

ST PAUL'S MILLENNIUM BANNERS

1



THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL

Saul, who later changed his name to Paul, was alive at the time of Jesus. He was a Jew but also a Roman citizen. He grew up in Tarsus and trained to become a Rabbi in Jerusalem. Saul thought that Christian teaching was opposed to Jewish law and was determined to crush it. He witnessed the death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. He persecuted the Christians wherever he could find them and was travelling to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus when a brilliant light blinded him. The Lord spoke commanding him to spread the Good News of Jesus. From that moment his life changed, he became a Christian and a great evangelist.

2



SAUL'S ESCAPE FROM DAMASCUS

Saul was led to Damascus where Ananias, a man sent by God, helped him. His sight returned and after Ananias baptised him he started to preach in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. Some strict Jews were angry and plotted to kill Saul. His life was in danger so with some help from some followers of Jesus he escaped from Damascus by being lowered down the city walls in a basket. He then returned to Jerusalem.

3



PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY WITH BARNABAS

Saul and Barnabas, who had helped him earlier, set out on a long journey to spread the word of Jesus. He went to Antioch, where Jesus's followers were first called Christians. Saul now used the Roman form of his name – Paul. His Jewish upbringing meant that he could use the Old Testament to show how Jesus was the promised Messiah, Greek learning meant that he could reach non-Jewish people and with Roman citizenship Paul had freedom to travel the Empire.

Paul undertook at least three missionary journeys covering many thousands of miles. The anger and persecution of some Jews and Gentiles as well as floods, robbers, shipwrecks and difficult terrain all conspired against him but he never lost his faith in Jesus.

4



THE JAILER AT PHILIPPI

On a second mission with Silas, Paul travelled through modern-day Turkey to Greece. They preached at Philippi but after false accusations they were charged and beaten and put in jail. Despite the hardship Paul and Silas prayed and sang in praise of God. At midnight an earthquake broke loose their chains and the jailer was sure his prisoners would escape. He was about to kill himself but Paul and Silas stayed. The jailer asked how he too could become a Christian. The apostle explained and convinced him. So he and his family were baptised.

Paul and Silas then travelled on to Athens, Corinth and eventually back to Antioch to tell of their many experiences.

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BURNING THE SCROLLS AT EPHESUS

5



Paul's third mission took him to Ephesus with Luke, Timothy and Titus as companions and messengers, three years of his life were spent here, preaching, healing and working miracles in the name of Jesus.

Ephesus was a large sea port with grand temples and places to worship Roman Gods but there was no Christian community. Many people believed in magic and some made their living by making silver statues of the Goddess Artemis as souvenirs. As Christianity spread some of the people who practised magic realised that what they were doing was wrong and were afraid. Many of them burned their scrolls and books of spells in the market place. Tradesmen who were angry because their trade was threatened began to riot but in spite of some disturbances many people in the area became Christian.

Paul knew it would create trouble if he stayed longer and he continued his journey through Macedonia and Greece and back to Jerusalem.

PAUL'S LETTERS

6



Paul wanted to encourage new Christians and to keep in touch with the many friends he had made on his travels, so he wrote letters or epistles to them. Sometimes he answered questions contained in letters written to him or reminded people of the way they should behave now that they were followers of Jesus. He gave his friends news of other Christians and told them about his plans for new journeys and his hopes for visiting them in the future. But in all his letters he told friends how he felt proud to be chosen to work as a missionary, telling people about Jesus, the Saviour.

Eventually Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire but that was not until 313 AD.

THE SHIPWRECK

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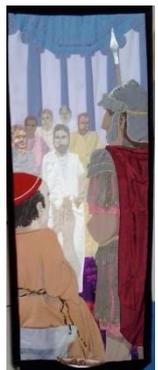


After being arrested on a false charge Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years. Eventually he claimed his right as a Roman citizen and asked to appeal to Caesar. Fasts, the governor could not refuse and arrangements were made for a passage by boat to Rome.

On leaving Crete a terrible storm blew up and the ship drifted out of control. Paul reassured the crew that God would protect them and after two weeks they were shipwrecked but no lives were lost and they came ashore on Malta. The islanders were friendly and Paul was able to preach and perform healing miracles. When the weather was suitable they set sail for Rome.

PAUL UNDER GUARD IN ROME

8



Paul, still a prisoner, arrived in Rome; there in the capital of the empire he was allowed to live with a soldier to guard him. Most of his time was spent in peaching and teaching and talking to visitors as well as continuing to send letters to Christian friends and Churches.

When a fire destroyed much of the city in 64 AD Christians were blamed for the blaze and the Emperor Nero had many of them executed. Paul himself was probably killed at this time. The sword has become one of Paul's emblems; the other is the book.

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