

# The Life and Journeys of the Apostle Paul - An Outline

## Before Conversion

- Apostle Paul was born around the same time as Jesus Christ. Exact date is not known.
- **10-33AD** He began life with the name of Saul and after his conversion his name was changed to Paul.
- He was a citizen of Tarsus, the capital city of Cilicia, a Roman land. It was situated on the river Cydnus.
- Saul went to university at Tarsus and was well educated.
- Saul's father was of the tribe of Benjamin and he was a strict Pharisee, a Jew with unmixed blood. His father's character was that of a staunch and upright man.
- Saul also became a staunch Pharisee.
- Saul was sent to the Jewish School of Learning at Jerusalem to study law.
- He was around 13 years old when he began his studies under the well-known Gamaliel. Gamaliel was a rabbi and very well educated.
- After his studies he returned once more to Tarsus.
- Soon after the death of Jesus Christ he returned to Jerusalem where Christianity was rapidly becoming widespread.
- Saul watched and approved of the death of Stephen. He participated in the persecution of the Christians with great zeal.

## After Conversion

- **33-35AD** On the road to Damascus to arrest and persecute more Christians Saul had his **conversion experience** when he met Jesus in a blinding light. Jesus commissioned him and temporarily struck him blind. He ordered him to go into Damascus. Ananias had a vision from the Lord telling him about Saul and his conversion and was sent to minister to him. Ananias healed his eyes and changed his name to Paul. Acts 9:1-19a
- Paul was baptized and began to teach and preach in the Damascus area for a period of time. Both the Jews and Christians distrusted him. Acts 19:b-31
- The Christians were afraid of him because of his past persecutions of the Christians.
- The Jews conspired against him to kill him. His disciples took him by night and let him down over the wall of the city in a basket. Acts 9:23-25; II Cor. 11:32-33
- **35-38AD** Paul escaped into Arabia where he spent the next three years, teaching and studying and getting to know the Lord.
- **38AD.** Paul visited Jerusalem and spent two weeks with Peter and James but did not meet the main church at this time. Paul returned to Damascus. Gal. 1:18
- **43-45AD** Barnabas located Paul and took him to Antioch where he became a part of the church in Antioch. Gal. 1:21
- **45-46AD** There was a famine in Judea. Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to deliver financial support from the Antioch community. They returned to Antioch. It was in Antioch that believers were first called Christians. It was around 12-14 years since his conversion at this time. Acts 11:25-30
- **NOTE: All dates are approximate as none of them have been or can be confirmed. For the most part dating was determined by who was ruling at the time!**

## 45-49AD First Missionary Journey - Act 13 to 15:35

- This journey began in Antioch from Paul's home church of believers. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for the work which I have called them." This was the beginning of their first missionary journey together.
- They left **Antioch** and went to **Seleucia** and sailed to **Cyprus**. When they reached **Salamis** they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. John was with them as their helper. They worked their way across Cyprus to **Paphos** where they were accosted by a magician named Elymas Bar-Jesus. The Proconsul, Sergius Paulus, summoned them, seeking to hear the word of God. Elymas, the magician, tried to turn Sergius away from Paul and Barnabas. Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit spoke to Elymas and then temporarily blinded him. Witnessing the power of the Holy Spirit in Paul, Sergius believed them.
- Paul, Barnabas and John sailed from **Paphos** and landed in **Perga**. John left them here and returned to Jerusalem No reason is given, but we find out later that Paul was not happy about it. He felt John had deserted them. Paul and Barnabas had to go on alone.
- They journeyed to **Pisidian Antioch** and visited a synagogue there where Paul preached a sermon. The people were very thrilled and asked them to stay for another Sabbath and tell them more about the Way. This they agreed to do.
- Jealous Jews caused a riot among the people resulting in Paul and Silas being driven from the city.
- They went to **Iconium** where the disciples continued teaching, being filled with the Holy Spirit. The city was divided in their opinions and when the Jews, with their rulers, attempted to mistreat and to stone them, they fled to the region of **Lycaonia**,

to **Lystra** and **Derbe** and the entire surrounding area, continuing to preach the gospel.

- At **Lystra** Paul started performing miracles. The people began to believe they were gods and wanted to make a sacrifice to them, including a priest of Zeus. With great difficulty Paul and Barnabas restrained them from doing this.
- The Jews from **Antioch** and **Iconium** came and stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead. He arose and went back into the city, then the next day Paul and Barnabas traveled to **Derbe**. After more teaching they returned through **Lystra** and **Iconium**, then back to **Pisidian Antioch** encouraging and strengthening the new believers to continue in the faith as they went.
- They continued on and passed through **Pisidia**. They then went to **Perga** where they spoke the word before continuing on to **Attalia**. They sailed from Attalia to **Antioch** where they reported all the things that God was doing among the Gentiles. This ended the first missionary journey.
- Paul and Barnabas were chosen to go to **Jerusalem** to meet with the council there concerning the problem of circumcision. They returned with the answer they needed. The next step was to get the decision to all the new believers they had talked to on their first journey. Plus, it was time to see how they were all doing and to further encourage them in the word of God. Thus it was that they were commissioned to make a second missionary journey.

### 50-53AD Second Missionary Journey - Acts 15:36 to 18:22

- An argument regarding taking John with them caused a split between Paul and Barnabas, so Barnabas took John and sailed to Cyprus. Paul took Silas, traveling through **Syria** and **Celicia** on foot, strengthening the churches as they went. They went through **Derbe** to **Lystra** where they met Timothy who was well spoken of by the brethren who were in **Lystra** and **Iconium**.
- Taking Timothy with them, Paul and Silas passed through the cities delivering the decrees from the council in Jerusalem for them to observe.
- From there they traveled through the **Galatian** and **Phrygian regions**, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. They arrived in **Mysia** and were waiting to go north into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them to do so.
- They passed by **Mysia** and went to **Troas**. While in Troas a vision appeared to Paul in the night and he received his calling to go to Macedonia.
- Paul and Silas sailed from **Troas** past **Samothrace**, arriving the following day at **Neapolis**. From there they went to **Philippi**, a Roman colony, and stayed there many days.
- They went down by the river to pray and met Lydia and went to stay with her. She and her family believed and were baptized. On the way Paul commanded a spirit to come out of a young girl who was making a profit for her masters by telling fortunes. The angry masters saw their hope of profit was gone, so they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities. The magistrates ordered them to be beaten and thrown into prison, with their feet in stocks. God caused an earthquake which opened all the prison doors and the shackles on their feet. The jailor became a believer. The next day they were released. They stayed with Lydia long enough to encourage them all and departed.
- They travelled through **Amphipolis** and **Apollonia** and arrived at **Thessalonica**. Paul and Silas taught here. Once again jealous Jews stirred up trouble, and the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.
- Those same jealous Jews followed them to Berea and stirred up a great deal of trouble there as well. The brethren there conducted Paul to Athens by sea while Silas and Timothy followed later. While in Athens Paul preached his famous sermon on Mars Hill. While waiting for Timothy, Paul went on to Corinth where he met Acquilla and his wife Priscilla. He made tents with them there until Silas and Timothy arrived from Berea. They also made tents. Tradition has it that Paul actually wove the mohair fabric for the tents and not the tents themselves. On the Sabbaths he preached in the local synagogue.
- Once Timothy and Silas were there he went back into full-time preaching and teaching for a short period of time. They wanted him to stay longer, but he needed to get back to Antioch and said, Lord willing, he would be back to see them again later.
- From **Cenchrea** Paul, along with Acquilla and Priscilla, sailed back towards **Syria**. When they stopped at **Ephesus**, Acquilla and Priscilla stayed on at Ephesus while Paul sailed on to **Caesarea**. He greeted the church there, then headed on up to **Antioch** by land, passing through **Damascus** on the way.
- **51-53AD** Paul wrote I and II Thessalonians.

### 53-57AD Third Missionary Journey - Acts 18:23 to 21:14

- After spending some time in Antioch Paul began his third journey and passed successively through **Galatia** and **Phrygia**, strengthening all the churches.

- He stayed in **Ephesus** for a period of three months, in public, teaching and performing miracles. When the people became a problem, Paul took his disciples to the School of Tyrannus and continued teaching and instructing them for a period of two more years.
- After these things were finished Paul purposed in his heart to go through **Macedonia** and **Achaia** again, then he said he would be going to Rome. He felt God wanted him to preach and teach in Rome; at this point he did not realize it would be as a prisoner!
- Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia ahead of him, **while he stayed on a bit longer in Asia**. There were many things that happened during this period of time. Read the scriptures for this portion of the journey for all the details. Once the main incident was over, Paul decided it was time to go into Macedonia himself.
- He travelled through the **towns of Macedonia**, giving exhortations as he visited each one. He continued on to **Greece**. He spent the next three months in that area. While there, just before he was to sail, he heard of a plot that was formed against him, so he decided to return by going **back through Macedonia by land** instead.
- Paul sent some of his disciples on ahead of him to **Troas**, while others accompanied him. Paul actually sailed from **Philippi** just after the celebration of Unleavened Bread. He joined the others in **Troas**. They spent seven days together there.
- During one of Paul's talks to disciples at Troas, a young lad fell out of a third-story window and was killed. Paul went to him, and he came back to life. This impressed the disciples, and the people were very joyful at receiving the boy back alive. Paul continued talking until daybreak.
- Once again the men with Paul sailed on a ship ahead of Paul. Paul walked to **Assos** and joined them on the ship there. From Assos they sailed towards **Miletus**, stopping at **Mitylene**, passing **Samos**, and then, finally, arriving at **Miletus**.
- Paul did not stop in at Ephesus this trip as he was anxious to get to **Jerusalem**, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.
- While in Miletus, Paul sent for the disciples from Ephesus so he could talk to them one more time, explaining that he did not believe he would be seeing them again because he knew something was going to happen to him in Jerusalem. He strengthened them in the Lord and encouraged them to stand firm in their faith, to avoid false doctrines and those who would lead them astray.
- From **Miletus** they sailed past **Cos** and **Rhodes** and changed ships at **Patara**. They passed **Cyprus** on their left and landed at **Tyre** to unload cargo. They stayed there seven days. They stopped at **Ptolemais** and then sailed on to **Caesarea**, their final destination.
- **From Caesarea Paul walked to Jerusalem**. Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied him. They arrived safely and were welcomed by all the brethren there. Many things happened while in Jerusalem. Read Acts 21:27-26:32 before continuing.
- **55-56AD** Paul wrote I and II Corinthians and Galatians.
- **57-58AD** Paul wrote Romans.

#### **58-60AD Fourth Journey - Caesarea as a Prisoner - Acts 23 to 26:32**

- Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and spent two years in prison in Caesarea. After two years of adventures while in prison, Paul was finally taken before Festus, then Agrippa. Afraid that Agrippa would turn him over to the Jews, Paul appealed to Caesar. Agrippa told Festus that if Paul had not appealed to Caesar, he could have been set free. God fully intended for Paul to witness for Him in Rome, so Paul is sent to Rome!

#### **60-62AD Fourth Journey continued as Paul is sent to Rome for trial before Caesar - Acts 27:1 to 28:31**

- Sailing from **Caesarea**, they briefly stopped at **Sidon** and then sailed by **Cyprus**, keeping close to the leeward side because the winds were so bad. They passed the coasts of **Celicia** and **Pamphylia** and landed at **Myra** in **Lycia**.
- At **Myra** they changed ships, an Alexandrian ship, heading for **Italy**. After many days and hard sailing they arrived off the coast of **Cnidus**. The strong winds prevented sailing much farther, so they sailed under the shelter of **Crete**, off **Salmone**, and with difficulty sailing past it they came to **Fair Havens**, not far from the city of **Lasea**.
- Considerable time passed and the voyage was now dangerous. Paul began to admonish them to stay put for the winter, warning them that there would be a loss of their ship and possibly many lives if they continued on. Of course they did not listen to Paul, a mere prisoner!
- The harbor was not suitable for wintering, so they voted to continue on sailing **to Phoenix** at the end of Crete where there was a better harbor. They tried to stay close in to Crete but the storm drove them out in the middle of the sea, a long way past Crete. They wound up having to let the ship be driven along by the fierce wind. They almost ran aground on a tiny island. They managed to escape it. They undergirded the ship and let the anchors down and continued drifting in the wind.

- After fourteen days had passed they noticed that the water was getting shallower and started taking soundings. They stalled the ship's approach to the land until daylight and saw a beach for which they headed in order to ground the ship there. However, they ran onto a reef where two seas met and were firmly grounded with the back end of the ship being battered.
- To make a long story short they all made it safely to the beach, some by swimming, some by floating in on boards from the ship. The name of the island was **Malta** (Melita). The natives were kind and kindled a big fire for them where they could get warmed and dried out. While here Paul was bitten by a venomous snake and nothing happened to him, to all their amazement. They thought he must be a god. Many miracles were performed and when it was time for them to leave, after three months, the people supplied all their needs. Meanwhile, they were guests of the island's leading man, Publius. Paul had the opportunity to bring healing to his father.
- An Alexandrian ship had wintered there on the island and took Paul and all the prisoners on board to go to Rome. They spent three days at Syracuse, then made a quick stop at **Rhegium** on the mainland of Italy.
- A couple of days later they arrived at **Puteoli** and were invited to stay with brethren for the seven days they were there. Finally, they arrived at Rome.
- The brethren there heard about Paul's arrival in Rome and came from all over to visit him and encourage him. Some came all the way from the Three Inns to visit him. While in Rome Paul was allowed to stay in his own rented house and receive his guests. He had a soldier that stayed with him guarding him.
- He spent two years preaching and teaching from his home as the people came to visit him.
- **61AD** Paul wrote Philippians, Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians.

**62-66AD Paul is acquitted by Nero and spends the next four years or so in a final missionary trip to Spain and back to Macedonia and Ephesus - Evidence: Allusions in the Epistles and traditions found in fragments of documents that have come to light over the last years.**

- Paul desired to go to Spain - Rom. 15:24, 28.
- Announces his coming to Philemon (vs.22) and to the Philippians (2:23-24) - suggesting it was not an immediate trip but would be after his acquittal.
- Paul was probably planning another visit first - Spain.
- The probable journey itself and details will follow this section.
- Evidence showed Paul was in Spain for at least one year, allowing plenty of time for a trip to Macedonia and Colosse.
- During the Macedonia portion of the trip, Paul remained in Crete long enough to found new churches, leaving Titus in charge of organizing them. Titus 1:5
- Upon his release from prison Paul possibly travelled to Spain first. Near the end of this time period, possibly 66AD Paul wrote I Timothy and Titus. He also seems to have made a quick trip to Macedonia and Colosse in Asia. The probable details are given for a trip to Spain first and then his trip to Macedonia, his second and final arrest and his execution. A likely schedule of his journeys follows, with evidence and scripture references. It will be up to you to decide. We believe that it did happen, even if not in the order given below. The Roman Emperor, Diocletian, not only tried to eliminate the Christians, but to also **destroy** all of their monuments and documents. A few fragments and documents did survive.
- Did this actually happen? It is reasonable to believe it did for the following reasons:
  - 1 Possibility time wise.
  - 2 Church was large and well-organized at a very early date, **150-300 AD.**
  - 3 Plans of Paul included a visit to Spain.
  - 4 Early documents indicate that such a visit was made.
  - 5 Local Spanish traditions speak of a visit by Paul.
  - 6 Monuments put up in Spain in memory of Paul and his teachings.
- Evidence:
  - 1 Testimony of Historian M. Diaz y Diaz says, "The evangelizing presence of Saint Paul in Hispania (Spain) seems to be beyond all reasonable doubt; the testimony, both contemporary and later, is conserved almost in its entirety by authors and texts unrelated to the Peninsula, and are therefore free of a biased interpretation, giving sufficient proof."
  - 2 The early arrival of the Gospel in Spain could be the result of his having accomplished his purpose.
  - 3 Meyrick places Paul in Spain for twelve months and made an important contribution to the establishment of the church in Spain.

4 Other independent witnesses are found in Cyril of Jerusalem who writes, "...one, who from Jerusalem, and even unto Illyricum, fully preached the gospel, and instructed even imperial Rome, and carried the earnestness of his preaching as far as Spain, undergoing conflicts innumerable, and performing signs and wonders."

5 A letter written by Clement of Rome to the church in Corinth in 69AD indicates that Paul did in fact reach Spain. In his letter Clement states that "Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being thrown into jail seven times, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects." The expression "extreme limit of the west" was commonly understood to be Hispania or Spain.

6 Chrysostom also writes about Paul, "For after he had been in Rome, he returned to Spain, but whether he came thence again into these parts, we know not." (Suggests a possible earlier visit?)

There is also an interesting fragment of a papyrus manuscript discovered in the Ambrosia Library (Italy) in 1700 by Domingo M. Muratori. This Latin document dates around the year 140AD, judging by its content. Besides references to the four gospels and Paul's letter to the Romans, there appear five lines which end with the words "...when he (Paul) went to preach the Gospel in Spain.

This reference to a visit of Paul to Spain is strong evidence that such a trip did take place.

8 Finally, **there are the local traditions.**

Although those are of late origin, they give an idea of what people much closer to the time believed.

- In Tarragon (Barcelona) there is a monument to Paul and the tradition that he preached there.
- At the other extreme en the patron saint of Ecija and for years baptisms were done in the name of the Father, the Son and the Apostle Paul.

### **One plausible route for Paul's journey through Spain would be:**

- Travel from **Rome** by sea entering Spain at **Tarragona (Barcelona)**.
- Pass down the coast and around the bend to **Cadiz**
- Head north through **Seville (Ecija), Cordoba, Merida (Madrid ?) and Zaragoza**
- Leave Spain again from the port of **Emporias** on the coast between **Barcelona** and **border of France**
- Travel between Spain and Italy was a common occurrence and what happened in one country did not escape the notice of the other one. At this time all of Italy, France and Spain were part of the Roman Empire, along with all the other areas where Paul preached and taught. Nothing escaped the eyes and ears of the Romans. They knew what Paul was doing. In the beginning, they did not worry about it, but his final arrest and execution showed how quickly they learned to hate Christians. Nero was an evil man. He sent Christians in the arena to face lions, roped some to tall poles around the ring of the arena, then set them on fire to provide light for the evening games. He ended his life in the flames when Rome burned.

The evidence is strongly in favor of Paul having visited Spain. However, many others would have had to build on his initial effort to evangelize and strengthen the church. In fact many others would have done the bulk of the work of building and organizing these churches, possibly some of Paul's converts from Rome took over the task once Paul was gone.

### **Second Phase of Paul's journey might be the following:**

- We may readily believe that after Paul's trip to Spain he kept his promise to Philemon and on that occasion would have visited the churches of the valley of **Lycus, Laodicea, Colossus** and **Hierapolis**.
- The following facts seem indicated by the Pastorals:
  - Paul remained in **Crete** exactly long enough to found new churches there. He left the care and organization of these churches to his fellow-worker Titus. Titus:1:5
  - He then went to **Ephesus** and asked Timothy, who was already there, to remain until his return while he proceeded to **Macedonia**. I Tim. 1:3
  - On this occasion he would have paid his promised visit to the Philippians, Phil. 2:24, and also to the Thessalonians.
  - The letter to Titus and the First Epistle to Timothy must date from this period; they seem to have been written about the same time and shortly after his departure from Ephesus. They were most likely sent from Corinth, but

they could have been sent from anywhere in Macedonia as well. In the letter to Titus Paul instructs Titus to join him at Nicopolis of Epirus where he intends to spend the winter. Titus 3:12

- The following spring he must have carried out his plan to return to **Asia**. I Tim. 3:14-15
- At some point Paul passed through **Troas** and left his winter mantle and parchments with Carpus to keep for him. 2 Tim. 4:13
- He was most likely arrested here in Troas as he left behind his mantle, books and parchments with Carpus. He would have been unable to return for them. 2 Tim. 4:13
- Paul would have been taken from there to Ephesus to the prison
- Trophimus, one of his travelling companions who was with him when he was arrested in Jerusalem was sick, so Paul had to leave him behind in Ephesus.
- The Proconsul sent Paul to Rome for trial. He was accompanied by Titus, Luke the physician (and Paul's lawyer), and Tychicus.
- At Rome we know that his imprisonment was short, that Paul was alone at his first hearing, his friends having scattered for various reasons. Luke was with him to the last.
- Paul felt that all human hope was lost, Rom. 4:6, and in his second epistle to Timothy, 2 Tim. 4:9-11, he begs Timothy to bring Mark with him to rejoin him as soon as possible, being sure to bring him his mantle, books and parchments that he had left with Carpus in Troas.
- There is no confirmation anywhere that Timothy and Mark made it to Rome before Paul was executed. The traditional place of his execution is shown at Aquae Salvae, now Tre Fontane, "Church of St. Paul without the Gates," just a few miles from the wall of the city. Just recently the Roman Catholic church dug up the coffin of Paul and tested the remains with a laser, without opening the coffin. It dated to the correct period of time, then he was transported to a different location for reburial.

### One possible route of Paul through Macedonia after leaving Spain:

- To give a clearer picture of Paul's last journey our map shows one of many possible routes he could have followed.
- From **Rome** he travelled to **Ephesus**. The route is never mentioned; it could be overland as the map shows, or it could have been entirely by sea from Rome to Ephesus. That would be my choice. This trip was to be done quickly as he had a lot he wanted to accomplish before things got worse in Rome. Nero had started persecuting Christians, and it would not be very long before they would most likely come after him again, a final time.
- Once at Ephesus he would have carried out his promise to visit Philemon and once there most likely visited a few of the other churches in the valley as mentioned earlier in this article.
- Back to **Ephesus** and headed north for **Troas** and **Macedonia**. He left Timothy behind to care for the churches in Ephesus. 1Tim. 1:3.
- He would have visited all the churches he had planted, probably including **Corinth**.
- It was about this time that he visited **Crete**, so it is placed next on this journey. He would have visited **Fair Haven** at this time and planted a few more churches. He put Titus in charge to get things organized.
- **Nicopolis** was his next stop, where we planned to stay for the winter. Visitors to Nicopolis are shown the ruins of a small building where Paul supposedly went to pray.
- From **Nicopolis** back through **Macedonia** and over to **Troas** where he left his winter mantle, book and manuscripts with Carpus.
- At this point it is believed Paul was arrested, taken to **Ephesus** to the prison there to await his trial. There is a place among the ruins in Ephesus that is pointed out to visitors where Paul was kept in prison before being sent to Rome...a slight confirmation of this particular theory.
- He sailed from **Miletus** for **Rome**, leaving one of his companions behind, Trophimus, who was sick. 2 Tim. 4:20 Travelling with him were Titus, who left Crete to travel to Rome with him, Luke his physician and lawyer, and, finally, Tychicus.
- At his first defense he was alone except for Luke and felt hopeless and deserted. 2 Tim. 4:16
- **66-67AD** Paul wrote the second epistle of Timothy asking him to bring Mark with him, picking up his mantle, books and parchments, to bring them to him at the prison in Rome. He urged Timothy to hurry and get there before winter.
- There is no evidence that Timothy and Mark got there before he was beheaded.

The following picture has recently been placed into Public Domain, so it has been included it so that you can see the type of death Paul experienced. An unpleasant scene to say the least. He was spared from the lions because he was a Roman citizen and, as such, deserved a swift and painless death.

[Visit Wikipedia for details about the picture.](#)

