**Notes on the Background on Saul**

**As a Pharisee:**

* Trade: tentmaker – lifelong source of income, didn’t have to depend on charity
* Hellenistic Jew of the Diaspora
* Had a ‘thorn in his flesh’ scholars don’t know for sure what it was: maybe epilepsy, malaria, or eye malady
* Proud, quick tempered, rugged
* Knew the law backwards and forwards on a literal level
* Stereo typical qualities: Paul represented typical pharisaical thought: arrogance, self-righteousness, intellectual, rigid, prejudiced, brilliant scholar of the Law

**As a pupil of Gamaliel:**

- from the tribe of Benjamin

- studied with the best teacher in the Temple in Jerusalem

- present at Stephen’s stoning: held everyone’s coats

- radically persecuted and killed Christians and imprisoned them

**From the City of Tarsus in Cilicia (in today’s Turkey)**

* Reputation for culture Hellenistic city
* Learned to read and write in Greek
* Could speak and preach in Greek to Hellenistic converts
* Came from a family with wealth and position
* Inherited Roman citizenship which protected him later
  + He could only be tried in front of the Caesar
* Took three major journeys around Asia and Europe (Greece and Turkey) after his conversion.
* Scholars think he maybe took a 4th journey, possible to Spain
* Was martyred in Rome around 64 CE

**How many miles did Paul travel?**

The distances traveled by the apostle Paul are nothing short of staggering. In point of fact, the New Testament registers the equivalent of about 13,400 airline miles that the great apostle journeyed; and if one takes into account the circuitous roads he necessarily had to employ at times, the total distance traveled would exceed that figure by a sizable margin. Moreover it appears that the New Testament does not document all of Paul’s excursions. For example, there seems to have been an unchronicled visit to Corinth (2 Corinthians 12:14; 13:1); he refers to shipwrecks of which we have no record (2 Corinthians 11:25); and there was his desire to tour Spain (Romans 15:24, 28), though it is still debated whether or not he ever succeeded in that mission. Considering the means of transportation available in the Roman world, the average distance traveled in a day, the primitive paths, and rugged sometimes mountainous terrain over which he had to venture, the sheer expenditure of the apostle’s physical energy becomes unfathomable for us. Many of those miles carried Paul through unsafe and hostile environs largely controlled by bandits who eagerly awaited a prey (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:26). Accordingly, Paul’s commitment to the Lord entailed a spiritual vitality that was inextricably joined to a superlative level of physical stamina and fearless courage.