

## Paul's Early Ministry

Here's where we left off, where Paul had not gone up to meet with the apostles at Jerusalem like it says here:

**Galatians 1:17:**

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

We read in Acts chapter 9 that when he was in Damascus, he really started growing in the Word. He started ministering the Word. He entangled or mixed up the Jews because he was teaching them that this is very Christ. Then the Jews got to the point where they got the Roman government involved; set up a garrison around the city that they could catch Paul. Then Paul had to be let down over the wall in a basket. This was the time when Aretas was king and there was a governor in Damascus under Aretas' reign.

**Galatians 1:18:**

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

This is about the time when Aretas was appointed king in 37 A.D. because 14 years later is when Paul was in Jerusalem at the Jerusalem council which was in 51 A.D. So this makes Paul's conversion about 34, 35 A.D. – somewhere in there.

**Galatians 1:19:**

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

The only apostles Paul saw, therefore, on his first revisit to Jerusalem, were Peter and James. The others, it says he did not see. Remember this.

**Galatians 1:20-21:**

Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

Syria is above Palestine; to the north of Palestine. Cilicia is sort of northwest of Syria. It's around on the north side of the Mediterranean Sea in what we, today call Turkey. Then it was Asia Minor. So Paul was up there in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea, in that general area along the coast there.

**Galatians 1:22:**

And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

Does that mean there was nobody in Jerusalem that knew him; that had seen him face to face? No, it only means that most of them didn't. It's like "all" without exception and "all" without distinction. Most of them didn't know him face to face. Peter, James and a few others had .

**Galatians 1:23:**

But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

That must have been quite an easement to the minds of the believers at Jerusalem; to know that the one who had formerly persecuted them was now teaching the same thing they were teaching, the faith.

**Galatians 1:24:**

And they glorified God in me.

That was his first trip to Jerusalem after his conversion. From there he went up to Syria and Cilicia.

**Acts 9:26:**

And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

This is his first trip to Jerusalem after his conversion. They didn't believe he was a disciple. They were afraid of him. They thought he was going to put them in jail like he had done previously.

**Acts 9:27:**

But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

In Galatians we read that he only saw Peter and James. If this is the same account, then who are the apostles Barnabas brought him to? Peter and James. Does it say Barnabas took him to "all" the apostles? No, either that or this has to be a different record.

Barnabas said, "Look there's nothing to be afraid of. I know what this Paul used to do, but God says forget the past. Your sins are cast as far as the East is from the West and remembers them no more. Paul, here, he's really with it. He's right on. He's tapped in. He's preaching the Word. You should have heard him up at Damascus. He was really preaching the Word."

**Acts 9:28-29:**

And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians [Hellenists; Geek speaking Jews]: but they went about to slay him.

Did Paul spend much time with the believers? No, he was only there 15 days. He really didn't get to meet much with the believers and they were afraid of him. He saw Peter and James and then he was out witnessing to the Greek speaking Jews and it says they went about to slay him.

**Acts 9:30:**

*Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Do you know where Tarsus is? Cilicia. Where did it say that he went after his first visit to Jerusalem in Galatians? Syria and Cilicia. Tarsus is in Cilicia and Tarsus is the town that Paul was born in.

**Acts 9:31:**

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Before this, remember what had happened? There was a great persecution because a man by the name of Saul had letters to go here, there and yon, to put Christians in jail. He was going into house, hailing men and women and committing them to prison. Now, this same Paul, the one who was above his equals, zealous of the traditions of the fathers, here he was down there at Jerusalem preaching the Lord Jesus. He had been up at Damascus doing it and word was getting out. They heard what was going on. They knew that the one that was really fighting against them now was on their side.

In Acts 22 verse 11 is where he was led to Damascus. Verse 12 is where Ananias gets involved and ministers to him. In verse 16 he says, "arise baptise and wash."

**Acts 22:17:**

And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

There are three years between verses 16 and 17. "In a trance," means he saw a vision like Peter in Acts 10 with the unclean animals let down in a sheet. Same thing; it was a vision not a trance.

**Acts 22:18:**

And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

How long was he there? 15 days.

**Acts 22:19-20:**

And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

And when the blood of thy martyr [witness] Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

“They know that I’m the one. Surely if they know that I’m the one that did that and now I’ve really tapped in; you’ve showed me these things Lord, they’ll believe me. Can’t I stay in Jerusalem and teach the Word?”

**Acts 22:21:**

And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

What was Paul’s ministry? Gentiles.

In chapter 26 after he finished telling about his conversion and the commission that we read a little while ago in verses 16 to 18:

**Acts 26:19:**

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, [to this commission; to go to the Gentiles etc.] I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

How long between Damascus and Jerusalem? Three years.

“the coasts of Judea” – in order to get out of Jerusalem and go up to Syria and Cilicia, he had to go through Judea. I’ll bet on the way he witnessed.

**Acts 26:20:**

For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

This was on one of his trips to Jerusalem. God told him, way back the first time he went to Jerusalem, “Depart. Get out of Jerusalem. I’m sending you to the Gentiles. They’re

not going to receive you here in Jerusalem. Go witness to the Gentiles.” His first trip to Jerusalem he told him that.

We've read how he went to Tarsus in Cilicia. It also says he went to Syria in Galatians.

In Acts chapter 9 after the churches had rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, then Peter goes down to Lydda. He saw some saints there. He ministers to Tabitha, who's also called Dorcus. Then in chapter ten is where Peter ministers up in Caesarea to Cornelius and his household. In Chapter 11 is where Peter goes back to Jerusalem with his six witnesses and says, “Yep, they got it too.” Then:

**Acts 11:19:**

Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen [chapter 7] travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

“Phenice” – is up the coast a little ways

“Cyprus” – that's that island out in the Mediterranean Sea

“Antioch” – that's up in Syria – one of the places it says in Galatians, Paul went. In Acts 9 it says he went up to Tarsus. That's in Cilicia. In Galatians it also says he went to Syria. How did he get from Tarsus which is in Cilicia over to Syria? That's the question we're going to answer.

“preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only” – What happened? On the day of the Ascension Jesus told them, “witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, Samaria and the ...” Still in chapter 11: only witnessing to Jews.

**Acts 11:20:**

And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene [Northern Africa], which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

“the Grecians” – the Greeks – that's why I believe this is not the Greek speaking Jews. This was given in some texts as Greek speaking Jews and other texts as Greeks. I think it was Greeks because it's in contrast. Before this they had only spoken to Jews. Now there going to speak to Greeks; Gentiles. This happened in Antioch up in Syria.

**Acts 11:21-23:**

And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

“seen the grace of God” – How God had even allowed Gentiles in

**Acts 11:24:**

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

This was in Antioch of Syria.

**Acts 11:25:**

Then [after Barnabas got the work going] departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

Where had Paul gone according to Acts 9? Tarsus, up in Cilicia. So Barnabas goes up to find Saul. He's still called Saul. Saul is his Hebrew name. Paul is his Greek name.

**Acts 11:26:**

And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

This is why it says in Galatians he was in Syria and Cilicia.

**Acts 11:27:**

And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

Here's how Paul got down to Antioch. After his first trip to Jerusalem, which was three years after he was converted, he makes a trip up to Cilicia to the city of Tarsus where he had been born. Now he makes a trip from Tarsus over to Antioch with Barnabas because Barnabas had been so hot and heavy for the Lord; he had been witnessing like crazy, his branch was ready to split and he needed another branch leader or something. At any rate Paul came over to Tarsus with him.

**Acts 11:27-30:**

And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world [44 A.D.]: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

In chapter 12 Herod stretches forth his hand, he kills James then he puts Peter in jail. Peter sleeps, an angel gets him out and they go to Mary's house. Then Herod dies. That all happened in 44 A.D. It happened when Paul and Barnabas were at Jerusalem. They had gone down there to take the abundant sharing down to Jerusalem to relieve the famine.

Where do you think Paul was when the believers were gathered together praying at the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark when Rhoda answered the door? Well, it doesn't say. Isn't it something that he was at Jerusalem at that time when Peter was getting out of jail by some unnatural means? What do you think that did to Paul's believing? Later on Paul gets out of jail in a similar fashion.

**Acts 12:24-25**, after Herod is eaten of worms:

But the word of God grew and multiplied.

And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

John Mark was the son of Mary, whose house they had been praying in. It says in **Acts 4:36** that Barnabas was a Levite:

And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

It says some place a certain Mark was the nephew of Barnabas.

[**Colossians 4:10**: Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)]

Whether these are all the same or not, we can't say with absolute certainty. But there's a good possibility that Barnabas and Paul did stay with John Mark and his mother Mary while they were at Jerusalem. They had to stay someplace. When you go to a town where you have relatives you normally stay there.

A lot of things in here that are sort of interesting but you can't go out and teach all these things; you can't say it with, "Thus saith the Lord." A lot of things you learn in the

Corps, you don't go out and teach all these things. This is just stuff that it's possible, they way they fall together, they could be but you can't say it with absolute certainty.

Barnabas and Paul returned from Jerusalem and took with them this John whose surname was Mark, who was possibly the nephew of Barnabas. Then in chapters 13 and 14 is where Paul and Barnabas take their first itinerary. That's something we'll go into later.

The next time Paul goes to Jerusalem is in chapter 15. After he gets back from his first itinerary in the end of chapter 14 it says.

**Acts 14:28:**

And there they abode long time with the disciples. [at Antioch]

**Acts 15:1-2:**

And certain men which came down ["up" – to us] from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

This was Paul's third trip to Jerusalem. This is where the Jerusalem council met; where Peter James and others meet.

**Acts 15:3:**

And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

Today you get in a car and you jump on a freeway and you go till you're there. In those days you stopped and told everybody along the way what was happening. They had fellowship.

**Acts 15:4-9:**

And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

**Acts 15:13-15, 18-22:**

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

Wherefore my sentence [declaration; revelation] is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

After this Jerusalem council meeting the men they sent with them were Judas and Silas.

**Acts 15:32-34:**

And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.

And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

Judas went back to Jerusalem. Silas stayed in Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Then verses 35 and following tell about how Barnabas and Paul had this argument over John Mark. Then chapter 16 gets into the second itinerary.

**Galatians 2:1:**

Then [after he went to Syria and Cilicia] fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also.

Does this say it was his second trip to Jerusalem? No, it just says 14 years later he went again to Jerusalem. This record more closely aligns with the record in Acts 15 with the Jerusalem council because of the content. The second time he went up to Jerusalem he went to take an abundant sharing offering up there to relieve the famine and Barnabas went with him. The third time Barnabas goes with him but it's because of the circumcision boys that were putting the pressure on the Gentiles. It more closely aligns itself with the Jerusalem council time-wise because it's 14 years later. 37 and 14 is 51; regarding the dates we had a while ago.

**Galatians 2:2:**

And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

He didn't go out and blab it all over. Paul went to those who were of reputation; the apostles, the elders. He took it up to the council and he said, "Look fellows, you're putting these Gentiles under law and it's not right.

As a leader, sometimes you can't blab everything you know. You can't tell everybody. Remember they stopped at Phenice and a few other places along the way. It says they just declared how God was moving among the Gentiles; how the Word was just opening up the areas in Syria and Cilicia. He handled it in Jerusalem behind closed doors and not for fear of the Jews either but because you don't hang your dirty laundry in public.

**Galatians 2:3:**

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

I'll show you later on in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts, which is the chapter right after this council, he took Timothy aside and circumcised him. Why? Revelation, people in the area; do anything to teach the Word.

**Galatians 2:4-5:**

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

That's a great teaching principle there; "to whom we gave place by subjection, NO, not for an hour." You say the opposite and then say, NO. He didn't give place to those guys who were trying to push law on them.

**Galatians 2:6-9:**

But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me:

But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter;

(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen [Gentiles], and they unto the circumcision.

James, Cephas and John were the ones who "held up the roof in the place"; the strong ones, on the law too; you know, they had come from that background and they were ministers of circumcision.

**Galatians 2:10:**

Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

"remember the poor" – the needy; where the needs are in the ministry; your abundant sharing

"the same which I also was forward to do" – I also was already willing and able and doing it

The gospel of circumcision to Peter, uncircumcision to Paul and they didn't put the pressure on the Gentiles to keep the law, like we read in Acts chapter 15. See how both Acts 15 and this record parallel, because of the content of what they trying to get across?

**Galatians 2:11-12:**

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

“came from James” – i.e. from Jerusalem, where James was “running the show”

**Galatians 2:13-14:**

And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

But [and] when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

“Why are you trying to make the Gentiles keep the law when you don’t even keep the law and you’re Jewish in background?” When this happened, I’m not absolutely certain. It may parallel with the first two verses of Acts 15: “when certain people came up from Jerusalem,” before the Jerusalem council happened. It may parallel with that account. But it couldn’t have happened after chapter 15 because Barnabas was still with Paul and in chapter 15 is where Paul and Barnabas split. It could be those first two verses in chapter 15 that we read where it says, “certain came up from Jerusalem” and they were putting on the pressure and saying, “In order to get saved you got to be circumcised.” Today it’s not circumcision, it’s water.

That was Paul’s third visit to Jerusalem; in Acts 15 and Galatians chapter 2. This is the first mention of Titus. Titus is not mentioned in the book of Acts. He’s mentioned quite a few times in II Corinthians where it says he went to Corinth. Paul never got to Corinth the first time until Acts chapter 18 and II Corinthians is referring to a time a couple of chapters after that when Titus went to Corinth. So, this is probably the earliest record of Titus and not much is said about him: only that he was a Greek, they didn’t compel him to get circumcised and he went with Paul on his third visit to Jerusalem. Apparently Titus had been working with Paul and the others at Antioch. At least he had been there in order to travel down south with them.

And Barnabas was with them, so you know this couldn’t have happened after chapter 15, as I said. It would have had to have been earlier and more than likely **verses 11-14** reflect back to a time before the Jerusalem council because it wouldn’t make much sense for Peter to run through this kind of a trip after they had made such a decision at the international headquarters at Jerusalem. But to withdraw himself from the Gentiles when the Jews all hepped on circumcision come up, that I could see. Then they make a trip down to Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas to decide what we’re going to do in this matter.

Any questions?

In **Galatians 2:12**, is this James the same as the James that was killed? No, the James that was killed was the brother of John in Acts chapter 12. This James was the one who apparently was heading up the operation at Jerusalem. I'll tell you who he was.

**Galatians 1:19:**

But other of the apostles saw I none, save [except] James the Lord's brother.

He was an apostle, then and he was the Lord's brother. That's which James this was. There were two James apparently, on the twelve; James the brother of John and James the brother of the Lord.

A question about **Acts 9:29:**

And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians [Hellenists; Geek speaking Jews]: but they went about to slay him.

Being Jew, they would also know their mother tongue. Would they know Aramaic? They were Greek speaking Jews, but they would also know Aramaic. The Hebrews were strictly Aramaic speaking Jews but all the Jews would know the Aramaic and the Hebrew to some extent, at least the Priests would know the Hebrew. The people wouldn't always but they would know their mother tongue. They were spread abroad and in there Synagogues and their Jewish communities, they would retain that knowledge of Aramaic so that they could go back and communicate with their people.

A question about **Galatians 1:17-18:**

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

It was three years after his conversion, after he had first come out of Jerusalem, that he went back to Jerusalem. Toward the end of those three years, that he was at Damascus and Arabia, is when he was let down over the wall in the basket at Damascus and then he went to Jerusalem.

