

## How old was the apostle Paul when He died?

The apostle Paul was probably about 60 years old when he died. By first-century standards, he lived a rather long life.

Paul was born in the city of Tarsus likely sometime in the first decade AD, and he probably died sometime in the mid- to late-60s, which means he would have been close to 60 years old when he died. Considering the hardships he endured and the times in which he lived, Paul would have been considered an old man at his death.

Initially, the Roman government treated Christianity as a sect of Judaism and thus usually afforded it a measure of religious liberty. But by AD 64, Emperor Nero was aggressively persecuting and killing Christians, blaming them for setting a disastrous fire that destroyed Rome in that year. Paul may have been one of many Christians who were falsely arrested and brutally executed at that time. It is also possible that Paul was arrested in the ensuing years, “chained like a criminal” (2 Timothy 2:9), and sentenced to death for his heroic faith and tireless efforts in advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

According to tradition, Paul was executed by beheading in Rome, although the exact circumstances of his trial and death were never written down. We do know from Scripture that Paul spent his final days living in the deplorable conditions of a Roman prison, awaiting his execution. Certain that his death was imminent, Paul wrote to his beloved protégé Timothy: “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all

who have longed for his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Following the account of the early church historian Eusebius, Foxe’s Book of Martyrs records that Paul was led by Nero’s soldiers “out of the city to the place of execution, where he, after his prayers made, gave his neck to the sword” (chapter 1, section X).

The Lord had revealed to Paul that he would spend his days suffering for the sake of Christ’s name (Acts 9:16). From then on, Paul lived ready to die: “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:20-21; see also Acts 21:13).

Based on the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul, we know that Paul was a most determined man, enduring brutal physical attacks, oppression, and mistreatment in his endeavor to make Christ known. At last, he finished his course. Paul died in old age, a martyr and a hero of faith to believers of every century to follow.