

## Christian Dispensation – To The Gentiles Acts 13:44-49

### Saul of Tarsus

His Life before Conversion

Saul was a Jew, raised to follow the Law of Moses – **Acts 22:1-3**

Saul was a Pharisee – **Acts 23:6**

Saul was an adherent to Moses' Law who persecuted Christians.

**Galatians 1:13-14; Acts 8:1-3; Acts 22:4-5; Acts 26:9-11**

### His Conversion to Christ

The Book of Acts records Saul's conversion in three places:

**Acts 9:1-22** – Luke writes the story as part of his narrative.

**Acts 22:1-16** – Saul, now Paul, tells the story in Jerusalem.

**Acts 26:1-18** – He tells the story to King Agrippa in Caesarea.

Paul's conversion story carries important doctrinal significance:

Apostles must witness Jesus raised – **Acts 1:21-22; 26:14-17**

Even after belief, baptism is required – **Acts 22:6-11,16**

The mercy and grace of God are amazing! – **1Timothy 1:12-17**

### Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles

Apostles were selected by God, and inspired to do His work – **Acts 1:21-25**

Paul was selected by God – **Acts 9:15-16; Acts 26:16-18; 1Corinthians 15:8-10**

Paul became an apostle to the Gentiles – **Romans 1:5; 1Timothy 2:7**

The Apostle Paul was committed to preaching Christ to the Gentiles.

As a "prisoner of Christ Jesus" – **Ephesians 3:1-10**

Through incomprehensible difficulties – **2Corinthians 11:23-29**

Even unto death for the cause of Christ – **2Timothy 4:6-8**

Details of Paul's Apostleship

Paul's ministry extended over about 35 years. (33–68 A.D.)

He embarked on 3 missionary journeys amounting to about 7,000 miles!

Paul's First Journey -- **Acts 13:1–14:28** (45-49 AD) ~1000 miles

Paul and Barnabas establish churches in many cities, including Lystra, Iconium and Derbe.

He endures his first stoning at the hands of the Jews while in Derbe – **Acts 14:19**

Paul kept right on preaching, and even helped establish elderships in the cities – **Acts 14:20-23**

Paul's Second Journey -- **Acts 15:36–18:22** (51-53 AD) ~2800 miles

Paul and Silas depart to preach and pick up Timothy soon after – **Acts 15:40-16:5**

Luke records two conversions from Paul's trip to Philippi – **Acts 16:12-15,25-34**

Paul spends at least a year and half in Corinth before returning home to Antioch – **Acts 18:8-11,18**

Paul's Third Journey -- **Acts 18:23–21:17** (54-58 AD) ~2500 miles

Paul came to Ephesus and stayed for at least two years. His teaching caused a huge stir – **Acts 19**

He and Luke sailed from Philippi to Troas, taking Lord's Supper "first day of the week" – **Acts 20:7**

Paul met with the elders of Ephesus to discuss God's plan for shepherding work – **Acts 20:17-35**

After the missions, he endured two major imprisonments in Rome.

Paul's Journey to Rome -- **Acts 27:1–28:14** (60-61 AD) ~2300 miles

Sailing from Crete, Paul and crew shipwrecked. He preached all along the way! – **Acts 27:21-38**

They came ashore at the island of Malta, where Paul worked miracles – **Acts 28:1-10**

Paul arrives in Rome for first imprisonment and is there under guard for two years – **Acts 28:30-31**

Paul authored 13 New Testament letters during his ministry.

These letters give instruction and motivation to Christians to be faithful to Christ.

**Romans 15:14–15; 1Corinthians 4:14–17; Ephesians 4:1; 1Thessalonians 4:1–2**

## Paul's 13 Epistles

**Galatians (???)** is a region that likely includes the cities Lystra, Iconium and Derbe. Paul visited there multiple times during his journeys. This letter addresses the brethren's need to stay true to the Truth they were taught (1:6-9). Specifically, they were being influenced by Judaizing teaches, who came in after Paul's departure and taught adherence to Moses' Law (3:1-6). The ultimate message is that we are set free from sin by Christ, not the Law of Moses (5:1-4), and belonging to Christ, we should live by the Spirit (5:22-26).

**1Thessalonians (51 AD)** was written not long after Paul left the city of Thessalonica. His visit there had been incredibly encouraging (1:2-10). But there was also much opposition to the faith in that city (Acts 17:5-9). Paul had recently sent Timothy back to check on them (3:1-5). Now he writes this follow up letter, which carries a simple, recurring message: "Excel Still More" (3:13; 4:1; 4:10). This growth is nicely laid out as a concise list of 17 attributes that should live in every Christian (5:12-22).

**2Thessalonians (51 AD)** was likely written shortly after the first letter. Paul is likely still at Corinth, where he worked for over a year and a half (Acts 18:11). It is clear that the Thessalonians have been doing very well (1:3-4). Paul expressed that God will punish the persecutors (1:5-10), and that they should not be led astray by any false teachers among them (2:1-12). Never forsake the "Truth" (2:13-3:2).

**1Corinthians (57 AD)** was written while Paul was in Ephesus, during his third preaching journey (16:8). While he began by encouraging the brethren, he ultimately had to deal with issues that had arisen (1:4-10). They had division among them, with several causes (1:11-13). Paul implores them to do what is right and remain focused on Christ's coming (15:50-58).

**2Corinthians (57 AD)** was likely penned several months after the first, once Paul had travelled to Macedonia (2:12-13). It is a letter of rejoicing! The first letter was direct, but it led them to repent (2:1-5; 7:8-11). Having unity again, he pressed on to the matter of a contribution for needy saints (8:4; 9:1).

**Romans (57-58 AD)** was written near the end of Paul's third journey, and likely from the city of Corinth (15:25). Paul had not yet been to Rome (1:13), but deals with the godless local culture, and then largely focuses on salvation by Christ's Law over all other law (8:1-14). He also speaks of the need for unity (15:1-7).

**Ephesians (61-63 AD)** is one of four letters Paul wrote while he was in a Roman prison (Acts 28:30-31). He knew the brethren there well from his recent trips. Now imprisoned, he reminds them how special they are in Christ (1:3-14) and how they should live and walk in a way worthy of their calling (4:1-3; 5:1-2,15-16).

**Colossians (61-63 AD)** is a second letter Paul wrote from the Roman prison. The city was about 100 miles East of Ephesus. We have no record Paul had ever been there. But they were his brethren, and this letter is very similar to Ephesians, emphasizing blessings in Christ (1:9-20) and living godly in Him (3:1-11).

**Philemon (61-63 AD)** is Paul's shortest letter, also written from prison. Paul converted Onesimus in prison, a slave who had run from Philemon (1:10-11). Philemon is encouraged to receive him back as a fellow brother in Christ (1:10-20).

**Philippians (61-63 AD)** was also written from a Roman prison. Paul had converted people to Christ in Philippi during his second journey (Acts 16:12-40). Now, ten years later, and from prison, Paul encourages them to live in unity in Christ (1:27-2:2), serve like Christ served (2:3-11) and "Rejoice Always!" (4:4-13).

**1Timothy (63-68 AD)** was written sometime after Paul's release from prison. Perhaps it was written from Macedonia (1:3). Paul and Timothy had a special, father-son like relationship (Acts 16:1-5; 1Tim 1:1-2). Timothy was charged to preach the Truth in Ephesus (1:3-5), including teaching about overseers (3:1-7) He was charged to guard the Truth and share it, no matter what (4:11-16; 6:20-21).

**Titus (63-68 AD)** was a travelling companion with Paul in his mission work. Now that Paul has been released from prison, he takes Titus to the island of Crete and leaves him there to preach. This letter is written after and encourages Titus to “appoint elders” (1:5-9) and teach all ages to be instructed by grace (2:1-15).

**2Timothy (66-68 AD)** is Paul’s final letter. He is once again in a Roman prison, and this time will not be released (4:6-8). These are his final instructions to his beloved son Timothy. “Do not be ashamed” of the Gospel (1:8-14), be diligent in accurately handling the Word (2:15), preach to all men and in all seasons (4:1-5), and know that the Lord is, and will always be, with you (4:16-18). He was put to death by Nero, in Rome, after the second imprisonment.

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