

Called to Follow Christ

Sunday, June 16

Discussion Questions:

- 1. Sometimes we allow our background (family, culture, education, experiences) and our training to determine the boundaries of our “call to follow” Jesus. Can you identify how this may be true for you? Can you identify how Jesus may be inviting you to allow Him to set those boundaries and that might change your response to Him?**
- 2. Has God ever called you to do something good that scared you and called for some courage? How did you respond?**
- 3. Paul “wrote off” his significant credentials as a Jew in favor of his complete trust in the grace of Jesus Christ. What human status symbols or accomplishments do you take the most pride in? How easy or hard is it for you to “write them off,” and find your ultimate identity and confidence in your status as a child of God?**
- 4. God used other people, including Ananias and Barnabas, to help Paul see and understand his call. Who has God used in your life to help you see and understand your call to follow Jesus? Are there people for whom God is using**

you in a similar way?



The Call: Called to Follow Christ

Tom Deviney

 Acts 22:3a, 22:39b, Philippians 3:5, Acts 22:3b,
Galatians 1:14a, Acts 22:4

[And Paul said,] “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia... a citizen of an important city...circumcised on the eighth day, a member fo the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews...brought up in [Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law being zealous for God...I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age...I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison.”





5 B.C. - A.D. 10 Paul is Born (est.)

15
20
25
30
35
40
45

5 B.C. - A.D. 10 Paul is born (est.)

A.D. 16-22 Paul begins study in Jerusalem (est.)

A.D. 32 Paul arrests Jesus followers in Palestine (est.)

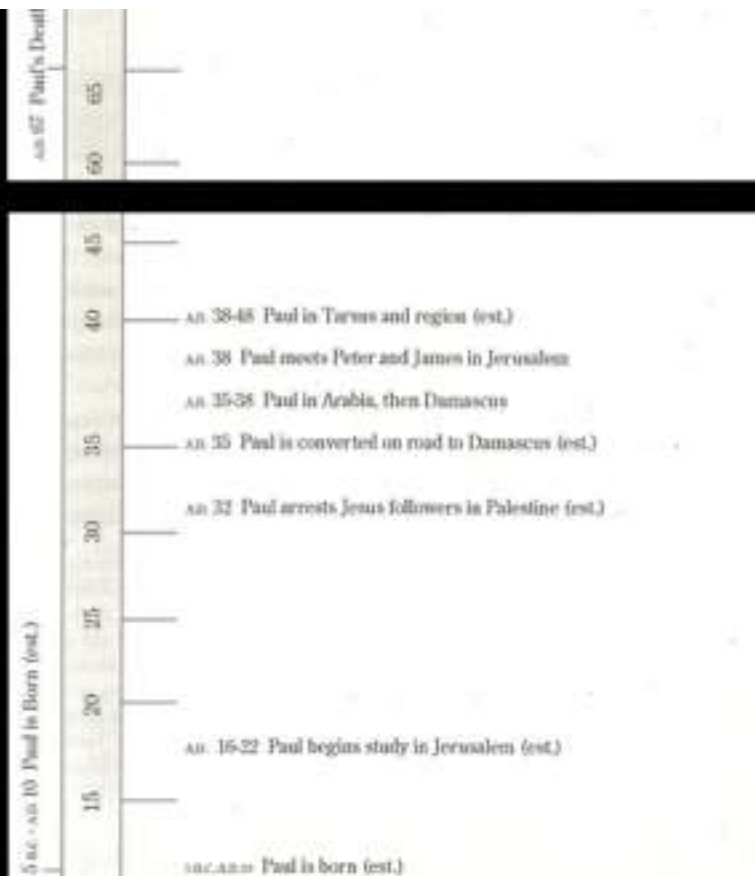
A.D. 35 Paul is converted on road to Damascus (est.)

A.D. 25-38 Paul in Arabia, then Damascus

A.D. 38 Paul meets Peter and James in Jerusalem

A.D. 38-48 Paul in Tarsus and region (est.)

THIS ONE IS HARD TO READ ON THE SCREENS





The inhabitants of this city apply to the study of philosophy and to the whole encyclical compass of learning with so much ardour, that they surpass Athens, Alexandria, and every other place which can be named where there are schools and lectures of philosophers.”

*Geography
by Strabo*



Paul's education



Saul the Persecutor



Acts 7:58–60, 8:1a

Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died... That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem.



s 8:3; 9:1–2

But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison...

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.



The Damascus Road



Acts 26:12–18

“With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’”



The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'"



Paul and Ananias



9:10–19

there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."



So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus.





Acts 9:23–25

After some time had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.



Paul in Arabia



Galatians 1:17

Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.



Galatians 1:11–12

For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.



Paul visits Jerusalem



Acts 9:26–27

When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.



Acts 9:28–30

So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He spoke and argued with the Hellenists; but they were attempting to kill him. When the believers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.



Barnabas



Acts 4:36–37

There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”). He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.



Acts 11:23–26

When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians.”



Who is your encourager?



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