

A painting of St. Paul of Tarsus, a bearded man with a serious expression, wearing a red and green robe. He is holding a scroll in his left hand. The background is dark and indistinct.

*The Life and Works of
St. Paul of Tarsus*

Who is St. Paul of Tarsus?

The first systematic theologian and writer of the Christian Church, has been the most influential teacher in the history of Christianity.

He was the Christian Church's apostle to the Gentiles.

Who is St. Paul of Tarsus (cont.)

Name	Saul (Sh'aul), later became Paul (Greek version of Saul)
Born	no scholarly consensus on date, in <u>Tarsus</u> , Cilicia (modern South eastern Turkey)
Died	AD 64-67, in <u>Rome</u> during Nero's <u>Persecution</u>
Major shrine	Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls
Feast	January 25(The Conversion of Paul) One of four saints with two feast days February 10 (Feast of Saint Paul's Shipwreck in Malta) June 29(Feast of Saints Peter and Paul) November 18 (Feast of the dedication of the basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul)
Attributes	Sword
Language	Koine Greek, Hebrew
Citizenship	Jewish ancestry from the tribe of Benjamin and a Roman Citizen
Profession	Trained as a Rabbi but earned his living as a tentmaker.

Who is St. Paul of Tarsus (cont.)

- Short of stature; broad-shouldered, somewhat bald, with slightly aquiline nose, closely-knit eyebrows, thick, greyish beard, fair complexion
- Have a pleasing and affable manner.
- He was celibate, and exhorted others to celibacy.
- He was given to recurrent attacks of malaria, had repeated hallucinations, and some scholars believe he was subject to epileptic seizures.
- Despite this painful and humiliating infirmity, Paul must undoubtedly have been possessed of great physical strength to have sustained so long such superhuman labours

Background

- Paul lived in the closing days of the Second Jewish Commonwealth
- Paul was sent at an early age to Jerusalem to attend Bible school
 - He studied under Gamaliel, a famous rabbi, where he learned to write in both Greek and Hebrew, had a thorough knowledge of both the oral and the written Jewish law, and also learned of the traditional rabbinic method of scriptural interpretation and commentary
 - He had an outstanding reputation as a young rabbinic student because he was authorized by the Jewish authorities to seek out and prosecute members of a new sect who proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah
 - Was part of the mob who stoned St. Stephen (1st Christian martyr) to death

Conversion



Conversion (cont)

- Paul spent the next three years of his life in Damascus with the Christians
- He then returned to Jerusalem and was accepted by Peter and the other Christians and then went to his home city of Tarsus and spent about six years preaching in parts of Syria and Cilicia
- Barnabas he set out to Tarsus to seek for him to help out in Antioch
- The disciples now, for the first time, were called "Christians" (Acts 11:26)

Teachings & Writings

- Paul was convinced that Jesus would return within *his* lifetime. He therefore thought it was necessary to convert as many people as possible.
- He was a powerful, charismatic orator, and an effective evangelist.
- Between the beginning of his missionary journeys and his death, Paul wrote a number of letters that later became part of the Christian New Testament.
- Before his death he composed a total of 13 letters. A 14th letter, the Letter to the Hebrews, traditionally bearing Paul's name, is now generally considered to have been written by a disciple of Paul's.

3 Main Principles of Paul's Teachings:

- Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah foretold by the prophets of Israel;
- By his death, Jesus had atoned for all men's sins and opened heaven for humanity
- The Mosaic Law had, by the fact of Jesus' salvation, been abrogated and replaced by the Law of Jesus. There was, therefore, no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile

2 Outstanding Traits of Paul's Writings:

- *The Jewish law*
 - ❖ Paul believed that since Christ had come, the law had not been merely changed and ennobled but that it had been invalidated and its nobility and all the salvation promised to the law had been transferred to the new law of Jesus.
 - ❖ Paul separated world history into two distinct parts:
 - ❖ the time prior to the coming of Jesus, when the law was God's manifest way of leading men to salvation; and
 - ❖ the time after the death of Jesus, when belief in and love of Jesus was the sole means of salvation.
 - ❖ In his later days, Paul probably eliminated any necessity of observing the law. The Council of Jerusalem (ca. 50 A.D.) had liberated all Jewish converts to Christianity from any obligation of observing the Jewish law.

2 Outstanding Traits of Paul's Writings:

- **The Jewish people as the chosen ones of God**
 - ❖ In his Letter to the Romans, Paul declared that the Jews were and would remain the chosen people of God. He asserted this, as he remarked, because God's decisions are immutable (*Not subject or susceptible to change*).
 - ❖ On the other hand, he maintained that Christians occupied a special place in God's favour since they had become the carriers of the salvation of Jesus, which had become predominant in God's scheme for man.
 - ❖ Paul declared that the Jews remained the chosen people but that a veil of ignorance had been drawn over their eyes.
 - ❖ He affirmed that this veil would be lifted only on the last day, when the world came to an end and Jesus returned to judge all men.

Map of Paul's Missionary Journey



Paul's Journeys

Paul had no difficulty in traveling or in communicating:

- The Eastern Mediterranean region are interconnected with Roman built roads.
- A common language, Koine Greek, was spoken throughout the Roman Empire and was used for all communications.
- Correspondence by mail was a daily and ordinary method of communication.
- Sea lanes for commerce and for passenger traffic were open between Palestine, Turkey, Greece, Italy, North Africa, and the main Greek islands.

Three (3) Missionary Journeys

1st Journey: *Antioch, Seleucia, Cyprus (Salamis and Paphos), Perga, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Derbe, Lystra, Antalya, Jerusalem, Antioch.*

- Paul and Barnabas with John Mark as their attendant, were commissioned by the Christian authorities to go to the surrounding nations and preach the Christian message.
- Churches were set up, and as soon as the little Christian groups seemed strong enough the apostle and his companions would move on.
- At Perga, John Mark deserted the work and returned to Jerusalem. The two proceeded with their journey without John Mark.
- About A.D. 50 the council of the apostles at Jerusalem affirmed that circumcision is not what saves a believer, but rather the grace of God shown through Jesus the Messiah.

Three (3) Missionary Journeys

2nd Journey: *Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, Samothrace, Macedonia (Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Beroea), Athens, Corinth, Cenchreae, Ephesus, Syria, Caesarea, Jerusalem, Antioch .*

- On his second mission (Acts 15.36–18.22; A.D. 50–53) Paul had a disagreement with Barnabas over John Mark and took Silas as his companion.
- He founded two churches (Philippi and Salonica) that were to become great.
- They later sailed to Athens where Paul delivered his famous address on the “unknown god” in the market. (Acts 17.16–34.)
- From Athens, Paul went to Corinth. In the course of a long stay there he wrote First and Second Thessalonians (A.D. 52).
- Possibly about this time he also wrote his letter to the Galatians, which was written later from Ephesus.

Three (3) Missionary Journeys

3rd Journey: *Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia, Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Caesarea, Sidon, Myra, Cnidus, Cauda, Malta, Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Rome (where he died).*

- The third missionary journey of St. Paul (Acts 18.23–21.26; A.D. 53–57) took him to Galatia, then Phrygia, and over to Ephesus.
- His two-and-a-half-year stay in Ephesus was one of the most fruitful periods of his life; in this time he wrote his two letters to the Corinthians (c.A.D. 56).
- He went to Corinth to help the Christians, and he probably wrote the Epistle to the Romans there.
- He returned to Ephesus and finally to Jerusalem to give the money raised by the churches for victims of a famine in Palestine.
- This was his last visit to the Holy City (A.D. 57–59), for soon after he arrived he was arrested for provoking a riot.

Captivity

- After being held prisoner for two years and after hearings before the council of priests, before the Roman procurator Felix and his successor Festus, before Herod Agrippa II, and again before Festus, he appealed to Rome on his citizen's right. So he was sent to Rome under guard. (Acts 21.27–28.31.)
- On the way they were shipwrecked on Malta but finally landed at Puteoli (Pozzuoli).
- Paul was imprisoned (A.D. 60) in Rome but was allowed to conduct his ministry among the Roman Christians and Jews who visited him.

Last Years

- Paul's letters to the Ephesians, Collosians, Philemon, Titus, and Timothy may have been written while he was imprisoned in Rome.
- One tradition holds (attested as early as in 1 Clement 5:7, and in the Muratorian fragment) that Paul visited Spain; while this was his intention (Rom.15:22-7), the evidence is inconclusive.
- Another tradition, that can also be traced back to the first century, places his death in Rome.
- When Paul wrote his Second letter to Timothy, Paul felt that all human hope was lost and begs him to rejoin him as quickly as possible, for he is alone with Luke. We do not know if Timothy was able to reach Rome before the death of the Apostle.
- Eusebius of Caesarea states that Paul was beheaded in the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero; this event has been dated either to the year 64, when Rome was devastated by a fire, or a few years later to 67 at a place called Aquae Salviae (now Tre Fontane), near the Ostian Way.

Peter and Paul

- According to the most common opinion, Paul suffered in the same year and on the same day as Peter; several scholars contend that it was on the same day but not in the same year; the oldest witness, St. Dionysius the Corinthian, says only *kata ton auton kairon*, which may be translated "at the same time" or "about the same time".
- From time immemorial the solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul has been celebrated on 29 June, which is the anniversary either of their death or of the translation of their relics.
- The Catholic Church considers that Paul died at the age of sixty-eight after having served the Lord for thirty-five years.

Paul's Influence

- Paul's influence as a theologian and thinker throughout the later development of Christianity has been invaluable and all-embracing.
- After Jesus, St Paul is most probably the most important person in the history of western Christianity.
- Jesus' message was preached exclusively to the Jews of Judea and Jerusalem.
- But Paul took this message to both the Jewish diaspora (those living outside Holy Land of Israel) and also to the pagans, or Gentiles, worshippers of the traditional gods of the Greeks or Roman Empire, or of other cults.
- In the process he changed the religion of Christianity, partly by adding many instructions about forms of worship, partly by changing the message.

Paul's Influence (cont)

- Paul translated both facts and doctrine into a general theology that is characterized by:
 - a universalism of salvation,
 - an intricate theory of grace, and
 - a central function of Jesus as man and as God.
- The most salient aspect of the theology and ethics of Paul is his emphasis on Christianity as a universal religion.
- St. Augustine, St. Albertus, Magnus, St. Anselm, and St. Thomas Aquinas drew on Paul's doctrines to organize their own thought and thus molded all subsequent Roman Catholic theological development and formulation until the 20th century.

Chronology

- c. 4 BC Birth of Jesus
- c. AD 5 Paul (originally Saul) born in Tarsus (Cilicia) son of a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, a Roman citizen. Brought up a Pharisee, educated in Jerusalem.
- 14 AD Death of Emperor Augustus, Tiberius became emperor.
- c. 30 AD Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, ordered the crucifixion of Jesus.
- c. 35 AD Saul emerged a bitter opponent of the followers of Jesus; assisted at the martyrdom by stoning of St. Stephen, the leader of a colony of Greek Jews of the Diaspora who had joined the Christians (Acts 7:58). Paul was converted on the road to Damascus to arrest some Christians and bring them to Jerusalem for trial. Baptized and went to Arabia (Gal. 1:17). The story of his conversion is told three times in the Acts of the Apostles (9:1-19; 22:5-16; 26:12-18).

Chronology

- 37 AD Tiberius died; Caligula became emperor.
- c. 39 AD Paul returned to Damascus, had to make secret escape from the king in a basket over city walls (Acts 9:23-5; 2 Cor. 11:32 ff).
- 41 AD Caligula assassinated; Claudius became emperor.
- c. 45 AD Barnabas and Paul went to Antioch (Acts 11:25 ff) and later to Jerusalem to take food to Christian community during a famine. He returned to Antioch (Acts 12:25). Afterwards the Church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out on the First Missionary Journey (to Cyprus, Asia Minor, and back to Antioch). On this journey Paul changed his name from Saul to Paul (Acts 13:9). Paul openly proclaimed his mission to the Gentiles, an action which met strong opposition from some Christian Jewish communities, those who wanted Christianity to remain exclusively for Jewish people.
- c. 50 BC Paul travelled to Jerusalem for the first Council of the Church to discuss with Peter the contentious issue of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the growing Christian communities. The mission to the gentiles was, however, recognized by the Jerusalem Church, a victory for Paul. In addition, the Law was not to be imposed on Gentile Christians (Gal. 2:6-9; Acts 15).

Chronology

- c. 53 AD Second Missionary Journey (Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Athens, Corinth), then back to Antioch (Acts 16-18).
- 54 AD Death of Emperor Claudius, Nero became emperor.
- c. 55 AD Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19-20): Ephesus (two years), Macedonia, Achaea, Corinth (where he probably wrote the Epistle to the Romans, to prepare for his visit there), and Jerusalem. In Jerusalem beaten by the mob (protesting against the conversion of the gentiles), rescued by Roman soldiers. To protect Paul the Romans sent him to governor Felix at Caesarea, and kept him loosely detained awaiting trial (Acts 21:27- 36; Acts 22; Acts 23 ff). First Corinthians was probably written at this time (c. 56 AD).
- c. 60 AD. Paul's trial. Paul appealed to Rome (his rights as a Roman citizen). Voyage to Rome, shipwrecked at Malta. In Rome awaiting trial, Paul wrote the Captivity Epistles. Paul was not treated severely in Rome, and may have made further missionary journeys (to Spain?)

Chronology

- July 64 AD The great fire in Rome. It was rumoured that the decadent emperor Nero had set the fire himself, to clear land for a new palace. Facing an enraged populace, he blamed the fire on the Christians, multiplying the anger towards them exponentially. To satisfy the public, he had hundreds of Christians torn apart by lions and burned at the stake
- 64-67 AD Paul martyred in Rome during Neronian persecution. By tradition Paul was beheaded on the left bank of the Tiber, about three miles from Rome.
- 64-69 AD Composition of the Gospel According to Mark, by an anonymous author (John Mark?), prepared as an indication of Peter's teaching.
- 66-70 AD Revolt in Judea. Romans began forcible suppression under Vespasian (later emperor in 69 AD).

Chronology

- 68 AD Nero committed suicide after being declared a public enemy by the senate (backed by the praetorian guard)
- 70 AD Jerusalem fell to the Romans under Titus (Vespasian's son): the Temple destroyed, the Jewish national council and high-priesthood abolished, religious taxes diverted to imperial treasury, Judea given over to the Roman empire (i.e., the end of the independent Jewish state).
- c. 70 AD Gospel According to Matthew prepared (anonymous author who compiled the different stories and sayings of Jesus, perhaps written in Hebrew). During this period the Gospel According to Luke was also prepared, traditionally by Luke, a gentile doctor who had become a Christian.
- c. 90 AD Gospel According to John prepared by a disciple of John who recorded his preaching (?). The date of the writing of this gospel is much disputed.

Chronology of Paul's Epistles

First Thessalonians	52 AD
Second Thessalonians	52 AD
First Corinthians	57 AD
Second Corinthians	57 AD
Galatians	55-57 AD
Romans	57-58 AD
Ephesians	62 AD
Philippians	62 AD
Colossians	62 AD
Philemon	63 AD
Hebrews	64-65 AD
Titus	64-65 AD
First Timothy	64-65 AD
Second Timothy	64-67 AD