

CONTINUING THE MISSION (ACTS CH1:8)!
ACTS CH8:1-8

ILLUSTRATION

Noughts and crosses is a great game to **encourage step-by-step logical thinking in your child**. You need two people to play, and you can play it anywhere with just a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Draw a little grid with two lines crossing another two lines at right angles.

PAUL! V1a+3

Saul, who will shortly be renamed by Christ, to Paul, has been given some kind of authority to persecute Christians – Acts Ch22:4a, Ch22:20 and Ch26:9-11! From Paul's birth until his appearance in Jerusalem as a persecutor of Christians, there is little information concerning his life. Born in Tarsus as an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin and a Roman Citizen (Acts Ch22:3; 28; Rom Ch11:1; Phil Ch3:5). A zealous member of the Pharisee Party (Rom Ch11:1, Phil Ch3:5, Acts Ch23:6), he was given official authority to direct the persecution of Christians. Of Paul's personal appearance, the canonical account suggests only that it was not impressive (1 Cor Ch2:3, 2 Cor Ch10:10).

Information about Paul's conversion is found in Acts Ch9, 22, 26.

Paul spent three years following his Baptism preaching in Damascus (Gal Ch1:17, Acts Ch9:19 – 30). Paul then spent only around 2 weeks in Jerusalem, as people plotted to kill him, before spending 10 silent years in Tarsus, his home town. Later, Paul was invited by Barnabas to come to Antioch in Syria, where they both taught for a year, before being sent out by the Church around AD 46-47. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch (Acts Ch11:25-26).

A POTENTIAL OVERVIEW OF PAUL'S CHRONOLOGY!

Birth of Paul	5 BC - 10 AD?
Death of Jesus	AD 29/30?
Persecution of Christians	30 - 33
Conversion	33
Ministry in Arabia/Damascus	34 - 37
Jerusalem (1 st Visit)	37
Syria and Cilicia	37 - 46
Antioch	47
Jerusalem	47 - 48
First Missionary Journey	47 - 49
Antioch (Peter confronted – Gal Ch2:11-14)	49?
Apostolic Council (Acts Ch15)	49
Letter to the Galatians (1)	49
Second Missionary Journey	49 - 52
Letters 1 st - 2 nd Thessalonians (2+3)	51
Antioch via Jerusalem (Acts Ch18:22)	51 - 52?
Third Missionary Journey	52 - 57?
Time in Ephesus	52 - 55?
Letters 1 st - 2 nd Corinthians (4+5)	
Philippi	55
Corinth	55 - 56
Letter to Romans (6)	

Jerusalem (Final Time)	57
Imprisonment in Caesarea	57 - 59
Journey to Rome	59 - 60?
House arrest in Rome	60 - 63?
Letter to Ephesians, Col, Phil, Philemon (7,8,9+10)	
Second imprisonment	63 - 68?
Letters - Pastoral Epistles (11, 12+13)	63 - 68?
Martyred by beheading	68?

OR,

A.D. 5-10?	Born in Tarsus as an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin and a Roman Citizen (Acts Ch22:3; 28; Rom Ch11:1; Phil Ch3:5) raised in either Jerusalem (Acts Ch22:37) or Tarsus
15-20?	Trained as a Pharisee by Gamaliel 1 (Acts Ch22:3; 26:5; Gal Ch1:14; Phil Ch3:5-6)
30/33*	Death, resurrection of Christ
31-34	Present at Stephen's stoning, persecuted Christians (Acts Ch7:58, 8:1; 22:4a; 26:9-11; 1 st Cor Ch15:9; Gal 1:13)
33/34*	Converted, called and commissioned on the way to Damascus (Acts Ch9:1-19; 22:6-11; 26:12-18; Gal 1:15-16)
33/34-36/37	Stays in Damascus a short time (Acts Ch9:19b); leaves for "Arabia" (i.e., Nabataean Kingdom; 2 nd Cor Ch11:32; Gal Ch1:17); returns to Damascus (Gal 1:17; Acts 9:20-22?); Jews and the governor under King Aretas try to arrest and kill him, Paul escapes through the City wall (Acts 9:23-24; 2 nd Cor 11:32-22).
36/37*	Meets with Peter (and sees James) in Jerusalem (Acts Ch9:26-30; Gal 1:18; Hellenists seek to kill him and he flees to Tarsus (Acts 9:28-30; Gal 1:21)
37-45	Ministers in Syria/Cilicia (2 nd Cor Ch11:22-27?)
42-44	Receives his "thorn in the flesh" (2 nd Cor Ch12:7-9)
44	Herod Agrippa dies (Acts Ch12:20-23)
44-47*	Spends a year ministering with Barnabas in Antioch (Acts Ch11:25-26) Second visit to Jerusalem ; Time of famine (Acts Ch11:27-30; Gal 2:1-10)
46-47	First Missionary Journey (Acts Ch13:4-14:26) 1.5 years?
48*	Paul and Barnabas spend "no little time" in Antioch (Acts Ch14:28;cf.Gal 2:11-14); Paul; writes letter to the Galatians
48-49*	Returns to the Jerusalem for the Apostolic Council (Acts CH15); Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (Acts Ch15:30-33), but a dispute over John Mark causes them to part ways (Acts Ch15:36-41)
48/49-51*	Second Missionary Journey (Acts Ch15:36 – Ch18:22): 2.5 years?
49	Edict of Claudius (Acts Ch18:2). Paul and Silas travel to southern Galatia through Asia Minor, on to Macedonia (notably Philippi - 1 st Thess Ch2:2; Thessalonica - 1 st Thess Ch2:2; Phil 4:15-16; Berea – Acts Ch17:10-15, Achaia notably Athens - 1 st Thess Ch3:1 and Corinth - 2 nd Cor Ch11:7-9)

49-51*	Spends 1.5 years in Corinth (Acts Ch18:11); Appears before Gallio (Acts Ch18:12-17); Writes 1+2 Thessalonians
51	Returns to Jerusalem? (Acts Ch18:22)
52-57*	Third Missionary Journey (Acts Ch18:23-Ch21:17); 5 years?
52	Travels to Antioch, where he spends “some time”; then travels through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts Ch18:23)
52-55	Arrives in Ephesus (Acts Ch19:1; 1 st Cor Ch16:8); ministers there for 3 years (Acts Ch20:31) and writes 1st Corinthians in the spring, near the end of his ministry there; makes brief, “painful visit” to Corinth (2 nd Cor Ch2:1), then returns to Ephesus and writes “tearful, severe letter” (now lost) to Corinth (2 nd Cor Ch2:3-4; Ch7:8-16)
55-56*	Travels North to Macedonia, where he meets Titus (Acts Ch20:1; cf 2 nd Cor Ch2:12-13); writes 2nd Corinthians
57*	Winters in Corinth (Acts Ch20:2-3; cf 2 nd Cor Ch9:4), writes letter to the Romans from Corinth; travels to Jerusalem and is arrested (Acts Ch21:27-36)
57-59	Imprisonment transferred to Caesarea, where he stays for 2 years (Acts Ch24:27)
60*	Voyage to Rome; shipwrecked for 3 months on the Island of Malta (Acts Ch28:11); finally arrives in Rome
62*	Under house-arrest in Rome (Acts Ch28:30-31), writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
62-67	Released from house-arrest in Rome, extends his mission (Spain?), writes 1st Timothy (from Macedonia?) and Titus (from Nicopolis): is re-arrested, writes 2nd Timothy from Rome shortly before his execution
64-67*	Martyred in Rome

PERSECUTION! V1b-3

Luke records for us that the people in Jerusalem turn against the Christians (Ch6:10-14), a lawless mob then take matters into their own hands and murder Stephen (Ch7:58-60) by stoning him, and a great persecution starts against the Church (Ch8:1)! **What is persecution?** For the Christian, it is being treated by someone unfairly or cruelly because you believe in and follow Jesus! Here are some examples of this:

Over 300 men, women and children in the UK were burnt alive for three words! It's by faith! 3 Welshman:

Rawlins White a fisherman – White was executed on 30 March 1555, the fire that took his life being built outside Bethany Church in the centre of Cardiff. The site of the old church is now occupied by James Howells Department Store; a plaque on one interior wall of the shop marks the spot where White breathed his last

Robert Ferrar the Bishop of St Davids – March 3rd 1555 Carmarthen

William Nichol – April 9th 1558 Haverfordwest! (A memorial in his honour is on Dark Street, Haverfordwest)

We as Christians may not be burnt literally, but perhaps burnt in relationships, burnt in being accepted, burnt in being misrepresented and misunderstood!

PHILIP! V4-8

Philip is mentioned by Luke after the martyrdom of Stephen and the resulting persecution of the Church, taking the Gospel to Samaria Ch8:5. At this point, the Church had completed the 1st part of the 4 part Mission of Jesus, to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth (Acts Ch1:8)!

“Philip was one of the ‘Seven’ who were chosen as officials (the first * ‘deacons’) of the Church at Jerusalem (Acts Ch6:5). On the persecution of the Church following the martyrdom of Stephen he took the Gospel to Samaria, where his ministry was much blessed (Acts Ch8:5-13), and subsequently he was sent South to the Jerusalem-Gaza Road to lead the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ (Acts Ch8:26-38). After this incident he was ‘Spirited’ away to Azotus, the Philistine Ashdod, and from there conducted an itinerant ministry until he reached the Port of Caesarea (Acts Ch8:39-40), where he appears to have settled (Acts Ch21:8). He was known as ‘the evangelist’, presumably to distinguish him from the apostle Philip, and had 4 daughters who were prophetesses (Acts Ch21:9)” (Cited in New Bible Dictionary, page 917 + 918).

Stephen and Philip the evangelist had similarities:

- Both chosen as part of the original 7 (Acts Ch6:5)
- Both were evangelists – Acts Ch6:10 + Ch8:5
- Both performed public signs – Acts Ch6:8 + Ch8:6

Luke has already reported that Stephen was involved in performing “great signs and wonders” (Ch6:8), as did Jesus (Ch2:22) and the apostles (Ch2:43; Ch5:12), Philip now continues with the prophetic gifting that is available to all believers (*Acts Ch2:38-39*)! He *goes into Samaria, performs public signs, by performing exorcisms on demons and healing the paralysed and lame, and the impact in the City is that “with one accord paid attention” and “there was much joy in that City”*.

Samaria, originally a region associated with the 12 tribes of Israel, **The region of Samaria was assigned to the house of Joseph, that is, to the tribe of Ephraim and to half of the tribe of Manasseh. The Samaritans were considered “half-breeds” by most Jews.** This was because of the influx of the Assyrians when they conquered Israel, the Northern kingdom, in 722 B.C. They took a number of the Jews to Assyria as captive slaves, but they also moved a great number of Assyrians into the conquered land, where they mixed with the Israelites in marriage. Jews and Samaritans **hated each other**. Most Jews would not travel through Samaria. They went by a longer route to avoid Samaria and any contact with Samaritans. Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan after he had been asked by a Jewish man: “What must I do to receive eternal life?”

Among the most significant differences between the Samaritans and the Jews is **the site which they believe God chose for his dwelling**. While the Jews hold that God chose Mount Zion in Jerusalem, Samaritans believe he chose Mount Gerizim near Shechem. (Luke Ch9:52 the village, 10:33 Good Samaritan, 17:11, 17:16 cleansed leper)

APPLICATION

What is God doing? God is constantly working at drawing back a redeemed people to Himself, through Jesus death on the cross! He then invites those whom He redeems, to join Him in His Mission!