

The First Journeys of Paul

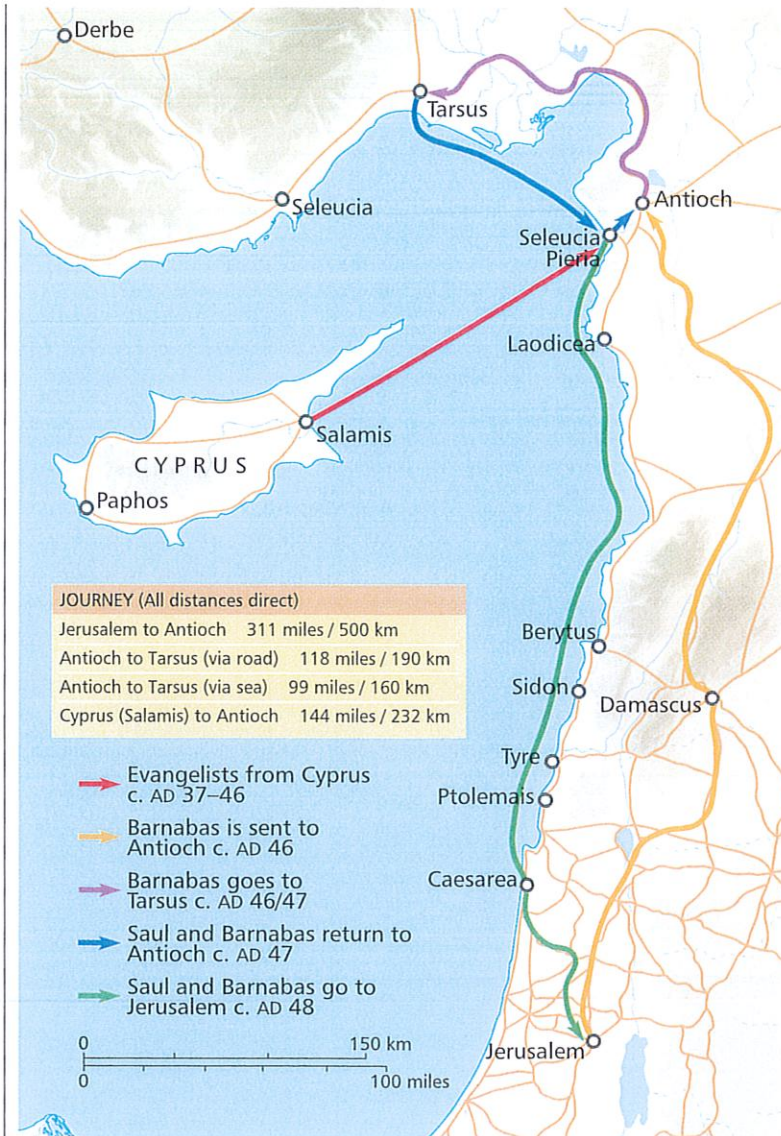
AD 46-49

Paul spent some ten years in Tarsus and Cilicia. It is inconceivable that during this time he was doing nothing; he was nothing if not an activist.

Indeed, it is likely that he started working with Gentiles and was actively evangelizing in the region. In the second letter to the Corinthians he talks of suffering that is not entirely accounted for by the stories in Acts (certainly not by AD 54/55, the time when Corinthians was written) – “Five times the Jews gave me thirty-nine lashes with a whip. Three times the Romans beat me with a big stick, and once my enemies stoned me. I have been shipwrecked three times, and I even had to spend a night and a day in the sea. During my many travels, I have been in danger from rivers, robbers, my own people, and foreigners” (2 Corinthians 11:24-26).

It seems likely, therefore, that these sufferings, or some of them at any rate, happened during this decade in Cilicia when Paul was learning his trade as a Christian evangelist – and many times it was a painful lesson.

This experience would also explain why Barnabas thought of Paul when he was sent north to investigate the new Gentile church at Antioch. He knew that Paul had been involved in similar work: he was calling on someone with expertise.



PAUL AND BARNABAS

- Following the persecution of Stephen, some followers return to Cyprus and Cyrene. Later they go to Antioch and start converting Greeks (Acts 11:19-21).
- Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem to investigate the rapidly growing church at Antioch (Acts 11:22-24).
- Barnabas then goes to Tarsus to

recruit Paul (Acts 11:25-26).

- They stay at Antioch for a year. During this time the Christians in Antioch make a collection to help the Jerusalem church in the famine (Acts 11:27-29).
- Saul and Barnabas (and Titus) go to Jerusalem, taking the famine money. There, Paul proposes a mission to Gentiles in Galatia (Acts 11:30; 12:24-25; Galatians 2:1-10).

THE MISSION TO GALATIA, AD 48-49

Paul returned from Jerusalem with a mandate to go and “preach to the Gentiles” (Galatians 2:8). He also returned with a new team member: John Mark, a relative of Barnabas. After fasting and praying at Antioch, this team set off on their mission, sometime in AD 48.

This journey, in some ways, sets the tone for all of Paul’s future missions. There are hardships and beatings – at one point he is even left for dead (Acts 14:20). There is also an internal disagreement, with John Mark deciding that this trip is not for him and returning to Jerusalem. Above all, there are new converts and new congregations.

THE MISSION TO GALATIA

- Paul, Barnabas and John Mark are commissioned by the congregation at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3).
- They travel to Cyprus and journey through the island. Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, becomes a convert (Acts 13:4-12).
- They sail to Perga, where John Mark leaves them (Acts 13:13).
- At Antioch, Paul speaks in the synagogue. Eventually they are expelled from the city (Acts 13:14-52).
- They stay “for some time” in Iconium, but leave when their lives are threatened (Acts 14:1-5).

- In Lystra Barnabas and Paul are mistaken for gods. Paul is almost killed (Acts 14:7-20).
- At Derbe they win “some people to the Lord” (Acts 14:21). Then they return the way they came, setting up congregations and appointing local leaders (Acts 14:21-23).
- They return to Antioch, via Perga and Attalia (Acts 14:24-28).

JOURNEYS (All distances direct)

Antioch to Cyprus (Salamis)	144 miles / 232 km
Salamis to Paphos	94 miles / 151 km
Paphos to Attalia	174 miles / 280 km
Attalia to Perga	8.5 miles / 14 km
Perga to Pisidian Antioch	94 miles / 151 km
Pisidian Antioch to Iconium	76 miles / 122 km
Iconium to Lystra	20 miles / 32 km
Lystra to Derbe	35 miles / 56 km
Return journey to Attalia (retracing steps)	233.5 miles / 375 km
Perga to Antioch	328 miles / 528 km
TOTAL	1207 miles / 1941 km

