

Acts and Paul's Life

1. Paul does not say much about his life from his letters. Much of what we know about his background and his missionary activities come from Acts

Acts and Paul's Life

2. Acts remains a selective source of information, and does not tell us the full picture, and it remains a secondary source on Paul (eg – what did Paul do between his call/conversion and 1st missionary journey? What did Paul do in his 18-month stay at Corinth? What happened after Acts 28?)

Acts and Paul's Life

3. Relatively few dates to anchor Paul's life – eg., 51/52CE – Paul before Gallio in Corinth; 58-59CE – Paul in Caesarea during last part of the leadership of Felix.

The World of Paul

- The Jewish world
 - Paul's education and training under Gamaliel (Acts 5:34; 22:3)
 - Paul's understanding of the Law
 - Paul's life as a Pharisee

The World of Paul

- The Greco-Roman world
 - Paul's hometown – Tarsus (cf. Acts 21:39)
 - Paul's exposure to the Hellenistic world – rhetoric, the art of letter writing, and his proficiency in Greek

The World of Paul

- The Christian world
 - Paul’s Jewish and Greco-Roman world prepared him for his ministry
 - Damascus road encounter with the risen Christ (Acts 9)
 - Reorientation of his life (Phil 3:7-11)
 - Reinterpretation of scripture configured around Jesus the Messiah

Discussion

- In your opinion, how would Paul’s exposure to the Jewish and Greco-Roman world prepare him for his mission to the Gentiles?
- Reflect on your own life. How would your life experiences in the past prepare you for your ministry today and in the future? Share 1 or 2 insights/experiences from your life.

Acts 7

- First encounter of Paul – persecutor of the church & the stoning of Steven

Acts 9

- Paul’s conversion and call
- Damascus, “a few days” (Acts 9:19b) then to Arabia (Gal 1:16-17); total time of 3 years (what did Paul do in Arabia?)
- Return to Damascus (Gal 1:17; Acts 9:20-25).
- Escape in basket (2 Cor 11:32-33; Acts 9:23-25)

What was Paul doing?

- What was Paul doing during his years in the Arabian desert that even King Aretas wanted to arrest him?

Acts 9:30

- Back to Tarsus after meeting the leaders in Jerusalem
- “Silent years” until Acts 11:25 where Barnabas sought Paul
- The role of Barnabas

Antioch

- Paul made Antioch his “gentile missionary headquarters” and base.

Missionary Journey 1

- **Acts 13:1-14.28**
- Cyprus and Southern Galatia: Antioch-Cyprus-Pamphylia-Pisidia-Iconium-Lystra-Derbe-Antioch.



Cyprus

- Acts 13:4-12
- John Mark left the team at Perga and returned to Jerusalem

Pisidian Antioch

- Acts 13:13-52
- Great success
- Large crowd (“whole city”) on 2nd Sabbath, causing Jews to be jealous and stirring up problems/persecutions
- Warm reception by Gentiles

Iconium

- Acts 14:1-7
- Persecution again

Lystra

- Acts 14:8-20
- Gods from heaven?
- Paul being stoned and dragged outside the city

Return to Antioch

- Acts 14:21-28
- Appointing leaders for the church on return journey
- Back to Antioch

Controversy & Conflict

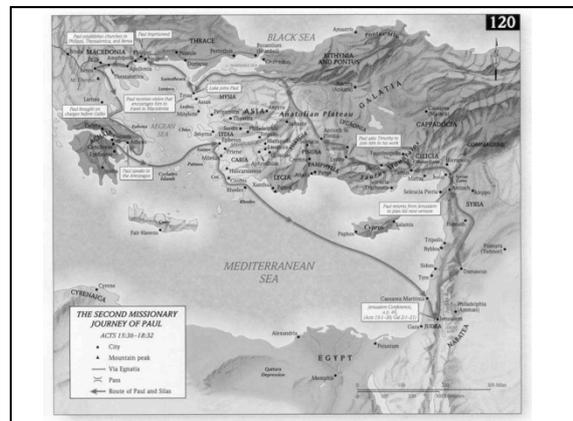
- Acts 15:1-35
- Jerusalem council meeting

Discussion: Controversy & Conflict

- Imagine that the decision of the Jerusalem council is to exclude Gentiles as the people of God and to enforce Jewish law on the Gentiles proselytes. How would this change the face of mission in the days of Paul and today?

Missionary Journey 2

- Acts 15:36-18:22
- Macedonia and Achaia: Antioch, Syria, Cilia, Derbe, Lystra, Phrygia-Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth (for 18 months), Cenchreae, Ephesus, Caesarea, Jerusalem, Antioch.



Second Missionary Journey

- Acts 15:36-18:22
- Off to a bad start?

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Second Missionary Journey

- Do you think the severe conflict between Paul and Barnabas could have been better resolved?
- Do you think this major disagreement would have any severe implications for mission?

Macedonian Vision

Neapolis

Philippi

Philippi

- No synagogue → less than 10 male Jews

Philippi

- Lydia and the household
- First gentile church in Europe
- Acts 16:15, 40

Philippi

- Slave girl: “These men are the servants of the Most High God who are telling you **a way to salvation**”
- Why did Paul cast out the Pythonian spirit in this girl?
- Read: “*οἵτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας* (Acts 16:17): Is Paul Proclaiming The Way or A Way of Salvation?” *MATS Journal* (2010): 73-86

Philippi

- Paul before the city magistrates
- The charge (16:20-12):
 - “these men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept and practice.”
- The verdict: stripped, beaten with rods, imprisonment

Philippi

- Jailhouse ROCK!!
- The jailor believes

Philippi

- Paul and Roman citizenship

Philippi

- The believers in Philippi and their social location:
 - Lydia
 - Slave girl
 - Jailer
- What does this suggest about the first European church?
- Is there a biblical basis for “homogeneous church”?

Thessalonica

Berea

Athens

Corinth

- Paul a “babbler”?
- ὁ σπερμολόγος - Literally this word means a bird picking up bits and pieces of seeds all over the place. Used figuratively, it is a pejorative imagery of persons whose communication lacks sophistication and seems to pick up scraps of information here and there.

- **Proconsul Gallio at Corinth (Acts 18:12)**
- The most significant archaeological evidence for dating the New Testament events

Corinth

- Paul's second vision
- Paul before Gallio
- The charge: "this man is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law"

Corinth

- 2 Cor 5:10 – another bema

Erastus Inscription

- **ERASTVS. PRO. AED. S. P. STRAVIT,** which is an abbreviation of **ERASTUS PRO AEDILITATE SUA PECUNIA STRAVIT.**
- "Erastus, in return for his aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense"

- Cf. Romans 16:23 "Erastus, who is the city's director of public works,...send you their greetings."
- οἰκονόμος – public treasurer

Paul Leaves Corinth

- Acts 18:18 – sailing from Cenchrea to Asia Minor

End of Missionary Journey 2

- Acts 18:22

Discussion

- Revisit all the major cities Paul visited during his 2nd Missionary Journey. What are some of the highlights/results of his ministry?
- What is the price that Paul paid for his ministry in obedience to the two visions he had (the Macadonian vision and the Corinthian vision)?