



Chapter Two - Paul's Resume:

The Mission of the former persecutor

1. Paul was
 - a. a Jew of the Diaspora - born in Tarsus in Cilicia (eastern Turkey)
 - i. Tarsus was a thriving, cosmopolitan university town
 - ii. Several schools of rhetoric in Tarsus - **Hellenistic**
 - iii. Tarsus was a center of **Stoicism** - ethics and daily life, not so much philosophy
 - iv. Jews of the Diaspora were common in Tarsus
 - v. Scripture in Tarsus would have been written in Greek - the **Septuagint** (LXX)
 - vi. Paul may have also read Scripture in **Hebrew/Aramaic** as he self-designated as a "Hebrew of Hebrews"
 - b. Major influences upon Paul: Judaism, Hellenism, Stoicism - he was well-versed in Hellenistic and rabbinic models of argumentation (due to his tutor, Gamaliel)
 - c. Became a Palestinian Jew - different from a Jew of the Diaspora - but for all first century Jews, **politics and religion were inseparable** - so opposition to Rome was both on a religious and political level and accounts for the rise of the Zealots
 - d. Of the tribe of Benjamin, named after King Saul (also a Benjaminite)
 - e. May have had a Roman middle name of Paul to reflect his Roman citizenship
 - f. a Pharisee in Palestine - an expert in Scripture who awaited the Messiah
 - i. Zeal for the law, both written and oral (tradition) - protect and promote the Law - could lead to intimidation or violence against fellow Jews who violated the Law or anyone who opposed God
 - ii. Committed to the purity of Israel - free from Gentile contamination
 - iii. Believed in the bodily resurrection from the dead
 - iv. Apocalyptic view - reworked in light of God's salvation in the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery

- g. Zealously committed to extinguishing the early Christians, apostate Jews - could mean a range:
- i. Scriptural arguments
 - ii. Private reprimands, intimidation, public renunciation
 - iii. Lethal violence
 - iv. Handing them over to Jewish authorities for 40 lashes minus one
 - v. Handing them over to the Romans for crucifixion
 - vi. Role models for his zeal
 1. Phinehas, Eleazar's son, Aaron's grandson, who impaled the adulterous couple
 2. Prophet Elijah, who killed 450 priests of Baal after the battle of the gods
 3. Priest Mattathias and his sons - the Maccabees - killed a Jew about to sacrifice to pagan gods before declaring war on the Romans
 - vii. Reasons for his zeal: the **convictions, conduct, and composition of the community** of the early Christians, who
 1. Had a relaxed attitude towards the Law
 2. Had a critical stance towards the Temple
 3. **Accepted Gentiles** without circumcision - **focus** of his persecution
 4. Committed blasphemy by calling a criminal the Son of God and Messiah
 5. Placed Israel at risk of Roman political reprisals by claiming the Messiah's advent
- h. Converted by a personal encounter w/Christ around AD 32-35, within a few years of Resurrection, which meant:
- i. Jesus was alive and could be encountered personally
 - ii. God exalted and vindicated Jesus' ministry and confirmed Him as God, Lord
 - iii. Jesus' death was efficacious for all, not a curse, but a blessing
 - iv. The end times had begun with the advent of the Messiah and inclusion of **Gentiles** - Israel's **prophecy that all nations** would stream to the new Jerusalem at the end times
 - v. Persecution against the Church was a grave error
 - vi. The Temple, the Law, and circumcision had to be re-evaluated
 - vii. **Gentiles** were part of God's plan in salvation history and must be part of the Church - focus of his persecution and the commission given to him by Jesus
 - viii. Paul saw himself in the line of prophets such as Jeremiah and Isaiah (Isa 49:5-6 and Jer 1:4-8); he had a specific commission from God to speak God's Word
 - ix. Paul experienced unmerited grace with this personal encounter with Jesus; he received a mission to urge the Gentiles to convert to Christianity; he would suffer for his mission as much as he made others suffer with his persecution of the early Church
 - x. Paul was **called** to believe that the Messiah had come - that Israel's hope had been fulfilled - he was a "Jew for Jesus" - he **did not convert** in the conventional sense - he was **converted** in the sense of religious identity - he experienced a radical reorientation of his fundamental commitment to (a) **convictions**; (b) **conduct**; and (c) **community**. (aka **belief, behavior, belonging**). His zeal for the Torah became zeal for the resurrected Messiah.



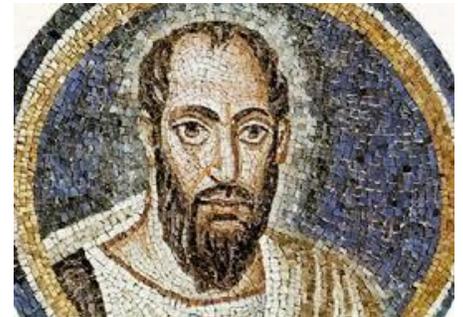
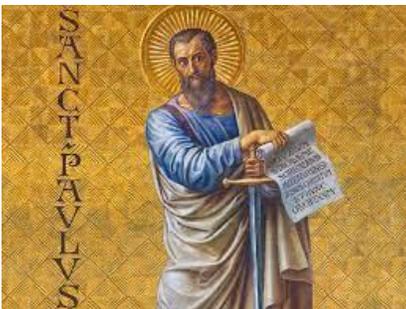
- i. An apostle (*apostolos*: one sent with a message, with the authority of the sender, in the sender's stead). Paul self-identifies as an apostle and considers apostleship to be the most important gift in the Church which came with grave responsibilities and certain rights:
 - i. Preach the Gospel and form communities/churches
 - ii. Live the Gospel for his own salvation and to set an example - conformity to Christ in His suffering and persecution as the ***Suffering Servant and as light to the nations***
 - iii. Stewardship of those new communities
 - iv. He was accountable for the quality of his preaching and parental care of the Church
 - v. Rights of financial support, companionship, regard for his advice and authority; yet
 1. He renounced the financial support, working to provide for himself even as he preached and formed new communities of believers
 2. He renounced personal power/authority and referred everything to Jesus
 3. He endangered himself by preaching in synagogues, several times being subject to stoning, beaten with rods, mob violence, 39 lashes, and i
- j. He sought to create a multinational network of Gentiles and Jews (to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles):
 - i. Who would obey and glorify the One True God of Israel and His crucified, risen Jewish Messiah
 - ii. By living lives of faith, hope, and love
 - iii. By the power of the Holy Spirit
 - iv. Emphasized God's faithfulness and grace, unmerited mercy
- k. Influences on Paul - Isaiah chapters 40-66
 - i. Isaiah of Jerusalem - 8th century
 - ii. Deutero-Isaiah: chapters 40-55, written during the Babylonian exile, 587 BC
 - iii. Trito-Isaiah, chapters 56-66, written during the return from exile, over 140 years in 3 stages: Zerubbabel in 538 BC (altar); Ezra 458 BC (Temple); and Nehemiah (walls), 445 BC
- l. Paul's vision:
 - i. Monotheism: Yahweh, the God of Israel, is the One True God
 - ii. Good News of redemption and salvation
 - iii. Universality - all nations will stream toward the New Jerusalem
 - iv. Newness: new creation, new covenant, new exodus - yielding a new song
 - v. National servanthood and mission: Israel is God's servant, a ***light to the nations***
 - vi. Personal servanthood and mission: spread the Good News to all the nations
 1. Jesus is the ***suffering servant***, whose example we follow
 2. Jesus' resurrection is His vindication; He is exalted above all as God and Lord
 3. God brings about through Jesus' mission the new exodus, the new creation, the new covenant - a ***light to the nations***

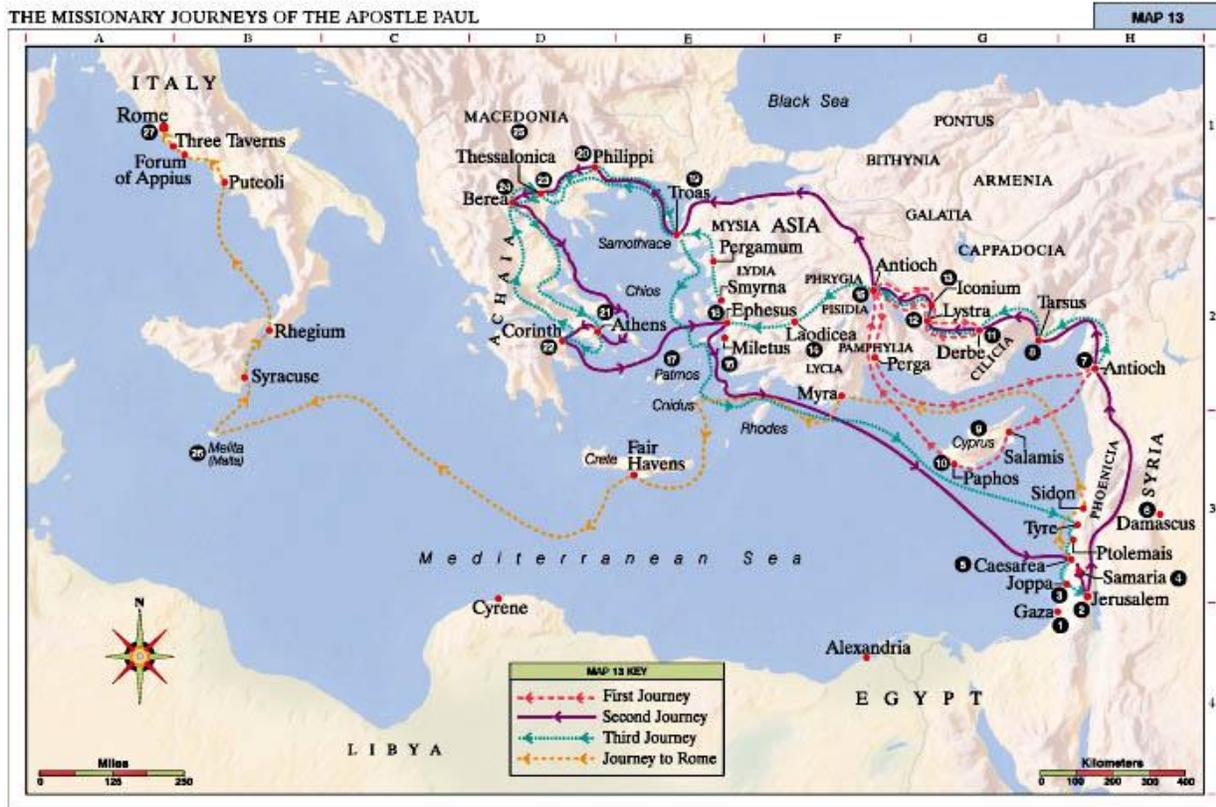


- vii. Paul:
1. Proclaimed the Good News (traveled as a preacher)
 - a. He traveled by land and by sea
 - b. Possibly 10,000 miles
 - c. At considerable danger to himself - mountains, rivers, bandits, pirates, storms, and shipwrecks
 2. Formed communities of Gentiles and Jews (a light to the nations) - mostly in commercial hubs where the Good News would spread rapidly - he enlisted the assistance of coworkers, perhaps 3 dozen of them, calling them fellow slaves, soldiers, and prisoners. Some of these were: Timothy, Titus, Barnabas, Silvanus/Silas, Mark (John Mark), Priscilla (Prisca) and Aquila, and Sosthenes.
 3. Suffered for his efforts to bring the Good News (in conformity to Christ) - Paul did not charge for his services; he provided for himself. Manual labor was considered beneath the social status of teachers. Paul thus identified with Jesus:
 - a. Had privileged status and rights
 - b. Which he freely released
 - c. Lowering himself to the status of a slave for the benefit of others
 - d. To bring the Good News of salvation to all
 - e. Suffering was core to the Gospel message; Paul lists his sufferings (see 2 COR 11:23-28)
 4. Paul's life was a Gospel message of conformity to Christ; he preached the Good News; and he performed "great works" such as healings, exorcisms, and even raised a boy from the dead who had fallen out of a window during Paul's preaching
 5. The house churches were central to Paul's teaching that he was forming communities more than "merely" converting individuals. In these house churches (of wealthy individuals which could accommodate large gatherings), the rich and the poor, the slave and the free, the Gentile and the Jew would intermingle as one Body of Christ.
2. Sources of information about Paul
 - a. Seven Pauline letters whose authorship is undisputed (ROM 1 & 2, COR 1 & 2, GAL, Philippians, 1 THES, and Philemon)
 - b. Six letters bearing Paul's name whose authorship is disputed (2 THES, COL, Ephesians, 1 & 2 TIM, Titus)
 - c. The Book of Acts
 - d. Other documents, inscriptions, archeological evidence, coins, and other physical evidence from Paul's era
 3. All historians rely most heavily upon the undisputed letters - Paul is more or less directly responsible for **eleven of the thirteen letters** - all but 1 TIM and Titus.



4. Inaccuracies or lack of perfect agreement between the Paul we read about in Acts, the Paul from whom we read in the undisputed letters, and the Paul presented in the disputed letters - could be a difference of perspective
 - a. Acts never specifically states that Paul wrote letters
 - b. Acts presents three missionary journeys Paul undertook, while his letters don't specifically narrate the missionary journeys (although he does refer to places he's been and places he's going)
 - c. Acts does not detail Paul's teaching, which is given in his letters
 - d. Acts describes Paul's tutelage under Gamaliel or his Roman citizenship, but Paul doesn't mention these in his letters
 - e. Acts narrates his conversion on the road to Damascus although Paul's letters don't
 - f. It is difficult to ascribe definite dates to New Testament events
5. Acts paints an historically portrait of Paul
6. I believe that Paul focused on the message he was given to spread - the Good News he was commissioned to give to all people, but specifically to the Gentiles - Paul would not give a biography of himself in his letters, which were meant to exhort, praise, chasten, and support the churches he founded on his missionary journeys.
7. Among historians, there is general agreement about Paul's life and ministry. Disagreements about minutiae do not prevent an intelligent reading of Acts or the Pauline epistles. Differences can be seen as mutually complementary rather than contradictory.
8. Acts and the Pauline epistles have theological and rhetorical "angles". There is a spectrum along which historians fall when evaluating Acts and the Pauline epistles:
 - a. Maximalist - Acts is reliable and can be correlated to the letters
 - b. Centrist - Undisputed letters should be primary source for knowledge about Paul and supplemented with information from Acts and the disputed letters
 - c. Minimalist - Letters should be primary source for a picture of Paul; Acts should be taken with suspicion. Only certain items from Acts are accepted: Paul's 18-month stay in Corinth; his journey to north Galatia; and his stay of two or three years in Ephesus.
9. The most important information for recreating a history of Paul's life and work would be the **reasons (or situations) he wrote his letters.**
10. An approximated chronology of Paul's life, beginning with his birth in Tarsus between 5 BC-10 AD and his martyrdom under Nero in 62-68 AD - so he lived approximately 72 years (maximum, 52 minimum). His conversion on the road to Damascus occurred approximately 33-36 AD, with his major missionary activity during the years 42-62 AD.





11. Paul's missionary journeys

- First trip:** Cyprus, Pamphylia, south Galatia (Pisidian Antioch, capitol of Galatia) - Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perga, Attalia, Syrian Antioch - narrated in **Acts 13-14**
- Second trip:** Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Phrygia, Asia, Macedonia (first European area), Achaia - Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Troas, Samothrace, Philippi, Amphipolis, Appolonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Achaia, Athens, Corinth, Cenchreae, Ephesus (provincial capitol of Asia), Caesarea, Syrian Antioch - narrated in **Acts 15:36-18:22**.
- Third trip:** Galatia, Phrygia, Asia, Macedonia, Cyprus - Syrian Antioch, Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia, "Greece" = Achaia, Athens, Corinth, Macedonia, Philippi, Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Samos, Miletus, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre (in Syria), Ptolemais, Caesarea, Jerusalem - narrated in **Acts 18:23-21:16**.
- Trip to Rome:** Arrested in Jerusalem, on to Antipatris, Caesarea (hearing with Felix), Sidon, Cyprus, Myra in Lycia, Lasea, island of Crete (shipwreck), escape onto the island of Malta, Syracuse, Sicily, Rhegium, Puteoli, Rome (for two years) - narrated in **Acts 21:15-28:31**

12. Chronology of Pauline epistles:

- 1 & 2 THES and Galatians - 48-51 AD
- 1 & 2 COR - mid-50s AD
- Romans - mid to late 50s AD
- Prison Epistles: Philippians and Philemon, COL, Ephesians - mid to late 50s AD or early 60s
- Pastoral Epistles: 1 TIM and Titus - earlier in Paul's ministry
- 2 TIM - during Roman imprisonment