

3. Life and Ministry of Paul

1. Birth and Early Life

- 1) Paul (Apostle Paul) was born around AD 5 in Tarsus, Cilicia. He was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin and also a Roman citizen.
- 2) His Hebrew name was Saul, while his Greek name was Paul.
- 3) Paul received a strict Jewish education from a young age and studied under Gamaliel in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3).
- 4) He was a Pharisee and strictly followed the Jewish law (Philippians 3:5–6).

2. Persecutor of Early Christians

- 1) Before his conversion, Paul was a zealous Jew who persecuted the early church. He approved of Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7:58) and arrested Christians, imprisoning them (Acts 8:3).
- 2) He even obtained letters from the high priest to arrest believers in Damascus (Acts 9:1–2).

3. Conversion on the Road to Damascus

- 1) However, while on the road to Damascus, Paul encountered the risen Jesus Christ. A bright light blinded him, and he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4).
- 2) This life-changing event led Paul to become a devoted follower of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:15–16). Later, Ananias healed his blindness, and Paul was baptized (Acts 9:17–18).

4. Early Ministry and Preparation

- 1) After his conversion, Paul immediately began preaching about Jesus. However, due to opposition, he retreated to Arabia for about three years for spiritual preparation (Galatians 1:17–18).

- 2) Later, he returned to Tarsus and was eventually brought to Antioch by Barnabas, where he became a church leader (Acts 11:25–26).

5. Missionary Journeys

1) Paul undertook three major missionary journeys to spread the Gospel.

(1) First Missionary Journey (Acts 13–14, AD 46–48)

- ① Companions: Barnabas, Mark
- ② Key Locations: Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe
- ③ Outcome: First major outreach to Gentiles, Paul stoned in Lystra

(2) Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36–18:22, AD 49–52)

- ① Companions: Silas, Timothy, Luke
- ② Key Locations: Asia Minor, Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea), Athens, Corinth, Ephesus
- ③ Outcome: Conversion of Philippian jailer and family, 1.5 years in Corinth

(3) Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23–21:17, AD 53–57)

- ① Key Locations: Galatia, Ephesus (3 years of ministry), Macedonia, Corinth
- ② Outcome: Powerful revival in Ephesus, resistance against idolatry

6. Arrest and Journey to Rome

- 1) Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and imprisoned in Caesarea for two years (Acts 24:27).
- 2) He appealed to Caesar as a Roman citizen and was transported to Rome. On the way, his ship was wrecked, but he survived on Malta (Acts 27).

7. Roman Imprisonment and Martyrdom

- 1) Paul was under house arrest in Rome for about two years, continuing to preach the Gospel (Acts 28:30–31).
- 2) He was later arrested again under Emperor Nero and was eventually executed by beheading (AD 64–67) (2 Timothy 4:6–8).

8. Paul's Theology and Influence

1) Paul wrote 13 letters in the New Testament(Romans to Philemon). His theology included:

(1) Justification by Faith(Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:16)

(2) Mission to the Gentiles(Romans 10:12–13, Ephesians 2:14–16)

(3) The Work of the Holy Spirit and New Life(Galatians 5:22–23, Romans 8)

(4) Christ-Centered Life and Ecclesiology(1 Corinthians 12:12–27,

Ephesians 4:11–16)

(5) Eschatology and the Hope of Resurrection(1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, 1 Corinthians 15)

9. Conclusion

Paul was one of the most influential figures in early Christianity, playing a key role in spreading the Gospel beyond the Jewish world.

His life and ministry significantly contributed to the growth of Christianity, and his theological teachings remain foundational to Christian faith today.