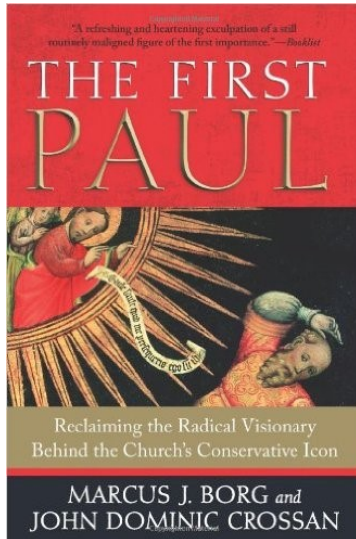


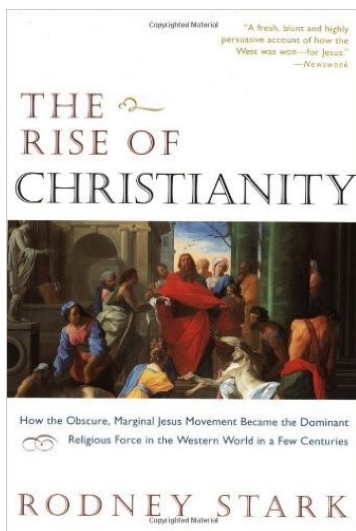
# Reading List for In Search of Paul April 23-May 9, 2019

## Essential Reading:



### [The First Paul](#), by Borg and Crossan

The book explores the reasons for Paul's mixed reputation and reveals what scholars have known for decades: the later "letters of Paul" were created by the early church to dilute his egalitarian message and make him more "acceptable" - "deradicalized" to fit Roman social norms in regards to slavery, patriarchy, and patronage. In truth, Paul was an appealing apostle of Jesus whose vision of life "in Christ" is remarkably faithful to the message of Jesus.



### [The Rise of Christianity](#), by Stark

Rodney Stark, professor of Religious Sociology at Baylor, explores the Christian movement throughout the 1st century. He argues that the first "Christians" were very modest in number and came from a broad spectrum of Roman society. When people joined an early Christian community they were not so much attracted by a "new abstract theology" but by a new way of doing life together in an otherwise classed imperial culture; which has great implications for the church today.

## Suggest Reading:

### [In Search of Paul](#) by Crossan and Reed

Using archaeological and textual evidence, it is shown that Paul was a fallible but dedicated disciple of Jesus, carrying on Jesus' mission of inaugurating the Kingdom of God on earth in opposition to the reign of Rome. Against the concrete backdrop of 1st century life, [In Search of Paul](#) reveals Paul's work, showing why the liberating messages and practices of equality, caring for the poor, and a just society under God's rules, not Rome's, were so appealing.

