.

Well, now we move to the next category, which is traditionally called First Missionary journey. And I hope you realize how inappropriately this obviously is in terms of a title because Paul has been a missionary and engaged in outreach activity for a number of years. But in any case, the church identifies Barnabas and Paul to be sent out and to engage in an evangelistic journey. And they're joined by a third person, John Mark. And after they are commissioned, they sail over to the island of Cyprus. Now, this makes sense because Barnabas is from Cyprus. And so naturally, Barnabas would go to a place where he has some local connections, where he has some family and some other familiar faces, where he can network and maybe enhance his ministry. And so we don't have time in this presentation to look at all the details of each missionary journey. I want to encourage you to read carefully through the biblical text, and flesh out the greater details that are found in all of these journeys so that this becomes more familiar to you. But they leave Cyprus and they convert actually, probably the most important convert of Paul's entire life, the proconsul, the governor of Cyprus, and of the region of Cilicia, and they sail from Cyprus north landing just outside of Perga. Acts 13:13 And then something important happens it's not a happy event. John Mark bails on them. John Mark, for whatever reason, we don't know why. maybe he was nervous, maybe he was scared, maybe it was homesick, but for whatever reason, he leaves the group. And it's just now just the two of them Barnabas and Paul, and they travel inland to Antioch and to Iconium and Derbe and Lystra and all kinds of amazing things happen to them, be sure you read the biblical texts and learn more about all of these events. They backtrack the same way they came leaving behind elders and all of these places, so that these fledgling churches would have some leadership and could flourish and grow. And the two of them returned to Antioch, the place where they started. The end of the so called first missionary journey.

Now, the next big event in Paul's life is yet another trip to Jerusalem, not the conversion visit, not the famine visit, but the Jerusalem Council visit. And the reason it was necessary is that some Christians from Jerusalem some Jewish believers went north to Antioch and said, you know, to really be a Christian, you have to be circumcised, you can't be saved unless you are circumcised. And so the church in the north and Antioch were perplexed by this claim. They were not happy with it. And so they said, Well, let's send some representatives to the apostles, the leaders in Jerusalem to discuss this matter. And so they picked, again because they must have been leaders, Paul and Barnabas. And Paul and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem where the Jerusalem Council is held. And the decision, I think, is known to you, the Jerusalem Council decided that Gentile Christians don't have to be circumcised but, but, just because I'm thinking now as a Jewish Christian leader in Jerusalem, just because we've given in on the circumcision issue, we don't want our Gentile brothers and sisters to think that anything goes and we know how Gentile Christians are, we're worried about certain practices, certain sins they might be tempted to. And so we're going to write them a letter, and we're not going to send it with Paul and Barnabas, we're going to send it with two of our own people to make sure that it's delivered and read and interpreted in the right letter and the right way. And so this letter goes out, it's often referred to as the Apostolic Decree, right, it, it records the decree the decision of the apostles on the issue of circumcision, but it also spells out some other things that they were concerned about. So Paul has the visit. It's a successful visit, they come back with the report. And then later on, of course, the church in Antioch and other places would have gotten this apostolic decree, this letter, delivered by two other people representing then the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem.

So that leads them to the next historical event, the second missionary journey, which again is a bit artificial, but the name has been around for so long it we're kind of stuck with it. And so Paul and Barnabas said to themselves, well, let's go back and revisit the churches, we started last time to see how they're doing and to encourage them. And they agreed on that, but then they disagreed on something else. They disagreed whether to take John Mark with them again. Barnabas said Yay, and Paul said Nay. And it's a bit sad to hear that the disagreement was so sharp, so strong that they had to part ways. Now part of the explanation for Barnabas willingness to take John Mark is, is that Barnabas and John Mark were cousins. So there was a family connection. So that may be one reason why Barnabas was willing to give John Mark a second chance. And, and we don't know why but Paul must have had some pretty strong compelling reasons not to take him. Maybe Paul was worried about what kind of impact John Mark would have on their ministry. But this sad event ultimately has a happy outcome, which I have to tell you already now because later in Paul's life, we can tell from his letters that Paul is involved in ministry, both again with Barnabas, and also with John Mark. And so it's good to see how ultimately Grace triumphs over sin and that Paul, who is, after all, an apostle who preaches a message of reconciliation demonstrates that also in his relationship with these Christian leaders.

Well, the two of them split and so Barnabas now with John Mark goes to Cyprus, right the place where they were last time to revisit the churches they had founded. And so Paul is going to go somewhere else. Paul goes by land and he goes first to the places in Asia Minor, where he and Barnabas established churches on the first missionary journey. But Paul needs a partner and so who's this partner? Well, maybe not surprisingly, it's Silas. Remember, Silas is in the area because he was selected by the Jerusalem leaders to deliver that apostolic decree. And so now Paul and Silas take out and they revisit the churches of Lystra and Derbe and Iconium. And

during that way, they picked up an additional person, an important person in Paul's life, one who became his 'spiritual son,' his name is Timothy. And so we have the three missionaries who keep traveling and they hit to Troas and again, I can't have time to go through all these details. I want to encourage you to read the Acts account and to flesh out all of these important stories to a greater degree. But in Troas Paul has the vision of the Macedonian man, they pick up by a fourth person Luke, because Acts shifts from the third person "they" did these things to suddenly the first person "we" did these things. And they sail, that is now the four of them Paul, Silas, John Mark and Luke, to Philippi. Then those famous events and Philippi happen, and then Luke is left behind it goes back to the third person and they go down the road through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessaloniki an important church mission there, run out of town to Berea. Paul goes by himself to Athens joined later by Timothy and by Silas. Paul sends them back. Paul goes on to Corinth. He's in Corinth for a year and a half, one of his longer stays. And then finally Paul sails across the Aegean to Ephesus, they want him to stay Paul says no, I've got to keep going. And he ultimately goes down to Jerusalem to visit the Christians there, and then finally ends up back where we started in Antioch of Syria. Thus the end of the so called second missionary journey.

Then the third missionary journey. And so Paul starts off yet again and goes through the region that we typically identify with as Galatia obviously encourages those churches that he founded in beforehand. And this time, seeing the second journey, the Spirit didn't allow Paul to head straight to Ephesus. Paul does go there. And Ephesus is a very important center, by far the most important city in anywhere in this region. And Paul is there for two years and three months. And Acts says the whole area, the whole region heard the gospel as a result of his ministry.

But during this time, other things happen, even some things that Acts don't tell us about. For instance, during this two years and three months, Paul makes an emergency visit to Corinth. Acts doesn't mention it, but it's described in Paul's letters to the Galatians. Paul has an emergency visit sails across the Aegean to Corinth, and then comes back again because of some difficulties over there.

But also during this time, I think it's important for you to realize that Paul starts his collection, Paul's collection. And so this is different from the famine relief that the Antiochian church gave earlier in Paul's life. Now this is now Paul toward the end of his life, trying to urge all of his different Gentile congregations to contribute to this collection. And I think Paul wants this collection to be a powerful sign not only of the effectiveness of His ministry, but a way of bridging the Gentile and Jewish communities, how the Gentile communities can be a blessing then to the Jewish Christian community.

And so Paul is traveling on the third missionary journey and he revisits churches in Macedonia, like in Philippi, and in Thessaloniki, maybe in Appolonia and Amphipolis and other places in the area. And Paul finally makes his way to Corinth. And Paul is in Corinth, now for on the third missionary journey for a short time actually, for- Do I have a slide here? No, I don't for that - for about three months. And during the three months stay, because he's waiting for the winter season to change, it's dangerous to sail on the Mediterranean even today, with modern ships during those winter months. He's ready to sail to the east back on the end of the third missionary journey, where there's a plot against his life. So Paul's got all this cash with him. He's collecting

all these offerings from different churches. And he's got a lot of people with him, because churches have given not only money, but representatives. So Paul's got a large entourage. And so because of a plot against Paul's life, the group splits. Paul backtracks, as you can see on the map, he retraces by land, a good chunk of the group sail and they meet over by Troas and they continue on the rest of the third missionary journey together. And so Paul ultimately goes to Jerusalem yet again, it will be ultimately his fifth visit. And this time he's got all of this money which he gives to the needy Christians in that area.

Now, on this end, part of the third missionary journey, Paul does something he goes to the temple this is what we talked about earlier, and the Jews who are not Christians think they see this Gentile with Paul, his name is Trophimus from Ephesus they wrongly think that Paul has brought him into the inner part of the temple, which is a big prohibition and one which the Romans allowed the Jewish to control as part of their own individual Jewish laws. And so a crowd descended on Paul and surely would have done in physical harm. And that's when he is arrested by that Roman commander who asked him about his citizenship and all of that then leads to the next event in Paul's life, right which is the Caesarean imprisonment.

Paul was in prison in the governor's home on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea for two years. He started off under the governor Felix and during the time he appeared to him and remember that Paul because of his Roman citizenship, he's not really in prison, he's more under house arrest. He has some freedom to carry on his ministry to receive people and to send emissaries to various places. Well, Felix' two year term comes to an end and Festus is the new governor. And so Paul's case kind of comes up again. And during that time, Paul is shifted off to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. This is what Paul doesn't want to be handled by them because they had authority over this religious matter which, if he were found guilty would result in his death. And that's when Paul pulled out his Pharisee card, and he thereby split the Sanhedrin who were divided between Pharisees and Sadducees. And Paul went back under Festus control and during that time, then Paul also appealed to Caesar, which as a Roman citizen, he had a right to do. And Caesar during this time was Nero, Paul's caesarean two year house arrest, caesarean imprisonment.

So after Paul's caesarean house arrest imprisonment, and because he appealed to Caesar, which he could do as a Roman citizen, he began then this journey to Rome. And it was not an easy journey, as you know, because the captain didn't listen to his advice and as a result got caught up in a storm, and we have the boat crash, and Paul lands on the shore of Malta. But his life and the life of everyone on the ship is saved. And then Paul has to pick another ship because there are lots of ships plying the Mediterranean Sea. And these are other ships who are laying low during the three months of the winter season. And so Paul is able to pick up another ship, which takes him the last part of his journey, and Paul finally arrives in Rome.

But then he has to wait yet another two years, because the next category for us to think about is his Roman imprisonment. And again, we need to remember as a Roman citizen and Acts specifically says that he wasn't in prison, he was more in house arrest, Acts 28, verse 30, right. It says, For two whole years, Paul stayed in his own rented house, and welcomed all who came to see him, he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. This is important for Acts because this is where Acts kind of

reaches a climax. Acts is not a biography of Paul, I have to say that again, because sometimes we don't get that right. Acts is not a biography of Paul. Paul doesn't even make his appearance until well into several chapters. Acts is rather a story about the spread of the gospel, how Jesus says at the beginning, you will be my witnesses to Jerusalem and to Samaria, and to Judea, and to the ends of the earth. And by the end of Acts, that's exactly what happens. The gospel is in the capital of the Roman Empire. And Paul is boldly and without hindrance, proclaiming the good news of the gospel. Paul's two year - at least - Roman imprisonment.

Now, we've got some other categories to add. But notice, I had to put a question mark after this, because, frankly, we can't be 100% sure about this next category, namely Paul's fourth missionary journey. Yet there are some strong suggestions both in the Bible and outside the Bible about what happened, that Paul had his case before the Emperor, and that Paul was as what often happened to people who were Roman citizens, and who got into some trouble, he was banished somewhere. This is very common to take a leading person or somebody, especially in a privileged position with Roman citizenship, and you would punish them by sending them to some remote place and say, Go there and stay out of trouble. And it seems likely that that's probably what happened to Paul, namely, that he was first released. And then he didn't do what he was supposed to do, at least from the Roman point of view. He did what he was supposed to do from the Divine point of view. Remember, First Corinthians 9, Paul says, Woe to me unless I preach. And so Paul is released. But he again engages in the preaching of the Gospel, which then again, gets him into trouble, which leads them to be arrested, and then it would have been found out again that he had been charged before and didn't do what he had been told and then would get a stronger penalty.

But what are some clues? What are some strong suggestions that Paul was released and that he didn't engage in yet a another missionary journey? Well, we have clues from the letters of Paul himself, especially the pastoral letters, the pastoral letters are First and Second Timothy and Titus. And there are some events that Paul refers to in them that don't really fit anywhere else in Paul's life. And the only way they could have happened is if they could have happened later in Paul's life when he was apparently released and engaged in some further ministry. So for example, when Paul writes to Titus, The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put an order what was left unfinished, appoint elders in every town as I directed to you. Well, when was Paul originally in Crete, and then carried on this ministry? It's possible it happened somewhere earlier in Paul's life, and the Bible just doesn't record it. But maybe a better alternative is it happened after Paul's first arrest his banishment, and then he resumed his evangelistic activity. We have certainly the desire of Paul to go to other places beyond that, which has found an Acts. In the end of Romans Paul says, I plan on doing so - namely visiting new Christians in Rome - when I go to Spain, I hope to see you right in Rome while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, namely to Spain. So after I have finished this task, this task is bringing at the end of the third missionary journey that collection that relief aid to Judea right after I finished doing that he writes to the Romans to make sure that you and they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain, and visit you on the way. So Paul's desire was to go further west to places like Spain. And it looks like he had an opportunity to carry that out after his first arrest and then later release.

Clement of Rome says exactly that, in his letter. This is not a biblical letter, but one written shortly after the New Testament. He writes, after Paul had been seven times in chains, and had been driven into exile and had been stoned and it preached in the East and in the West, he won the genuine glory for his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and having reached the farthest limits of the West. So Clement has clearly an idea that Paul did get to other regions further west and the proclamation of the gospel.

The Muratorian Canon is a collection of biblical books. And there it has a brief reference, which is also suggestive. It talks about the departure of Paul from Rome, when he journeyed to Spain.

And Eusebius was not only a bishop of Caesarea, but he records a lot of early church history and he says this is exactly what happened to Paul, he says, after pleading his case, that is Paul's case before the Roman emperor, Paul is said to have been sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and after a second visit to the city of Rome, that he finished his life with martyrdom.

So we do have a question mark after fourth missionary journey. But there are a number of strong clues both in the Bible and outside the Bible, that this is indeed what happened.

Well, the last event is a sad one, but an important one too, and that is Paul's death. And the early tradition always dates, Paul's martyrdom of both Paul and Peter to the reign and the persecutions of the Emperor Nero. However, there was a difference in the way that they died. Peter was not a Roman citizen, and Paul was. And so because he was a Roman citizen, the testimony is quite clear, and it's consistent with his Roman citizenship, namely that Paul was beheaded. He was beheaded on the Ostian Way, a major Roman highway, just outside the city gates. You never killed somebody inside the city or rarely. So right? You always did it outside the city, because that's where the graveyards, that's where the body would be deposited. And in fact, there's a church still today, it's called St. Paul Outside the Walls church, because this is the place in Paul's day that was just outside the city walls of Rome, the place where Paul was martyred, and where his body was buried. And so it's quite clear that Paul was not killed, like Peter was, you know, crucified or upside down, nor was Paul killed you know, in the games, like many Christians were but he was killed, you might not think of it as a very nice way but compared to crucifixion, or to being thrown to the beasts, beheading is at least a much more humane way to die.

This is the inside of the St. Paul outside the church walls church, where the grave of Paul is supposedly located, actually, some excavation has shown here a number I mean, there's this is an area where graves are located. And a number of these graves date to the first century, the time of the Apostle Paul. And so, Paul, here's an image from the 1500s. Paul, most likely as a Roman citizen, was killed by beheading. And Paul commands, the Colossians. Remember, he wrote Colossians, when he was in Rome, under house arrest, he says to them, Remember my chains. In other words, remember that I am suffering on behalf of the gospel. And in a similar way, we should think about Paul in his life, and especially his death, we could hear him say almost to us Remember my decapitation. It's not a happy thing to hear. But it's a important challenge whether we too not only hear the gospel, but are willing to proclaim the gospel, even in places where we might get pushback even where our life might be threatened.

Well, dear friend, we come to the end of our study of Paul the missionary, I hope that Paul is no longer just a name for you. Or if you had maybe a stereotype view of Paul in a certain way that maybe wasn't flattering or helpful, that, that has been corrected by this study. Paul was an important figure in the New Testament church. God used this important figure in in great ways to proclaim the good news and to spread the growth of the church.

And so may or our understanding of Paul, the man Paul the missionary, help us to be better readers and interpreters of his letters, so that we can better understand again what God was saying, not only to the people then and there, but what God is also saying to us here and now.



**Paul: The Missionary**  
**By Jeffrey A. D. Weima**  
**Slide Contents**

**Introduction**

**Q. Why Study the Life of Paul?**

- Raymond E. Brown: “Next to Jesus Paul has been the most influential figure in the history of Christianity...Whether or not they know Paul’s words well, through what they have been taught about doctrine and piety, all Christians have become Paul’s children in the faith” (page 422)

**How do we know about the life of Paul?**

**I. Sources about the Life of Paul**

"Primary" source: Paul's Letters: What Paul himself wrote

"Secondary" source: Acts of the Apostles: What others wrote about Paul

Other sources: Apocryphal writings: Writings outside the Bible (E.g., *The Acts of Paul*)

**II. Paul’s Early Years**

1. **Birth**: Tarsus of Cilicia

- *Acts 21:39* “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city”
- *Acts 22:2* “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia”
- *Acts 9:30* Christian leaders in Jerusalem take Paul to Caesarea “and sent him off to Tarsus”
- *Gal 1:21* “Then I went to Syria and Cilicia”

1. **Birth**: Tarsus of Cilicia

- “*no ordinary city*”: phrase used by Euripides (480-406 BC) to describe great city of Athens
- Tarsus was important business center, university city and crossroad of travel
- Paul’s Jewish parentage also strongly asserted in Rom 11:1 and Phil 3:5

## 2. Education: Jerusalem

- *Acts 22:3* "...but brought up in this city [Jerusalem]. I studied under Gamaliel ..."
- Paul went either as a boy or as a young man to the "Harvard" school of Judaism
- *Gamaliel*: the most famous Jewish teacher of the 1<sup>st</sup> century (*Acts 5:34* "Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by The Bible and its Story ; possibly a grandson of the great religious leader Hillel

## 3. Religious Orientation: Zealous Pharisee

- Paul belonged to conservative Jewish party of the Pharisees
- *Acts 23:6* "I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead"
- *Phil 3:5* "in regard to the law, a Pharisee"
- *Pharisee* = "the separated ones"
- Paul's zeal or zealousness
- *Acts 22:3* "thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors and zealous for God"
- *Gal 1:13-14* "and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers"
- *Phil 3:6* "as for zeal, persecuting the church"
- Numbers 25:13 "He [Phinehas] and his descendants will have a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites.

## 4. Persecutor of the Christian Church:

- *Acts 8:1* "And Saul approved of their killing him [Stephen]"
- *Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; 22:4-5; 26:9-11*
- *Gal 1:13, 23* "For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it ... They only heard the report: 'The man who formerly persecuted us ...'"
- *Phil 3:6* "... persecuting the church"
- *1 Tim 1:13* "Even though I was once ... a persecutor and a violent man"

## 5. Appearance:

*2 Cor 10:10* "For some say, 'His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing'"

*Acts of Paul* (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD):

"And he saw Paul coming, a man small in size, baldheaded, bandy-legged, of noble mien, with eyebrows meeting, rather hook-nosed, full of grace. Sometimes he seemed like a man, and sometimes he had the face of an angel" (3)

## 6. Legal Status: Roman Citizen

- Paul was a Roman citizen
- Only a small percentage of population enjoyed this great privilege
- Three means of obtaining citizenship:
  - Inherit it through birth (so Paul: “I was born a citizen” [Acts 22:28])
  - Receive it as a reward for special service to the Roman empire
  - Purchase it at a great price (so Roman commander in Jerusalem: “I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship” [Acts 22:28])

## 7. Paul made good use of his citizenship:

- Philippi incident (Acts 16:35-39)
- Jerusalem incident (Acts 22:22-29)
- Caesarean appeal (Acts 25:10-12)

Paul’s citizenship also impacted the nature of both his lengthy Caesarean and Roman imprisonment— not in jail but under “house arrest”

- Acts 24:23 “...to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs”
- Acts 28:16, 30 “When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him ... For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him”

## 8. Trade/Skill: Leatherworker

- Paul learned a trade likely as part of his rabbinical training, since Jewish teachers were expected to support themselves by some form of labor
- *Acts 18:3* “And because he was of the same trade he stayed with them [Aquila and Priscilla], and they worked, for by trade they were tentmakers”
- Since tents were usually made with leather, it may be better to call Paul a “leather worker” who not only made and repaired tents but a range of leather goods

Paul’s example of working to provide for his own support has led to the modern idea of a “tent making ministry”

## 9. Paul's Trade/ Skills: Leatherworker

- Paul worked in order to avoid accusation that his ministry was selfishly motivated
- *Acts 21:33-34* “I have not coveted anyone silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions”

- *1 Thess 2:9* “We worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you” (in the context of 2:1-12 where Paul defends the integrity of his motives for ministry)

Paul’s example of working to provide for his own support has led to the modern idea of a “tent making ministry”

- *2 Thess 3:7-9* “We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we did not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘Anyone who is unwilling to work shall not eat’”
- *1 Cor 4:12* “We work hard with our own hands”

### III. Paul’s Conversion (AD 33)

#### 1. The Conversion Event:

Secondary source:

- Acts 9:1-19
- Acts 22:1-21
- Acts 26:2-23

Primary Source:

•Gal 1:11-12 “I did not receive it [the gospel] from any human source nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ”

#### 2. Paul's Appeals to his Conversion Encounter with

*1 Cor 9:1* “Have I not seen the Lord?” Christ:

*1 Cor 15:8* “and last of all he [the Lord Jesus] appeared to me also”

### IV. Early Missionary Activity (AD 33-47)

#### 1. Three Year “Arabia” & Damascus Ministry:

- After conversion, Paul spends three years in Arabia & Damascus
- *Gal 1:17* “I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I return to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem”
- *Arabia* = not Arabian Peninsula but the Nabatean Kingdom in northeast region of the Dead Sea, including city of Damascus (2 Cor 11:32)

## **2. 1<sup>st</sup> (“Conversion”) Visit to Jerusalem:**

After three year ministry in Arabia & Damascus, Paul makes the first of what will be five visits to Jerusalem

*Gal 1:18* “Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas (Peter) and stayed with him fifteen days...”

*Acts 9:26-30* Barnabas brings Paul to the Jerusalem apostles; Hellenistic Jews try to kill Paul and so believers take Paul to Caesarea and send him by boat to his home city of Tarsus

## **3. Ten Year Tarsus Ministry:**

- *Acts 9:30* “...and sent him off to Tarsus”
- *Gal 1:21* “Then I went to Syria and Cilicia ... Then after fourteen years, I went again to Jerusalem”
- 14 years is likely from date of his conversion; if one deducts 3-year ministry in Arabia and Damascus, and deducts 1-year ministry in Antioch (see below), then 10 years are left for Tarsus ministry

## **4. One Year Antioch Ministry:**

- Barnabas, who had been sent north from Jerusalem to minister in Antioch, brings Paul from Tarsus to help him
- *Acts 11:25-26* “Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people”

## **5. 2<sup>nd</sup> (“Famine Relief”) Visit to Jerusalem:**

*Acts 11:27-30* Agabus predicts severe famine over entire Roman world and so Antioch church sends Barnabas and Saul to deliver the famine relief to Christians in Judea

*Gal 2:1-10* “Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas”

## **V. First Missionary Journey (AD 47-48)**

*Acts 13:4-14:28*

- Antioch church commissions Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to begin evangelistic trip; John Mark joins the missionary pair
- Travel to Cyprus—home of Barnabas (*Acts 4:36*) & southern Galatia
- John Mark leaves during middle of journey

### **Journey to Jerusalem Council (AD 48/49)**

- Jewish Christians (“Judaizers”) from Jerusalem travel north to Antioch and claim: “Unless you are circumcised ... you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1)
- Paul and Barnabas, along with some others, are appointed to discuss this issue with Jerusalem leaders (Paul’s 3<sup>rd</sup> visit to Jerusalem)
- “Jerusalem Council” reaches a decision and then sends out to all the Gentile churches via Judas and Silas (who later travels with Paul) the “Apostolic Decree” which explains the decision

### **VII. Second Missionary Journey (AD 49-51)**

Barnabas and Mark return to Cyprus

Paul and Silas revisit Asia Minor churches & then go to new regions

### **VIII. Third Missionary Journey (AD 52-57)**

Acts 18:23-21:26

- Paul sent out again from Antioch on a 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey
- Lengthy stay in Ephesus (2 years & 3 months)
- Delivery of relief aid to Jerusalem (5<sup>th</sup> visit) which leads to his arrest

### **IX. Caesarean Imprisonment (AD 57-59)**

- *Felix*: Paul appears over 2-year period before governor (and his Jewish wife Drusilla) who hoped to be offered a bribe for Paul; he commands the centurion: “Give him [Paul] some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs” (Acts 24:23)
- *Festus*: Before new governor Paul appeals to Caesar to avoid being tried by Jewish leaders
- Agrippa II & Bernice: Paul meets with this Jewish king & his sister

### **X. Journey to Rome (AD 59-60)**

Acts 27:1-28:31

- Paul appeals to Caesar and so undertakes his prison journey to Rome
- After storm off Crete, Paul’s ship crashes on shore of Malta
- Paul takes another ship and finally arrives in Rome

## **XI. Roman Imprisonment (AD 60-62)**

- *Acts 28:16*: “When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him”
- *Acts 28:30*: “For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!”
- House arrest versus prison

## **XII. Fourth Missionary Journey? (AD 62-67)**

- Acts ends in chapter 28 with Paul freely preaching the gospel in the capital city of the Roman empire—a fulfillment of Jesus’ command in the opening of the book to “*be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*” (1:8)
- Acts, therefore, does not spell out how Paul’s life ended
- Was he acquitted and then began a 4<sup>th</sup> missionary journey?

### **Evidence: Pastoral Letters**

- *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*: events referred to in these letters cannot be fit anywhere into previous travels of Paul and thus assume a release from house arrest and a fourth missionary journey
- *Titus 1:5* “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you”
- Implies that Paul and Titus were in Crete, a ministry not mentioned anywhere in Acts

### **Evidence: Romans**

• *Romans 15:24, 28* “I plan on doing so [visiting the Christians in Rome] when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there [Spain] ... So after I have completed this task [to bring relief aid to Judea] and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way”

### **Evidence: Clement of Rome**

- Clement of Rome (AD 30 – 100)
- *Epistle to the Corinthians* (also known as *1 Clement*) 5:6-7 “After he [Paul] had been seven times in chains, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, and had preached in the East and the West, he won the genuine glory for his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world and having reached the farthest limits of the west”

### **Evidence: Muratorian Canon**

- *Muratorian Canon* (AD 170): the first explicit catalogue of NT books or the canon; an 85 line fragment of an 8<sup>th</sup> century Latin manuscript which is a translation from a Greek original dating to 170 due to its reference to Pius I, bishop of Rome (142-157) as recent; named after discoverer of the fragment, L. A. Muratori
- *Lines 38-39*: “the departure of Paul from the city [of Rome] when he journeyed to Spain”

### **Evidence: Eusebius**

- Eusebius was Bishop of Caesarea and a church historian (AD 265-340)
- *Ecclesiastical History* 2.22.3: “After pleading his cause, he [Paul] is said to have been sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and after a second visit to the city [of Rome], that he finished his life with martyrdom”

### **XIII. Paul’s Death (AD 67/68)**

- Early tradition consistently dates the martyrdom of both Paul and Peter during the reign and persecutions of Nero (AD 54-68) in Rome
  - Paul was beheaded with the sword at the third milestone on the Ostian Way, at a place called Aquae Salviae, and buried on the site covered now by the basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls
- Paul was almost certainly *not* martyred along with Nero’s gruesome killing of the Christians in Rome (thrown to the beasts, burnt alive as human torches, wrapped in animal skins and attacked by animals, etc.)
- Two facts support this:
- Paul’s status as a Roman citizen ensured that he would be killed only after a trial
  - Paul’s death by beheading is the normal (and more humane) means by which Roman citizens were executed after being tried and sentenced to death

Paul commands his readers to remember the sacrifice that comes from being a follower of Christ: “Remember my chains!” (Col 4:18)

Paul similarly commands his readers now after his martyrdom in an even more powerful fashion: “Remember my decapitation!”

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