

"Lucidly done and without any dumbing down, these stories pull off the difficult trick of being time-honouring and contemporary." Andrew Motion, Poet Laureate 1999–2009



PAUL OF TARSAUS

Who expects their life to change completely in one moment?

The foundations of Jewish law are under threat from the followers of a man called Jesus. These people have reached Damascus. They must be stopped. Saul, uncompromising and brutal, is the man for the job. But by the time Saul reaches Damascus he is blind and in shock. What could have happened to him on that journey?

How does a man react when his beliefs are turned upside down? Now calling himself Paul, can he convince his former enemies to trust him? Can he convince the world that Jesus's teachings are for everyone?

Through treacherous journeys, passionate preaching and long letters, Paul tries to tell the world what he believes, but will it make any difference?



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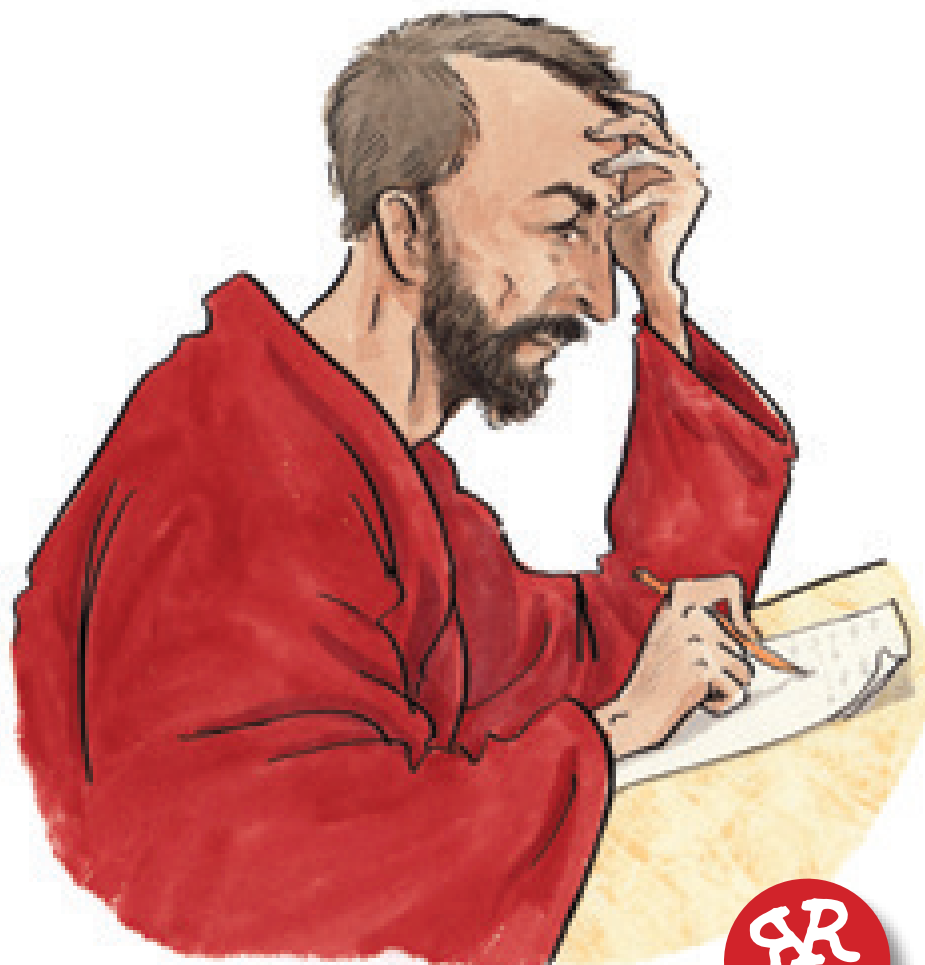


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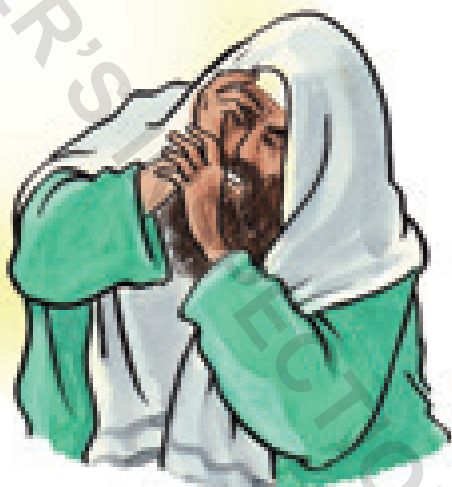


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Retold by Alan Moore and Gill Taver
Illustrated by Karen Donnelly

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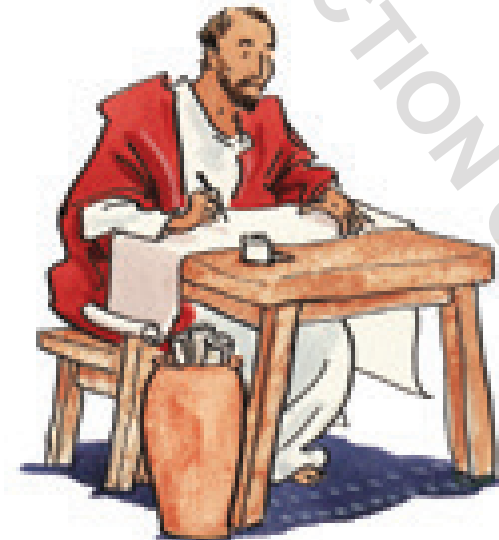
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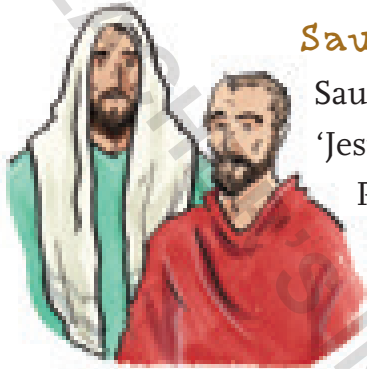
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THE CHARACTERS

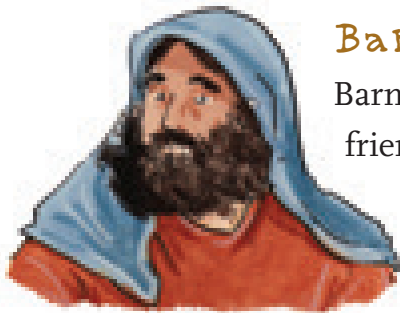


Saul/Paul

Saul is determined to crush the 'Jesus movement'. Later, renamed Paul, he spreads the news of Jesus around the world. What happened to change him?

Simon Peter

Jesus's loyal disciple is now a leader in the growing church. Will he and Paul ever reach agreement?

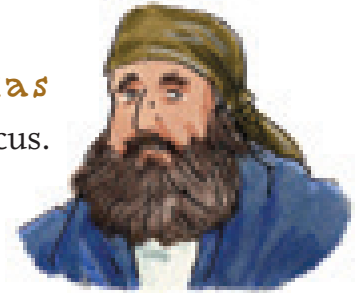


Barnabas

Barnabas leads Paul to Jesus's friends. What further role will he play in Paul's work?

Ananias

Ananias lives in Damascus. What role does God want him to play in his plans for Saul?



James

James is Jesus's brother and a leader in the growing church. Can he and Paul find a way to work together?

Timothy

Timothy hears Paul preach in Lystra, and decides to help him. What will his role be?



Silas

When Silas joins Paul in Antioch, does he know that it's just the beginning of a very long journey?



PAUL OF TARSSUS

This imprisonment has lasted so long, compressing my energy until the pressure feels so immense that the walls should blast apart. I need to be out there. There's so much still to do, half the world still to visit. How can I do God's work from here? I might not have much time left. I need to focus. Think, Paul, think.

People say the letters I've written during my life have been more powerful than my spoken words, but the guards won't let me send any more. Perhaps I should write an account of my life and hide it so that one day it might be found, and help people in centuries to come to understand the good news of Jesus Christ.

But can I remember all the journeys? Can I remember the people I met, the words I wrote? Will I have time? With God's grace, I will try.



My parents named me Saul. I was brought up as a Jew and as a Roman citizen in Tarsus, far from the Jewish homeland. It wasn't easy being Jewish in a Gentile society. As a minority we felt that we had to assert our identity, deliberately setting ourselves apart as God's people by strict adherence to the laws passed to us by Moses. I remember many arguments when I tried to explain to non-believers the things that made my Jewish faith so special. Perhaps adversity made us stronger, more rigid in our beliefs.

I've never been a man to do things by halves. If I believe something then I believe it with every part of my being, and I have to act upon it. I believed in the Jewish law – the Torah – and therefore I wanted to teach and enforce it. As soon as I was old enough, I travelled to Jerusalem to study to be a Pharisee.

I had a full classical education, but now I needed to concentrate on the Torah. My fervour and energy were soon noticed by the Supreme



Jewish Council – the Sanhedrin. They placed considerable authority upon my young shoulders. I loved it. I was determined that nothing should dilute or weaken the Jewish faith.



I became increasingly aware of a movement of people developing around a man called Jesus. I hadn't met Jesus, but I heard about him with concern. Although Jewish himself, Jesus was

Biblical sources

On the *Real Reads* website you will find an online concordance (www.realreads.co.uk/newtestament/concordance/paul). A 'bible concordance' is an indexing tool which allows you to see how the same words, sentences and passages appear in different versions and translations of the Bible. This online concordance will direct you from events in the *Real Reads* version back to their biblical sources, so you can see clearly where each part of our story is drawn from.

Life in New Testament times

Paul was brought up as a Jew in Tarsus, in what is now southern Turkey. Tarsus is a long way from Palestine, so influences upon the young Paul would have been quite different from the childhood experiences of Jesus and his friends. Jews in Tarsus were a minority, meaning that Paul lived among Gentiles. He would probably

have spoken at least two languages and, as Tarsus was known as an intellectual centre, he could have received a thorough classical education.

Tarsus, like Judea, was within the Roman Empire. At the time, the Romans ruled most of the land bordering the Mediterranean. In order to move around their enormous empire, the Romans built an impressive transport network, which helped to make Paul's travels much easier than they would otherwise have been. Over a period of thirty years, Paul travelled about ten thousand miles.

Paul visited many of the major cities of the time. Although these would have looked impressive, many of their inhabitants lived in great poverty. These people needed something to give them hope and purpose. The word 'gospel' means good news – Paul brought them good news about how they could live, and taught that Jesus's death gave everybody the chance of eternal happiness after a life of goodness. Paul believed that this message was for everybody, not only for Jews.