

The Great Persecution (c. Spring–Summer 34)

Acts 8:1b–3	Acts 22:4, 19b	Acts 26:10–11a
<p>1b And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.</p> <p>2 And devout men carried Stephen <i>to his burial</i>, and made great lamentation over him.</p> <p>3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed <i>them</i> to prison.</p>	<p>4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.</p> <p>19b I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:</p>	<p>10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against <i>them</i>.</p> <p>11a And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled <i>them</i> to blaspheme;</p>

Philip's Ministry in Samaria (c. Summer 34)

Acts 8:4–25

The Great Persecution Serves to Spread the Gospel Message

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Philip Preaches to the Samaritans

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

Simon the Magician

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

Peter and John Visit the Work in Samaria

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Peter Rebukes Simon

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.
 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.
 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.
 25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (c. Summer 34)

Acts 8:26–40

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.
 27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,
 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.
 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.
 30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?
 31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.
 32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:
 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. [[Isa 53:7–8](#)]
 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?
 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.
 36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.
 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.
 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Saul's (Paul's) Call and Conversion Experience (late 34)

Acts 9:1–19a

1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,
 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.
 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus:
 and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:
 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him,

Acts 22:6–16

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus
 about noon,
 suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.
 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me,

Acts 26:12–18

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,
 13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.
 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue,

<p>Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5b <i>it is</i> hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 5a And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord <i>said</i> unto him, Arise,</p> <p>and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought <i>him</i> into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias;</p> <p>and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I <i>am here</i>, Lord. 11 And the Lord <i>said</i> unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for <i>one</i> called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting <i>his</i> hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy</p>	<p>Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise,</p> <p>and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.</p> <p>12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt <i>there</i>,</p>	<p>Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? <i>it is</i> hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.</p> <p>16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and <i>from</i> the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, <i>and</i> to turn <i>them</i> from darkness to light, and <i>from</i> the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.</p>
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<p>name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house;</p> <p>and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, <i>even</i> Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith,</p> <p>and arose, and was baptized. 19a And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.</p>	<p>13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.</p>	
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Saul Preaches Christ in the Damascus Synagogues (late 34)

Acts 9:19b–22

19b Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.
 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.
 21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?
 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

Saul's Extended Residence in Damascus and Arabia (late 34–early 37)

Galatians 1:15–17

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,
 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:
 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Saul Narrowly Escapes Capture in Damascus (early 37)

Acts 9:23–25	2 Corinthians 11:32–33
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<p>23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.</p>	<p>32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:</p>
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25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let <i>him</i> down by the wall in a basket.	33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.
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Saul's First Post-Conversion Visit to Jerusalem (early 37)

Acts 9:26–29	Galatians 1:18–19
<p>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.</p> <p>27 But Barnabas took him, and brought <i>him</i> 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.</p> <p>28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.</p> <p>29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.</p>	<p>18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter,</p> <p>and abode with him fifteen days.</p> <p>19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.</p>

Saul's Ministry in Tarsus (his hometown in the province of Cilicia) (c. 37–46)

Acts 9:30	Galatians 1:21–24
<p>30 <i>Which</i> when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.</p>	<p>21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;</p> <p>22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:</p> <p>23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.</p> <p>24 And they glorified God in me.</p>

Scripture quotations are from *The King James Version (KJV)*. The KJV is in the public domain.

Chronological Notes

- 1) My chronological framework for the life of the apostle Paul follows Carson & Moo / Kostenberger for the period of 33 to 49 (both place Paul's conversion c. 34), and Kostenberger / Finegan for the period of 49 to 67 (both place Paul's arrest in Jerusalem c. 55).¹ I differ from Steinmann / Finegan over the identification of Galatians 2:1–10 with the council of Acts 15 (the current majority view).² I prefer to connect Galatians 2:1–10 with the famine visit of Acts 11.³ In support of this view are the following

¹ D. A. **Carson** and Douglas J. **Moo**, *An Introduction to the New Testament—Second Edition* (Zondervan, 2009): 359–369; Andreas J. **Kostenberger**, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* (B&H Academic, 2009): 397–403; Jack **Finegan**, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, Rev. Ed., (Hendrickson Publishers, 1998): 390–402.

² Andrew E. **Steinmann**, *From Abraham to Paul*, 306–320. See also Moises **Silva**, *Interpreting Galatians*, 129–139.

³ I find myself in good company: Richard N. **Longenecker**, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990): lxxiii–lxxxviii. See also Stanley D. **Toussaint**, "The Chronological Problem of Galatians 2:1–10," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 120:480 (Oct 1963): 335–340; Paul R. **Trebilco**, "Itineraries, travel plans, journeys, apostolic parousia," in *Dictionary of Paul & His Letters*, G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin and D. G. Reid eds. (Downers Grove, Illinois, Inter-Varsity Press, 1993): 446–456; Joe **Morgado**, Jr., "Paul in Jerusalem: A Comparison of His Visits in Acts and Galatians," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37.1 (March 1994): 55–68; David J. **Downs**, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008): 33–39; Thomas R. **Schreiner**, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Zondervan, 2010): 28–29; Ronald Y. K. **Fung**, *Galatians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Eerdmans, 1988): 86; Ben **Witherington** III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, (Eerdmans, 1998): 13–18; Timothy **George**, *Galatians*, New

points from Marshall⁴ and Schnabel:⁵

- A) Galatians 2:1–10 is a private meeting, not a public one as in Acts 15.
 - B) Galatians 2:1–10 is connected to a revelation, which best corresponds to Agabus' prophecy of the coming famine in Acts 11:27–28.
 - C) If Galatians 2:1–10 is equivalent to Acts 15, then Paul left unmentioned the famine visit of Acts 11:27–30. This makes no sense in light of Paul's intent in providing the autobiographical detail in Galatians 1–2.
 - D) Peter's fear of the men from Jerusalem in Galatians 2:11–14 makes no sense if the incident occurred *after* the Council of Acts 15.
 - E) Why, if writing to the Galatians *after* the Council of Acts 15, did Paul make no mention of the decision which had been reached? This makes no sense in light of the fact that when he returned to the Galatian churches on his second missionary trip, he made a point of sharing the decision with them (see Acts 16:4).
- 2) On the dating of Paul's escape from the "ethnarch" (*ethnarches*, 2 Cor 11:32–33; cf. Acts 9:23–25) of King Aretas, see Douglas A. Campbell, "An Anchor for Pauline Chronology: Paul's Flight from 'The Ethnarch of King Aretas' (2 Corinthians 11:32-33)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121.2 (2002): 279–302. Campbell argues for a six month window between late 36 and early 37 for Paul's escape. Steinmann agrees, but argues for a larger window between 36 and 38, mainly due to his view that Galatians 2:1–10 is equivalent to Acts 15.⁶

American Commentary (Broadman & Holman, 1994): 136–137; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Paternoster, 2002): 43–56.

⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary Vol. 5, (Sheffield Academic Press, 2003): 258–262.

⁵ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Volume 2, Paul and the Early Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004): 988–89.

⁶ Steinmann, 301–303.