

Who is Paul of Tarsus?

Chosen by Jesus to spread his Good News - Acts 9:15

'I have chosen him to serve me, to make my name known to gentiles and kings and to the people of Israel'

- Born in Tarsus in southern Turkey to a Jewish family at 10 BCE - 67CE .Was born a Roman citizen and well instructed in the Jewish faith by Rabbi's.
- Paul was a missionary who spread Christianity to the Gentiles of Europe and Asia Minor. He is attributed as the most successful missionary in Christian history.
- Having a Jewish background, Paul (Saul) was initially a supporter of Christian persecutions in an attempt to "stamp out" the new Jewish-Christ worshipping sect. He was later to converted Christianity after Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus.
- Paul went to Damascus where he was later on baptised and announced that he did not receive the Gospel from one of the apostle but from God, himself.
- Paul or Saul, as he was originally called, a tent-maker, was a Pharisee who was educated and spent many years in Jerusalem. He was on his way to Damascus to continue his mission of stamping out converts to the new Jewish sect of Christians when he experienced a vision of Jesus, which he describes in Acts 9:1 – 9. From then on he became a missionary, spreading the message of Christianity. He also wrote a large part of the New Testament.
- Paul was arrested for "teaching all the Jews living among the gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs" (Acts 21:21) and was a prisoner in Caesarea for two years until a new governor reopened his case.
- Christian tradition holds that Paul was **beheaded** in Rome during the reign of Nero.

How did Paul share the Good News of Jesus?

- Undertook three missionary journeys by establishing Christian communities through voice in synagogues (Jewish population refused to accept his teachings = he preached amongst the gentiles).
- He preached to both groups of people, Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles) (Gentiles being Jewish people not practicing any religion).
- Paul wrote letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians and Thessalonians, and addressed various subjects. His letters to the Corinthians were based on instructions for harmony and peace, as the Corinthian community was in a state of conflict at the time; his letters to the Thessalonians were consoling as the Thessalonians felt anxious in his absence; his letters to the Galatians were berating as the Galatians were rejecting Paul's preaches; and his letters to the Romans were instructatory and outlined the key features of Christianity. It is possible that Paul wrote his letters to the Romans in preparation for his journey to Rome.
- Of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament, Paul is attributed as the author of thirteen of them, although it is plausible that some of these books were written by people using Paul's name as a pseudonym. His message is spread through the bible, and to those who read and engage with it.
- He travelled tens of thousands of miles around the Mediterranean spreading the word of Jesus and it was Paul who came up with the doctrine that would turn Christianity from a small sect of Judaism into a worldwide faith that was open to all.
- He had 3 Missionary Journeys:
 - * First Journey with Barnabas to Cyprus, Galatia and Antioch was on 46ACE
 - * Second Journey to Greece: Thessalonica and Phillipi. He wrote letters to the Thessalonians at around 50 ACE. He went to Galatia, West to Achaia, Macedonia, Ephesus, Corinth and Athens
 - * Third Journey to Greece: Thessalonica and Phillipi and Galatia: Ephesus at around 53 CE. He travelled to Galatia, Asia Minor and Greece.
- Paul helped to ease the process of conversion as it was him that argued that people won't convert to Christianity if they are forced to be circumcised. Therefore opening up the doors for community to easily convert to Christianity of their own choosing.

What was Paul's message?

- Paul maintained that the death and resurrection of Jesus meant that there was a new covenant which freed all from sins.

- Paul spread Jesus' message to gentiles and Jews alike. The teachings were not restricted to the Jewish community, and allowed 'outsiders' to convert to and live out the Christian teachings. This can be seen as an invitation by Paul, or even by Jesus, for everybody to follow out the teachings of God.
- Paul made it clear that Jesus was the crucified Messiah and that he was the image of God. In saying this, he did stay true to Christianity's Jewish heritage and affirmed God's message to the Jewish people.
- Paul frequently wrote about love, free will, predestination and the idea of living in the footsteps of Jesus.
- His strongest emphasis was on the death, resurrection, and lordship of Jesus Christ. He preached that one's faith in Jesus assures that person a share in Jesus' life (salvation). He saw Jesus' death as being for the believers' benefit, not a defeat. Jesus died so that believers' sins would be forgiven.
- Promises in regards to receiving a position in God's heaven.