

The Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul, who started as one of Christianity's most zealous enemies, was hand-picked by Jesus Christ to become the gospel's most ardent messenger.

Paul traveled tirelessly through the ancient world, taking the message of salvation to the Gentiles. Paul towers as one of the all-time giants of Christianity.

The Apostle Paul's Accomplishments:

When Saul of Tarsus, who was later renamed Paul, saw the resurrected Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road, Saul converted to Christianity.

He made three long missionary journeys throughout the Roman Empire, planting churches, preaching the gospel, and giving strength and encouragement to early Christians.

Of the 27 books in the New Testament, Paul is credited as the author of 13 of them. While he was proud of his Jewish heritage, Paul saw that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well.

Paul was martyred for his faith in Christ by the Romans, about 64 or 65 A.D.

The Apostle Paul's Strengths:

Paul had a brilliant mind, a commanding knowledge of philosophy and religion, and could debate with the most educated scholars of his day.

At the same time, his clear, understandable explanation of the gospel made his letters to early churches, the foundation of Christian theology.

Tradition portrays Paul as a physically small man, but he endured enormous physical hardships on his missionary journeys.

His perseverance in the face of danger and persecution has inspired countless missionaries since.

The Apostle Paul's Weaknesses:

Before his conversion, Paul approved of the [stoning of Stephen](#) (Acts 7:58), and was a merciless persecutor of the early church.

Life Lessons:

God can change anyone. God gave Paul the strength, wisdom, and endurance to carry out the mission Jesus entrusted Paul with.

One of Paul's most famous statements is: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,"* (Philippians 4:13, NKJV), reminding us that our power to live the Christian life comes from God, not ourselves.

Paul also recounted a "thorn in his flesh" that kept him from becoming conceited over the priceless privilege God had entrusted to him.

In saying, *"For when I am weak, then I am strong,"* (2 Corinthians 12:2, NIV), Paul was sharing one of the greatest secrets of staying faithful: absolute dependence on God.

Much of the Protestant Reformation was based on Paul's teaching that people are saved by grace, not works: *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-"* (Ephesians 2:8, NIV).

This truth frees us to stop striving to be good enough and to instead rejoice in our salvation, gained by the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Hometown:

Tarsus, in Cilicia, in present-day southern Turkey.

Referenced in the Bible:

Acts 9-28; Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 2 Peter 3:15.

Occupation:

Pharisee, tent maker, Christian evangelist, missionary, Scripture writer.

Background:

Tribe - Benjamin

Party - Pharisee

Mentor - Gamaliel, a famous rabbi

Key Verses:

Acts 9:15-16

But the Lord said to Ananias: "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." (NIV)

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV)

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (NIV)

2 Timothy 4:7

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (NIV)

Significance of the Apostle Paul

Paul had more influence on the New Testament and how we think about Jesus and God than any other early apostle.

John wrote a Gospel; some letters of Peter remain extant (*still existing; not destroyed or lost*); even some thoughts from James remain known.

However, Paul wrote the bulk of the letters that have been preserved, and it was his follower Luke who wrote the book of Acts as well as his own Gospel.

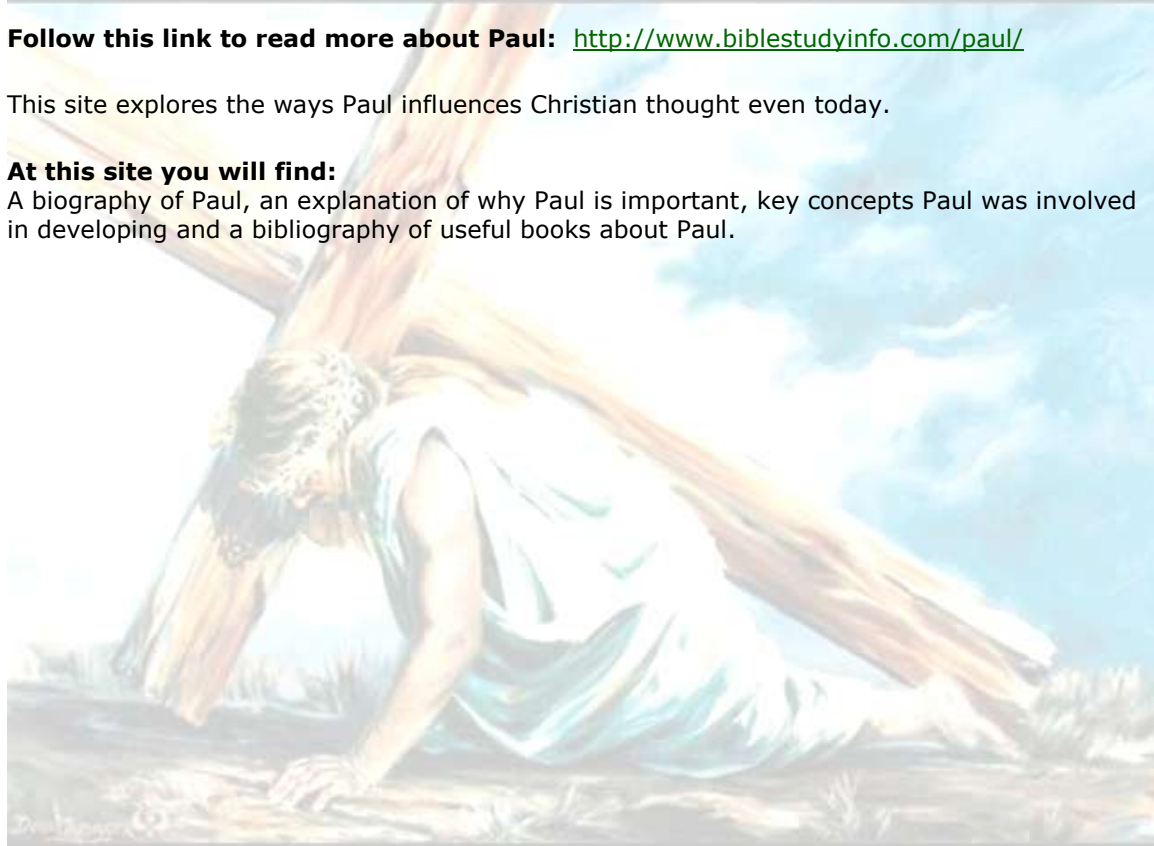
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Follow this link to read more about Paul: <http://www.biblestudyinfo.com/paul/>

This site explores the ways Paul influences Christian thought even today.

At this site you will find:

A biography of Paul, an explanation of why Paul is important, key concepts Paul was involved in developing and a bibliography of useful books about Paul.



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