

**The Life and Missionary Journeys of St. Paul**  
*“I do it all for the sake of the Gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:23)*

**I. Biographical**

1. A.D. 8 - Born in Tarsus in Cilicia (Eastern part of modern Turkey) (cf Acts 22:3)
  - a. Tarsus – cosmopolitan university town; center for stoicism; Jewish presence throughout region
2. Parents members of the Tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5)
3. As a Jew of the Diaspora - Given 2 names: Original Hebrew: Sual (Greek: *Saulos*); Paul (Ltn: *Paullus*)
4. Spoke Greek and Roman citizen (cf. Acts 22:25-28)
5. Learned manual labor as a “tent maker” (cf Acts 18:3; Acts 20:33-35)
6. Exposure to various cultures – Roman, Greek, Hebrew → disposed to a true universality

**II. Education**

1. Early life in Tarsus: Hellenistic (Greek) influence; exposure to stoicism; familiar in the study of rhetoric
2. At 12 or 13 years (A.D. 20-21), Paul left Tarsus and moved to Jerusalem (in Palestine)
  - a. In Jerusalem educated by Rabbi Gamaliel the Elder (nephew of Rabbi Hillel)
  - b. Education in strict Pharisaism (school of Hillel); developed zeal for the Mosaic Torah (cf Gal 1:14; Phil 3:5-6; Acts 22:3; 23:6; 26:5)

**III. Early Persecution of the Church as a Pharisee: ca A.D. 30-36 (Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil 3:5)**

1. Major concerns of Pharisees:
  - a. Zeal for the Law (written and oral); b. Purity of Israel; c. Belief in the bodily Resurrection of the dead (likely part of apocalyptic world view that God was about to transform history)
2. Saw a risk in the new movement of Jesus of Nazareth as threat to Jewish identity
  - a. Fiercely persecuted the Church: Saul “laid waste” the church (Acts 8:3) involving imprisonments, beatings, and even executions (Acts 9:1, 22:4, 26:9-11)

**IV. Conversion of Saul (Paul) on the Road to Damascus (Syrian city just North of Palestine): A.D. 32 or 36**

1. “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?...I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting...” (Acts 9:4-5)
2. Chosen instrument: to carry the gospel beyond Palestine (Acts 9:15)
  - a. Involved traveling missions to evangelize the Gentiles, governors & kings, and the sons of Israel

**V. Preaching after Initial Conversion**

1. Preaches in Damascus and the Jews plotted to kill him (Acts 9:19-23)
2. Goes to Jerusalem – preaches boldly and disputes Hellenists – they also sought to kill him (Acts 9:28-30)
  - a. Went back to Tarsus until summoned to Syrian Antioch (Acts 9:30; 11:25-26)
3. Remained in Antioch 1 year with Barnabas as they preached and taught (Acts 11:26)
  - a. Saul and Barnabas commissioned for a specific missionary task (Acts 13:1-3)
  - b. Saul is hereafter referred to as Paul (with the exception of recounting his conversion) (Acts 13:9)

**VI. Missionary Journeys**

**1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey to Galatia: A.D. 46-49** (Acts 13:4-14:28)

1. Departed from Antioch (of Syria), went down to Selucia, and from there sailed to Cyprus (island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea; was a Roman province; homeland of Barnabas)
2. Preached in both Salamis and Paphos (of Cyprus)
3. Sailed from Paphos to Attalia and Perga (of Pamphylia)
4. Moved from Perga to Antioch of Pisidia (in Southern Galatia)
5. After persecution in Antioch of Pisidia, moved on to Iconium (city in Southern Galatia) and then to Lystra and Derbe (cities of Lycaonia also in southern Galatia)
6. After Derbe, returned to Lystra, Iconium and to Antioch (of Pisidia)
7. Returned to Perga and Attalia (of Pamphylia); sailed back to Antioch (of Syria) where they had begun their journey

**Council of Jerusalem: ca. A.D. 49** (between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journeys)

1. After 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey, Paul and Barnabas sent to Jerusalem for Council of Jerusalem
2. Converted pagans not obliged to observe Mosaic Law (i.e., circumcision) (cf. Acts 15:6-30)
3. The Jerusalem delegation then sent Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas to the Church of Antioch

**2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey to Greece: A.D. 50 – 52** (Acts 15:36 – 18:22) (Paul and Barnabas separated prior to this 2<sup>nd</sup> journey; Paul chose Silas and later Timothy to accompany him)

1. Beginning in Antioch, went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches
2. Came to Lystra (in Southern Galatia), Timothy accompanied Paul on his journey
3. Went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia; forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go directly west (Asia) or directly north (Bithynia). therefore went to Troas

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey to Greece (continued)**

4. In Troas Paul had a vision of a man in Macedonia who called him to help them; He crossed over from Asia Minor to evangelize the mainland of Europe near Greece (Macedonia)
5. Went from Troas, through Samothrace, Neapolis, arriving at Philippi (Roman colony and leading city of Macedonia)
  - a. Beaten, imprisoned for exorcising a demon from a fortune teller; earthquake miraculously freed from prison
6. Left Philippi, passed through Amphipolis, Apollonia and arrived at Thessalonica, the leading city of the Roman Province of Macedonia (northern Greece). Church established there A.D. 50
  - a. Persecution in Thessalonica, the brethren sent Paul and Silas to Berea, then Paul to Athens alone
7. Paul went to Athens (capital of ancient Greek culture)
  - a. Preached to pagans and Greeks in the Areopagus; his preaching served as a model of how to translate the Gospel into Greek culture; God not foreign to the culture, but awaited them, as the answer to the most profound questions
8. After Athens, he went to Corinth (Capital of the Roman province of Achaia in S. Greece) arriving about A.D. 50-51
  - a. Corinth had reputation for sexual impurity and ruthless business tactics
  - b. Some opposed him but many were open to his preaching; stayed 1 ½ yrs. in Corinth (ca. A.D. 50-52)
  - c. Had to appear before the governor, Gallio, as he was accused of illegal worship
9. Left Corinth and sailed for Syria: arrived in Ephesus. sailed on to Caesarea. and went down to Antioch

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey – Paul returns to Asia and Greece: A.D. 53-58** (Acts 18:23-21:15)

1. After some time in Antioch (of Syria), he departed and went through regions of Galatia and Phrygia
  - a. Antioch had become the point of origin of the Church of the pagans; place where term “Christian” was born
2. Paul returned to Ephesus, capital of the province of Asia (southwest Turkey) where he stayed for 2 years
  - a. Ministry very fruitful in Ephesus; from here wrote letters to the Thessalonians and Corinthians
  - b. Some in the city (silversmiths & tradesmen) incited the people against him, as their income diminished with the decline of the worship of Artemis. Because of this, Paul had to flee to the north
3. Departed for Macedonia, then moved on to Greece; spent 3 months in Greece
  - a. Plot made against him by the Jews, so he departed to Troas where Luke met up with him (stayed 7 days)
4. Went to Assos, then Mitylene, Chios, Samos and Miletus
  - a. Elders of the Ephesian Church came to Miletus to meet with him; spoke about being true pastors of the Church
5. From Miletus, he set sail for Tyre (passing through Cos, Rhodes, Patara).
6. Went from Tyre, to Ptolema, to Caesarea and eventually Jerusalem (the final destination of his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey)
  - a. They arrived in Jerusalem about A.D. 58
  - b. He was arrested in Jerusalem because of a misunderstanding in which some Jews mistook other Jews of Greek origin for pagans (who were introduced by Paul in the Temple area reserved only for Israelites); Roman tribune guarding the area of the Temple, intervened to prevent Paul’s sentence of death
  - c. Imprisoned in Caesarea; appealed to Caesar (Nero the at time); Procurator sent him to Rome under military custody
7. Paul most likely wrote the book of Romans during final months of this 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey, probably during the winter of late A.D. 57 or early 58 (cf Acts 15:26; 20:1-3)

### **Paul’s 4<sup>th</sup> Journey (Arrested in Jerusalem – Imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome)** (Acts 21:15-28:16) (Paul stayed in Rome under house arrest for 2 years, A.D. 60-62)

1. From Caesarea to Sidon and to Myra (in Lycia)
2. From Myra to Cnidus, to Fair Haven (on the Island of Crete); encountered storm and drifted to Malta for safety
3. From Malta they continued on to Rome (passing through the cities of Syracuse, Rhegium, and Puteoli)
  - a. The Christians of Rome went to meet him at the Appia Forum and others at the Three Taverns
  - b. Presence of Christians before Paul’s arrival indicates that the Romans already embraced the faith (Rom 1:8)
4. Under house arrest, chained at all times to a Roman soldier, still had freedom to continue limited apostolic work
5. Wrote the “Captivity Epistles” to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and to Philemon
6. Paul’s case before Caesar – Luke does not indicate the outcome
7. Preaching in Rome - preliminary fulfillment of Jesus’ mandate to witness to the “ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8)

### **IV. Subsequent Ministry**

1. Paul expressed intention to travel *westward* from Rome to Spain (Rom 15:24) as well as *eastward* from Rome to Macedonia and Asia Minor (Phil 2:24; Philem 22). Evidence suggests he carried out both journeys:
  - a. Paul evangelized the island of Crete in the east (Titus 2:5); this mission would not have been possible to fit into Paul’s travel schedule (described earlier in Acts)
  - b. Clement of Rome - Paul carried the Gospel to limits of the west
  - c. Tradition holds Paul was later rearrested and martyred (beheaded) in Rome (mid 60’s)