



## Paul: The Mind of the Apostle

By A. N. Wilson

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**"Wilson . . . does a tremendous job here of not only examining all that is known about Paul's life but also putting it into context with what was happening throughout the Roman Empire. As always, Wilson's insights fascinate and provoke."?Booklist**

It begins on the road to Damascus, in a moment graven on the consciousness of Western civilization. "Saul, Saul," asks the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, "why persecutest thou me?"

From this experience, and from the response of the Jewish merchant later known as Paul, springs the Christian Church as we know it today. For as A. N. Wilson makes clear in this astonishing and gripping narrative, Christianity without Paul is quite literally nothing. Jesus, with the layers of scholarship and ceremony stripped away, is a fastidious and fervent Jew who will lead his followers into a stricter, purer observance of Judaism; it is Paul who will claim divinity for him, who will transform him into the Messiah, center of an entirely new religion.

In Wilson's astute narrative, we see Paul negotiating the dangerous political currents of the Roman Empire, making converts, and writing the great epistles that define our understanding of Christ and of the sublime paradoxes of his teaching. What drove Paul? What would he think of what his church has become? The answers lie in Wilson's extraordinary biography, which lays bare the psychological journey of Christianity's true inventor.

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## **Paul: The Mind of the Apostle** By A. N. Wilson Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

A.N. Wilson, who has written revisionist biographies of Jesus, Tolstoy, and C.S. Lewis, trains his critical eye on the first self-identified Christian writer in *Paul: The Mind of the Apostle*. Wilson's book may purport to be a biography of Paul, but it is really an argument about the origin and nature of Christianity. His premise is that "Jesus was a devoted Jew who did not seek to found a new religion, but to call his followers to a stricter observance of Judaism." It was Paul, not Jesus, who exemplified the central tensions of Christianity. ("Jewish or non-Jewish? Roman or anti-Roman? Apocalyptic or practical?") And according to Wilson, it was Paul who first claimed Jesus' divinity and called Jesus the messiah. Wilson's argument, though heterodox, is no hatchet-job. Paul may be "widely regarded as someone who distorted the original message of Christianity, by adding 'theology' to the supposedly simple message of love Jesus preached," but Wilson sees Paul as "a prophet of liberty, whose visionary sense of the importance of the inner life anticipates the Romantic poets more than the rule-books of the Inquisition." Wilson concludes that Christianity is "an institutionalised distortion of Paul's thought, the inevitable consequence of the world having lasted ... more than nineteen hundred years longer than he predicted." Wilson's prose is just this lively and provocative throughout, and his observations are always skeptical and forgiving: "Paul did not imagine that there would be such a thing as Christianity, or Christian civilization, any more than Jesus did." --*Michael Joseph Gross*

### From Library Journal

Having produced a biography of Jesus (Jesus, LJ 9/1/92), Wilson now gives us a biography of Paul, who took Jesus's movement into the wider world. Paul's missionary activity spread Christianity to many places in the Roman Empire, and his writings occupy a significant portion of the New Testament. Wilson argues, as do many others, that without Paul there would be no Christianity. He reminds us that some of the greatest Christian thinkers?e.g., Augustine, Luther, Calvin?were especially dependent on Paul's theology. Wilson's book finds its place among the many on Paul because it effectively puts Paul in historical and social context and because of its probe of the psychological and social forces affecting Paul. Though scholarly, Wilson's book can easily be read by the informed. Highly recommended.?John Moryl, Yeshiva Univ. Libs., New York  
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### From [Booklist](#)

The apostle Paul is one of the great question marks of Christianity. What really happened on the road to Damascus to make this self-proclaimed persecutor of Jesus' followers become one himself? And what compelled him to take the nascent religion to the Gentiles? Moreover, did he realize that he was forming and shaping a religious movement that says more about his own speculations than it does about the ideas of Jesus? Almost as many books have been written about Paul as about Jesus, but Paul's biographers have much more to go on, especially his own writings. Wilson, author of *Jesus: A Life* (1992), does a tremendous job here of not only examining all that is known about Paul's life but also putting it into context with what was happening throughout the Roman Empire. As always, Wilson's insights fascinate and provoke. Even as rich and incisive a portrait as this one cannot provide a complete understanding of Paul or the turbulent time in which he lived, but readers will come away seeing the enigmatic apostle as an imaginative transformer who shaped a worldwide religious movement, often in furious contrast to the man on whom it is supposedly based. *Ilene Cooper*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Harold Baughman:**

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book called Paul: The Mind of the Apostle? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have various other opinion?

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