



# Paul: The Mind of the Apostle

*A. N. Wilson*

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

From the author of the best-selling *Jesus* comes an extraordinary new biography: the psychological journey of the man who invented Christianity.

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

From this experience, and from the response of Saul of Tarsus, the Jewish merchant later known as Paul, springs the Christian Church as we know it today. For as A. N. Wilson, biographer of Tolstoy, C. S. Lewis, and Jesus, makes clear in this astonishing and gripping narrative, Christianity without Paul is quite literally nothing. Jesus, with the layers of exegesis, scholarship, and ceremony stripped away, is a Jew, a fastidious and fervent Jew, who would 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.

And it is Paul who will negotiate the dangerous political currents of the Roman Empire, traveling everywhere, making converts, writing the great epistles that define our understanding of Christ and of the sublime paradoxes of his teaching, defusing the natural antagonism of the supreme temporal power to this dangerous spiritual force, Christianity, which would in time consume that empire from within.

What drove Paul? What fueled this act of inspired creativity? What would he think of what his church has become?

At the time that Paul was traveling and preaching his doctrine of salvation in Christ, the Emperor Nero was lighting the gardens of his palace, the Vatican, with torches made of living Christians. Such was the force of Paul's message that within two hundred years the Roman emperor was a Christian and the Vatican belonged to the Church.

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