



Paul: A Novel

By Walter Wangerin

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An intimate portrait of a complex individual through whom God was at work, turning the world upside down. With vivid imagination and scholarly depth, award-winning author Walter Wangerin Jr. weaves together the history of the early church with the life story of its greatest apostle--Paul. Wangerin begins to unfold Paul's incredible life by imagining the childhood and early family life of a boy then called "Saul." A fierce prosecutor of Christians before his conversion, Paul never lost his fiery dedication, boldness, and strong personality. After his shocking encounter with God on the road to Damascus, he applied his formidable strengths to spreading the gospel. Wangerin deftly reveals Paul's character through each stage of his life, and enables us to see Paul the person, living and complex, viewed through the eyes of his contemporaries: Barnabas, James, Prisca, Seneca, and Luke. Paul's rich interaction and brilliant dialogue with friends and foes, leaders and slaves, Jews and Greeks, creates a swift and intense historical drama around the man who spread the seed of the Gospel to the ends of the known world.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Saul of Tarsus, the impassioned rabbi and persecutor of Christians, had a Damascus road experience that changed his life and helped shape the future of the world. As Paul, writer of some of the meatiest chunks of the New Testament and zealous missionary to the Gentiles, he became one of the most controversial figures in history.

Yet what do we know about the man, other than what's in the letters that have fashioned the Christian church for 2,000 years? Unless you are a theologian or historian, the answer probably is very little--until now. Walter Wangerin, the highly acclaimed scholar and writer, has breathed new life into this fiery, enigmatic, and passionate creature in what should be celebrated as a seriously good work of literature.

The novel, which combines expert knowledge and prophetic imagination, charts the first exhilarating and dangerous years of the church after the death of Christ. It is seen through the eyes of the witnesses--Priscilla, who meets Paul in Corinth; Barnabus, Timothy, and Titus, his companions; James and Simon Peter, the "pillar" of the first Christians; and Seneca, the great Roman writer, statesman, and adviser to Nero.

Wangerin serves up a feast of color and detail that brings the first century--and, even more impressively, the Bible--alive. Whatever your religious persuasion, this book serves as a fine companion to the one of the greatest yet most puzzling stories ever told. --*Brian Draper, Amazon.co.uk*

From Publishers Weekly

In his second Bible-based novel, Wangerin delivers an uneven but informative narrative portraying the Apostle Paul as a flawed, confrontational man who inspires either murderous hate or passionate love. Reminiscent of both Eugene Peterson's paraphrased New Testament and Robert Graves's dishy novels about the Roman emperors, this book borrows from the Bible and various other historical sources to chronicle the itinerant ministry of Paul from his preconversion persecution of Christians to his execution in Rome. Each chapter is narrated by a different character--generally one of Paul's close associates--and while this technique successfully brings biblical figures to life, it disrupts the narrative flow. The story is punctuated by epistolary fragments from the Bible--and perhaps most interesting but least connected to the rest of the text--Seneca's gossipy letters about Nero and political intrigues in Rome. To his credit, Wangerin breathes life into the women who are mentioned but never fleshed out in Paul's letters, particularly Prisca, and he takes pains to emphasize the multicultural, multiethnic composition of the first-century church. Nor does he downplay the hardships these groups encountered as they attempted to find common ground. In fact, the novel focuses almost too exclusively on Paul's attempts to reconcile Gentile and Jewish followers of Jesus. While overwrought dialogue about circumcision and Jewish food restrictions is often tedious, readers wishing insight into Paul, the New Testament church and the schisms that nearly destroyed it will be rewarded for their patience. (May)

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From Library Journal

In 1998, Wangerin wrote the acclaimed *The Book of God: The Bible as a Novel*. Here he turns his attentions to the tireless apostle Paul. A devout Jew fluent in the scripture of the Torah, Paul actively persecutes the fledgling Christians until Jesus strikes him blind and opens his eyes to the new faith. Then Paul casts off the hatred that led to the stoning of Stephen years earlier and shares his joy in the Lord with a disbelieving world. As Paul's story unfolds from the viewpoints of the people around him the slight, bantam rooster figure

takes on an ethereal happiness that draws followers to Jesus wherever he goes. Barnabas, Prisca, Timothy, Titus, Lydia, James, Simon Peter, Simeon Niger, and others share good and bad thoughts of Paul, adding layers to an already complex figure. Paul only speaks for himself in letters. At times humorous, at times appalling, Paul's voice reaches beyond the pages of fiction to exhort a fundamental love of Jesus. For all collections.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gregory Mendoza:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important for people. The book Paul: A Novel was making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The reserve Paul: A Novel is not only giving you a lot more new information but also to get your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your own personal spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship with all the book Paul: A Novel. You never feel lose out for everything if you read some books.

Billy Gallardo:

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Keith Karam:

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