

# Summer in the Word: New Testament

## Pauline Epistles

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# Content

1. Life of Paul

2. Letters of Paul (Historical/Cultural Context)

- 13 letters - 24% of NT





# Life of Paul

- Early Life
- Persecution of the Church
- Conversion
- “Tunnel” Period
- Missionary Journey





# 1. Paul's Early Life

- From Tarsus: Famous for Rhetoric, Philosophy, Poetry
- Raised in a devout Jewish family...but in a hellenized city
- Left Tarsus to train as a Pharisee (Shammaite school - most zealous)
  - Phil 3:5...a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;



## 2. Paul's Persecution of the Church

**Q: Why was Paul so zealous in persecuting Christians?**

- Paul was a “Zealot”

Phil 3:6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

**Q: Who was Israel's Greatest Zealot?**



# Phinehas the first Zealot!

Num **25**<sup>7</sup> When Phinehas..., saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, <sup>8</sup> and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman,

<sup>10</sup> (Lord said), <sup>11</sup> “Phinehas...was jealous with My jealousy...<sup>12</sup> Therefore, ‘I give him My covenant of peace;<sup>13</sup>...because he was jealous for his God

- Saul was going to become a distinguished Pharisee b/c of his zeal!





# Paul's Conversion





# 3. Paul's Conversion

**Acts 9:1** Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples..., went to the high priest, <sup>2</sup> and asked for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way...he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> As he was traveling,...suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; <sup>4</sup> and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" <sup>5</sup> And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting"





# Saul's conversion

Acts 22:1 - 21; 26:9 - 23; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8; Gal 1:15 - 16

<sup>17</sup> Ananias...laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus,...has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." <sup>18</sup> And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and was baptized;





## 4. Paul's "Tunnel" Period (AD 33 - 48)

**From Conversion to the writing of Galatians (Paul's first book)**

- Damascus to Arabia (Mt Sinai - Elijah's tomb) (Gal 1:17)
- 3 years in Damascus (plot to kill) (2 Cor 11:32; Acts 9:23-25)
- Jerusalem (Peter/James) through Barnabas (plot to kill) (Gal 1:18; Acts 9)
- 10 years in Syria/Cilicia (Tarsus) (Acts 11:30; Gal 1:21)





# Paul's first letter: Galatians

- After 10 yrs in Tarsus, Barnabas brings Paul to Antioch (Acts 11:25)
- Barnabas & Saul sent out as Missionaries at Antioch (Acts 13:1 - 2)
- Some came from Jerusalem church to Galatians telling them they had to get circumcised. Which made Paul write Galatians.





# 5. Paul the Missionary

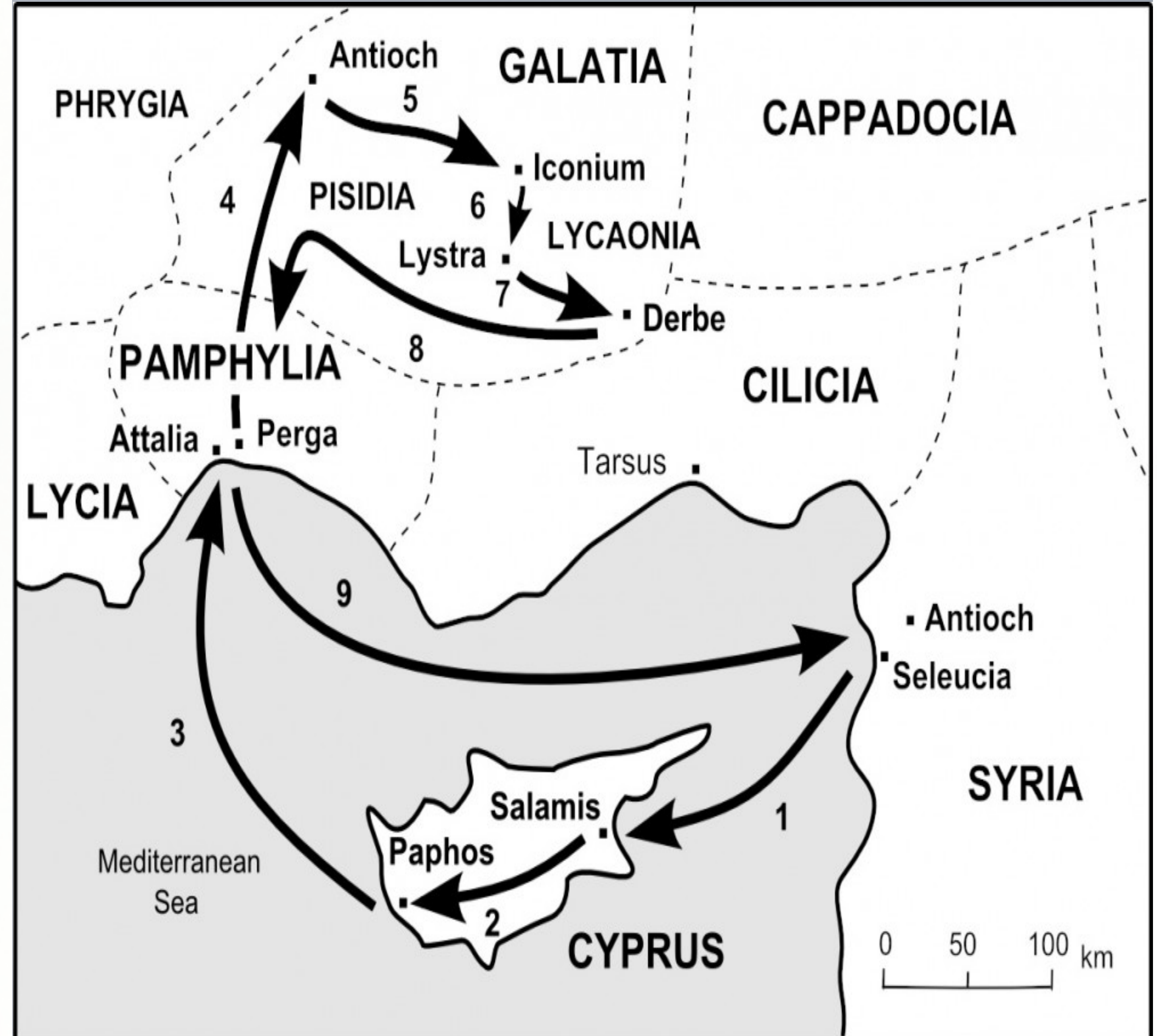
- First Christians (mostly) went East
- Paul went (mostly) West
- Book of Acts details 3 missionary journeys by Paul.





# 1<sup>st</sup> Mission (Acts 13 - 14) Barnabas & John Mark

1. **Cyprus** (Miracles)
2. **Antioch** (Mark leaves;  
Sermon to Jews)
3. **Iconium** (Revival; Miracles)
4. **Lystra** (Miracles & Sermon  
to Gentiles; Stoning)



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Mission (Acts 15 - 18)

**Silas, Timothy, Luke**

- Paul & Barnabas separate over John Mark (Paul takes Silas)
- Cilicia (Tarsus) - Derbe/Lystra (Timothy joins)
- Macedonian Vision (Paul actually wanted to go east!)
- Troas (Luke joins - would not have if they went east!)
  - Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea
  - Athens, Corinth, briefly Ephesus







# PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

# Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey

## Interesting Patterns

- Riots: Philippi; Thessalonica; Berea; Corinth; Athens (Areopagus - court)
- Prominent People (esp. Women)
  - Philippi: Lydia
  - Thessalonica: Leading Women
  - Berea: Prominent Greek Women
  - Athens: Dionysius Areopagite (judge)
  - Corinth: Crispus and Sosthenes!!!





# 3<sup>rd</sup> Mission (Acts 19 - 21)

- Ephesus (Greatest Revival)

1 Cor 15<sup>30</sup> Why are we also in danger every hour? <sup>31</sup> I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. <sup>32</sup> If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.

- Paul visited Ephesus on his 2<sup>nd</sup> trip
- Riots - Asiarchs (high ranking officials in Asia)
- God fulfills Paul's desire by bringing Paul back East



# Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey

- Back to Macedonia (Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica)
- Back to Ephesus (prophetic prayer w/ Elders)
- To Jerusalem (gets arrested; sent to Rome - house arrest)





# Paul's 4<sup>th</sup> Mission?

- Spain (farthest limits of the West - Clement of Rome) to Crete (Titus)
- Ephesus (2 Tim 1:15, "All turned away"; 1 Tim 1:3, b/c of doctrine)
- Colossae (to visit Philemon)
- Macedonia (through Miletus, Trophimus got sick) - **Troas** (left books/cloak with Carpus) - planned to winter in Nicopolis (warmer city)
  - Rome (under Nero); Demas, Onesiphorus, Luke. Asks for Mark & Timothy. Beheaded, not wild beasts b/c he was a Roman citizen.





## Paul, 62 - 68 AD

This map represents a possible itinerary for Paul after his release from Roman prison in 62 AD and his death in Rome during the fall of 67 or spring of 68. This is speculated from: Romans 15:24, 28; Titus 1:5, 3:12; 2 Timothy 1:15; 4:13; 4:21; 4:9-21; Philemon 22; Philippians 2:23,24 and Eusebius' account that Paul preached in Spain which agrees with Clement and the Muratorian Canon.

SPAIN

ITALY

Rome

Philippi

Troas

Laodicea

Colosse

Neapolis

Ephesus

Miletus

Corinth

CRETE

Paul could have gone directly to Spain upon his release from Roman prison. He could have returned through Crete (Titus 1:5), wrote Titus from Corinth, revisited the Asian churches and been arrested in Troas where he would have left his cloak and books (2 Tm.4:13).





# Paul's legacy

**He wrote 13 letters - 24% of New Testament!**

- He planted churches in 17 locations!
- Damascus, Syria, Cilicia, Cyprus, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Troas? Spain?
- He mentored Silas, Timothy, Titus, Luke, Demas, Crescens, Tychicus, Carpus, Erastus, Trophimus, Artemas
- He had many female co-workers: Phoebe, Euodia, Syntyche, Apphia, Priscilla (Prisca), and Junia



# Paul's legacy

He suffered faithfully for Jesus...

**2 Cor 11:23** Are they servants of Christ? I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. <sup>24</sup> 5 times I received from the Jews 39 lashes. <sup>25</sup> 3 times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, 3 times I was shipwrecked. <sup>26</sup> *I have been*...in dangers from rivers, from robbers, from *my* countrymen, from the Gentiles, in the city, in the wilderness, on the sea, among false brethren; <sup>27</sup> *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup> Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.





# Paul's Focus

**Acts 20:24** But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

**2 Tim 4:6** For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; <sup>8</sup> in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.



# Summer in the Word: New Testament

## Paul's Letters





# Order of Paul's letters

- Galatians
- 1-2 Thessalonians
- 1 Corinthians
- Prison Epistles: Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians
  - 2 Corinthians
  - Romans
  - Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy)



# Galatians

## Justification by Faith Alone

- Jewish Exemption: Only Jews given permission to pray “for”, not “to” Emperor.
- Some in the church wanted this “Jewish Exemption”, so they told Gentile believers to get circumcised. They told Galatians that Paul was a people pleaser, left out circumcision to make it easier for Gentiles.
- Jerusalem church was under great pressure from zealous Jews who heard about Jewish Christians eating with Gentiles. Peter & Barnabas, out of love for the Jerusalem church refrained from table fellowship.
- Paul had to go to Jerusalem to settle this again (Acts 15). James, leader of Jerusalem church, agrees with Paul which paves the way for Gentile acceptance and his martyrdom (stoned).





# 1 - 2 Thessalonians

- Paul leaves Philippi, goes to Thessalonica, starts a church in 3 weeks!
- Paul is kicked out, goes to Berea, flees to Athens, was worried about the Thess's...he sends Timothy. Tim returns w/ good news and Paul writes 1 Th.
- 2 Thess is weeks after 1<sup>st</sup> b/c he receives news again that they are struggling. Esp. with persecution and false rumor that the day of the Lord had arrived.
  - They were confused & anxious about Christ's return
  - What about those who already died?
  - Should we abandon our ordinary life and just wait?



# 1 - 2 Corinthians

Paul goes to Corinth, spends 18 months (wrote 4 letters, which 2 are lost)

- 1<sup>st</sup> letter: Do not associate with believers in unrepentant sexual sin
- 2<sup>nd</sup> letter: 1 Corinthians (from Ephesus)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> visit: Painful because they did not listen and rejects him
- 3<sup>rd</sup> letter: Letter of tears - which affects the Corinthians powerfully
  - Titus lets Paul know the Corinthians chose Paul over his antagonist but now super apostles hurting Paul.
- 4<sup>th</sup> letter: Paul writes 2 Corinthians (prepares for 3<sup>rd</sup> visit)





# Problem of Corinth

- Division (rich vs. poor; Paul/Apollos/Peter to Rome)
- Sexual immorality
- Suspicious of Paul (Paul's antagonist; Super Apostles)
  - Improper use of Spiritual gifts



# Prison Epistles: Philippians

- Paul's first mission to Macedonia (Paul's vision)
- 1<sup>st</sup> church in Europe. Started w/ Lydia, Jailer, Slave Girl (Unity prob)
- Paul goes to Ephesus - great revival and persecution breaks out and Paul ends up in jail (writes Philippians)
  - Paul thanks Philippians for their support and exhorts (Euodia/Syntyche) to unity and watch out for false teachers.





# Prison Epistles: Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians

- Paul started the church in Ephesus (scene of greatest revival)
- Paul's co-worker (Epaphras) started churches in Colossae
- Paul met Philemon who became Paul's supporter (Colossian church met in his home)
- In prison, Paul meets Onesimus Philemon's slave but became a Christian under Paul
  - Paul writes Colossians to warn the churches to be on guard against Jewish community - tells John Mark to make a pastoral visit to Colossians (4:10)
    - Paul writes a similar letter to the Asian church called Ephesians (circular, general letter)



# Romans

## Church in Rome started through Jews who came to Pentecost

- Paul wanted to raise support for Spain but Roman church didn't know Paul well or had false understanding of him (Paul explains his theology of gospel and mission to the Gentiles)
- Paul wrote to minister to the Jew/Gentile division in the church. Rome became majority Gentile after Jews kicked out but when they returned, it was hard for them due to Gentile understanding of food.
  - Paul wrote Romans through Tertius and gave it to Phoebe (deacon)





# Pastoral Epistles

## The Mentoring Epistles - To Timothy and Titus

- Paul is released from prison in Rome (Acts 28).
- While doing missions (to Spain), he writes 1 Timothy and Titus.
- 1 Timothy & Titus: Remain in Crete/Ephesus, continue leading the church and raise up good leaders.
- Returns to Rome, gets imprisoned (final time) & writes 2 Timothy.
  - Asks Timothy to join him in Rome and bring John Mark. And exhorts them to keep the faith.



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## Q and A

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# Discussion Questions

- What stood out that you were not aware of before?
- How did your understanding of Paul's life or mission or his letters deepen through this study?
- How important do you think is history and cultural context in understanding scripture?

