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Paul: In Fresh Perspective

By N. T. Wright

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"For me," says N.T.Wright, "there has been no more stimulating exercise, for the mind, the heart, the imagination and the spirit, than trying to think Paul's thoughts after him and constantly to be stirred up to fresh glimpses of God's ways and purposes with the world and with us strange human creatures." Wright's accessible new volume, built on his Cambridge University Hulsean Lectures of 2004, takes a fresh look at Paul in light of recent understandings of his Jewish roots, his attitude toward the Roman Empire, and his unique reframing of Jewish symbols in relation to his experience of the risen Christ. Then Wright attempts a short systematic account of the main theological contours of Paul's thought and its pertinence for the church today.

Part One Themes 1. Paul's World, Paul's Legacy 2. Creation and Covenant
3.Messiah and Apocalyptic 4. Gospel and Empire

Part Two Structures 5. Rethinking God 6. Reworking God's People 7.
Reimagining God's Future 8. Paul, Jesus, and the Task of the Church

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Editorial Review

Review

N.T. Wright is one of the premier New Testament scholars in the world right now, but his views not least some of those set out in *Paul in Fresh Perspective* are quite controversial.

He is part of a group of scholars (by no means agreed among themselves) arguing for the "New Perspective on Paul," or NPP. Wright is the foremost NPP popularizer. He is an engaging speaker and lucid writer who works admirably hard at bringing his view to lay people.

However, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* is not easy reading and not quite for most lay people. This small book (just 174 pages of text and a few endnotes) comprises the Hulsean Lectures Wright delivered at Cambridge. These lectures, Wright says, are a further development beyond another small book he wrote, *What St. Paul Really Said*. In *Paul in Fresh Perspective* Wright hits themes familiar from that earlier book: the narrative of creation and covenant, Messiah and apocalyptic, and gospel and empire.

The most controversial of Wright's emphases are those which have a bearing on justification. He is famous for arguing that justification is not about how you get into God's family; it's proof that you are in. It's God's declaration that you are, in fact, part of His covenant family. He thus questions the traditional Reformation doctrine of imputation.

In the second half of *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, Wright takes Jewish theology as an organizing principle for laying out a Pauline theology, viewing it through the three primary lenses of monotheism, election, and eschatology. This is a work with a popular look but a scholarly appeal. It appears to be a forerunner to the fourth volume of what will likely prove Wright's magnum opus, the *New Testament and the People of God* series. It will bring readers up to date on the thinking of a very good writer and important scholar and theologian. --Mark L. Ward, Jr., *Christian Library Journal*, June 2007

About the Author

N. T. Wright is the Bishop of Durham and the author of several Fortress Press books, including *Jesus and the Victory of God* (1996), *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (2003), *The New Testament and the People of God* (1992), and *The Climax of the Covenant* (1992).

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Wright's book, taken from his lectures, gives a solid outline of the Apostle Paul's theology. Simon Vance captures the essence of Wright's treatise, giving full attention to complex details as he explicates Paul's thoughts. Part One of the book discusses Paul's world and his legacy, giving a general introduction to Pauline thought. The following chapters focus on major biblical themes for the purpose of providing a historical and cultural Pauline worldview. With effortless narration, Vance describes Paul as belonging to the called out ones, those set apart for Christ. This is not an easy listen. It should be sipped--like a full-bodied wine.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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