

PREPARATION FOR LESSON: Read Acts 13 - 18**THE CHURCH**

Church means the Body of Christ; all believers everywhere who have their faith in Jesus, put together by the Holy Spirit.
church (small c) means a local group of believers, put together by people.

PAUL

His Life dates are approximate

Birth in Tarsus c. **1 AD**

Education in Jerusalem under Gamaliel from **14 - 23 AD**; trained as rabbi and theologian
 in Tarsus in the university; also rabbi in one of the synagogues from **23 - 32 AD**

Rabbi in Jerusalem **32 - 33 AD**

Believer in Jesus – preparation for ministry to Gentiles **33 - 45 AD**

Conversion on Damascus Road	33 AD
Preparation & preaching in Arabia & Damascus	33-36 AD
First visit to Jerusalem as a believer	36 AD
Teaching in Tarsus	36-43 AD
Pastor with Barnabas in Antioch	44-46 AD
Famine visit to Jerusalem	45 AD

Missionary **46-56 AD** Council visit in Jerusalem 49 AD

Prisoner in Caesarea and Rome **56-60 AD**

Last years of ministry **60-68 AD**

His Preparation Saul...

...was accustomed to foreign languages and cultures; had university education.
 ...was fluent in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic & Latin; enjoyed city life.
 ...had legal protection and travel rights as a Roman citizen.
 ...was trained in the Old Testament and learned a variety of teaching skills as a Jewish rabbi.

His Names

Saul: his Jewish name which he used while working with the Jews.

Paul: his Roman name which he used while working with the Gentiles & Roman authorities.

His Writings – see page 3

1st Trip 46-49 AD No books written.

2nd Trip 49-53 AD From Corinth, he wrote **1-2 Thessalonians**.

3rd Trip 53-56 AD
 From Ephesus, he wrote **1 Corinthians**.
 From Macedonia, he wrote **2 Corinthians**.
 From Corinth, he wrote **Romans, Galatians**.

As **prisoner** 58-60 AD

From house arrest in Rome, he wrote **Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians**.

In his **last years** 60-68 AD

From Macedonia, he wrote **1 Timothy, Titus**.
 From prison in Rome, he wrote **2 Timothy**.

His Conversion Experience given 3 times to show how Paul makes his story relevant to different people.

Told to supportive Christians	chpt. 9
Told to antagonistic Jews	chpt. 22
Told to interested Gentiles and Jews	chpt. 26

CULTURAL BACKGROUND: Rules for Gentile believers Acts 15

In local church activities, when they ate with Jewish believers, they should respect Jewish convictions. When they brought meat to the church meal, they were not to buy it in the market where it had first been offered to idols or where it had not been butchered properly so the blood had not drained from the meat. They were not to practice immorality.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tarsus - capital of Cilicia province

- Port city of one-half million people.
- Jews were given permanent Roman citizenship in 50 BC by Cicero, a Roman leader.
- Known for its culture, philosophy and education.
 - Famous philosophers taught there.
 - Outstanding Romans visited the city such as Cicero, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Mark Anthony.
 - The university was famous for its courses in philosophy and medicine; had a hospital where Dr. Luke trained.
- Known as a trade center for its timber and goat's hair.

Antioch of Syria - residence of the Syrian governor

- The 3rd largest city in the Roman empire with 1 ½ million people.
- The majority were Greeks who worshipped idols and used religious prostitution as part of their religion.
- Had the first Gentile church where believers were called *Christians*; it was the center of missionary activity.

Lystra - where people worshipped the gods....

- Zeus (Jupiter) he was the supreme deity who controlled the weather.
- Hermes (Mercury) he was the god of food merchants and the god who brought good luck.

Philippi - a Roman colony where Roman citizens had full legal protection

- They could not be arrested or beaten without a proper trial.
- Anyone who violated these rights lost his position and could never again hold political office.

Athens - art center of the world; the center of Greek thinking and reasoning

- Produced great men in history: Pericles, Demosthenes, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Euripides.
- Had a university known for its courses in philosophy, reasoning and wisdom.
- Had 30,000 statues of gods, so it was said, *it is easier to find a god, than a person in Athens* (Petronius).



APPLICATION: Preparation for ministry

God uses our education, interests, spiritual gifts, abilities and positive experiences to prepare us for ministry. He also takes the past with its unfairness, our pain, losses and even our bad choices. He uses them to give us greater understanding, maturity and patience. He takes the present with its disappointments, limitations, illness or loss and uses them to increase our faith and trust.

He uses all these things - past and present - for our development first and then as preparation for ministry to others. As we allow God to change us thru these experiences, He will have people cross our path who are going thru difficult times. Because of what we have been thru, we will have understanding and wisdom to know what to say and what to do. We will know how to encourage with a card, a meal, an arm around the shoulder or supportive words.

There is nothing that God allows in our lives that He cannot use in our ministry with others.



PAUL - His Writings

