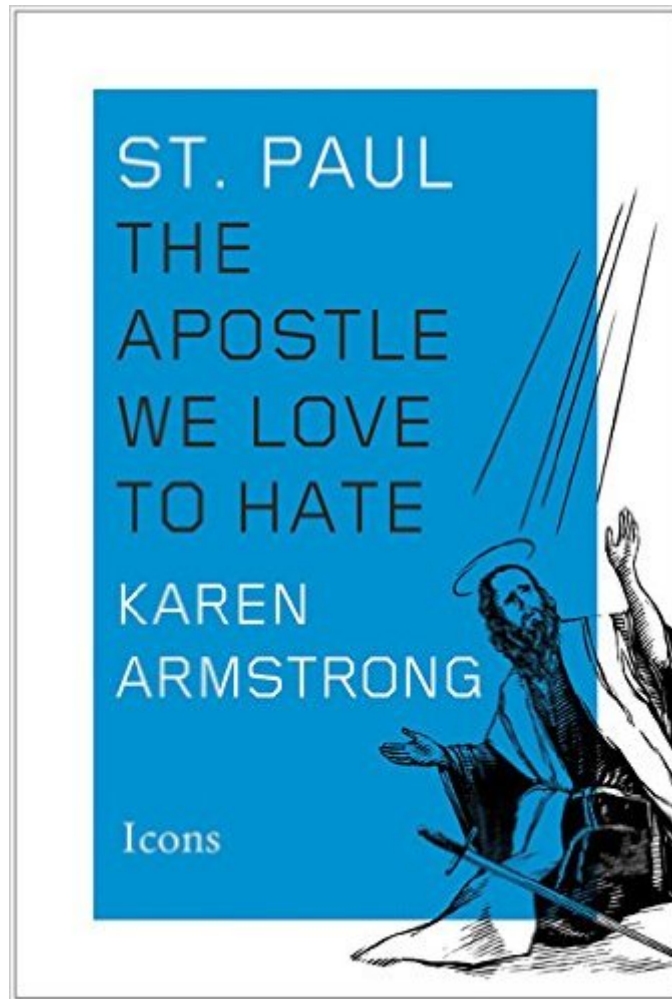


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St. Paul: The Apostle We Love To Hate (Icons)



Synopsis

St. Paul is known throughout the world as the first Christian writer, authoring fourteen of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament. But as Karen Armstrong demonstrates in *St. Paul: The Apostle We Love to Hate*, he also exerted a more significant influence on the spread of Christianity throughout the world than any other figure in history. It was Paul who established the first Christian churches in Europe and Asia in the first century, Paul who transformed a minor sect into the largest religion produced by Western civilization, and Paul who advanced the revolutionary idea that Christ could serve as a model for the possibility of transcendence. While we know little about some aspects of the life of St. Paul—his upbringing, the details of his death—his dramatic vision of God on the road to Damascus is one of the most powerful stories in the history of Christianity, and the life that followed forever changed the course of history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

You could argue that Paul (Saul of Tarsus) was the most influential apostle in Christianity. His writing, which shows a lawyer-like mind with clarity of thought, educated unlike the most of the other apostles, was the basis for much of today's Christian practice, whether Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant. But he's not a cuddly, warm figure in history. He was literally the early Christians' worst enemy, persecuting them as a zealous Pharisee. This book is a highly readable, enjoyable look at what we can tell of Paul's life and path to his belief, and the times in which he lived. Karen Armstrong

is one of the most prominent authors on theology and religion and a clear and captivating writer. She gives us what is known about Paul's origins (not much), his demise (a mystery), the speculations about Paul's personal life and the background of the Roman rule over the Holy Land with its brutality and draconian enforcement of the law. Crucifixions were so common, she tells us, during one rebellion, they ran out of lumber and places to nail up the condemned. She discusses Jewish customs regarding the executed, including the conflict between the Roman disregard for Jewish custom of same-day burial and how that impacts the story of Jesus' burial. Armstrong does a great job of creating the mise-en-scene at the time of Paul's writing and creating an image of Paul the man, struggling with the turbulent and dangerous times as he follows his faith and his calling as one of Christ's most influential apostles and literally one of the giants in founding Christian belief. What we have of Paul are his letters, but those are enough, along with what we know of history from Josephus and others to work out what his life might have been like and how his mind worked. Why is he "the apostle we love to hate?"

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