Paul in Context

1 Saul the Pharisee
2 Apostle to the Gentiles
3 When I am weak then I am strong
4 Poured out like a drink offering
1. When was Saul told he was the apostle to the Gentiles?


(Three years after conversion)

2. When did he start preaching to Gentiles?


(About 15 years after conversion)

3. Where did they get the idea that they had to preach to Jews first?

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Jesus crucified and resurrected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Pentecost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Stephen stoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Paul converted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33–36</td>
<td>Paul in Arabia and Damascus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Paul’s 2 week visit to Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36–43</td>
<td>Paul in Syria (Antioch) &amp; Cilicia (Tarsus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>James the apostle beheaded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Paul’s trip to Antioch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Paul’s second visit to Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46–48</td>
<td>Paul’s first journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Judaist contention at Antioch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–52</td>
<td>Paul’s second journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53–58</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>58–60</td>
<td>Paul imprisoned in Caesarea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60–61</td>
<td>Paul shipwrecked on Malta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–63</td>
<td>Paul imprisoned in Rome</td>
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<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>James the Lord’s brother stoned</td>
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<tr>
<td>64–67</td>
<td>Paul’s later journeys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Acts**:
- Acts 9:1–22
- Acts 9:23–25; Gal 1:17–18
- Acts 9:26–30; Gal 1:18–19
- Acts 9:30; Gal 1:21
- Acts 11:25–26
- Acts 11:27–30
- Acts 13:2 – 14:28
- Acts 15:1–2; Gal 2:12–14
- Acts 15:2–29
- Acts 15:40 – 18:23
- Acts 16:1 – 21:17
- Acts 23:23–26
- Acts 28:11–31

**Roman Emperors**:
- Tiberius (14–37)
- Caligula (37-41)
- Claudius (41–54)
- Herod Agrippa I king of Judea (41–44)
- Vespasian (69–79)

**Roman Procurators**:
- Pontius Pilate Roman procurator (26–36)
- Felix (52–60) Roman procurator
- Festus (60–62) Roman procurator

**Other**:
- Jews expelled from Rome (49)
- Herod Agrippa II Tetrarch of Nth. Territory (50–93)
- Felix (52–60) Roman procurator

**Books of the New Testament**:
- Galatians from Antioch (49)
- 1 Thess. from Corinth (51)
- 2 Thess. from Corinth (51/52)
- Romans from Corinth or Cenchrea (57)
- Philippians from Rome (62)
- 1 Timothy and Titus from Philippi (64/65)
- 2 Timothy from Rome (67/68)
Acts 11:19–30

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Antioch

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■ Earliest believers in Antioch fled Jerusalem because of Saul. (Acts 11:19)
Barnabas

- Acts 4:36.
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First journey

Acts 13:1–4

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- Did he tell them where to go?
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Acts 13:9 the turning point: Saul becomes Paul, and Paul becomes the leader.
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God-fearers at Miletus
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“the place of the Jews who are also God-worshipers”
Gentiles and Jews

Jew: a descendant of Jacob
Gentile: not a Jew
Proselyte: a Gentile who had converted to Judaism. (e.g., Ruth)
God-fearer: a Gentile who believed in God, but did not follow the law of Moses. (e.g., Cornelius)

It seems likely that the early church leaders assumed preaching to Gentiles meant preaching to God-fearers, not pagans.
First journey

Acts 13:1 – 14:28

- Barnabas, Saul and John Mark.

Churches established in Cyprus, Lycia and Galatia.

No need to go to Cilicia because Paul had already been preaching there.

Go to synagogue, establish ecclesia, move on.

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Map showing the travels of the apostles Paul and Barnabas during their first missionary journey, including visits to Salamis and Pisidian Antioch.
Preaching on the first journey

- “Turning to the Gentiles”. Acts 13:47
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- Iconium. Synagogue. Acts 14:1
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- Lystra, Derbe, etc. No mention of synagogues.
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- Galatians 2:7–9
- Romans 11:13
- 1 Timothy 2:7
Persecution from the Jews

Developing persecution

- Acts 13:45 — abusive talk

- Acts 13:50–51 — expulsion

- Acts 14:2,5 — slander, plots

- Acts 14:19 — stoned

Threats from Jews due to jealousy

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Acts 14:26–28
From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been entrusted by God’s grace to the work they had now completed. 27 On their arrival, they gathered the church together and reported everything that God had accomplished through their activity, and how God had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. 28 They stayed with the disciples a long time.
Judaist contention at Antioch

Acts 15:1–2; Galatians 2:12–14

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Acts 15:1–2; Galatians 2:12–14

- Jewish Christians who wanted everyone to keep the law.
- Key issues: circumcision, Sabbath, food laws.
- Problem started in Antioch, but continued throughout all churches in first century.
Some people came down from Judea teaching the family of believers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom we’ve received from Moses, you can’t be saved.”

Paul and Barnabas took sides against these Judeans and argued strongly against their position.

The church at Antioch appointed Paul, Barnabas, and several others from Antioch to go up to Jerusalem to set this question before the apostles and the elders.
The role of James

(James the half-brother of Jesus)

- Acts 15:13–21. James proposes that Gentiles do not have to keep the law.
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Following the Jerusalem conference, Judaisers undermined Paul’s work in Galatia.

Galatians 1:6–7

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 4:9–11, 17–20; 5:1–3, 12
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- **Paid “super-apostles”:**
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Summary

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- Other believers tried to undermine Paul’s work.
- The Jerusalem conference and the letter to the Galatians are responses to the Judaist controversy.
- There was divided opinion on keeping the law, even amongst the leadership in the first century ecclesias.
Thoughts for today

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- Not every decision in the New Testament is inspired or binding.
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