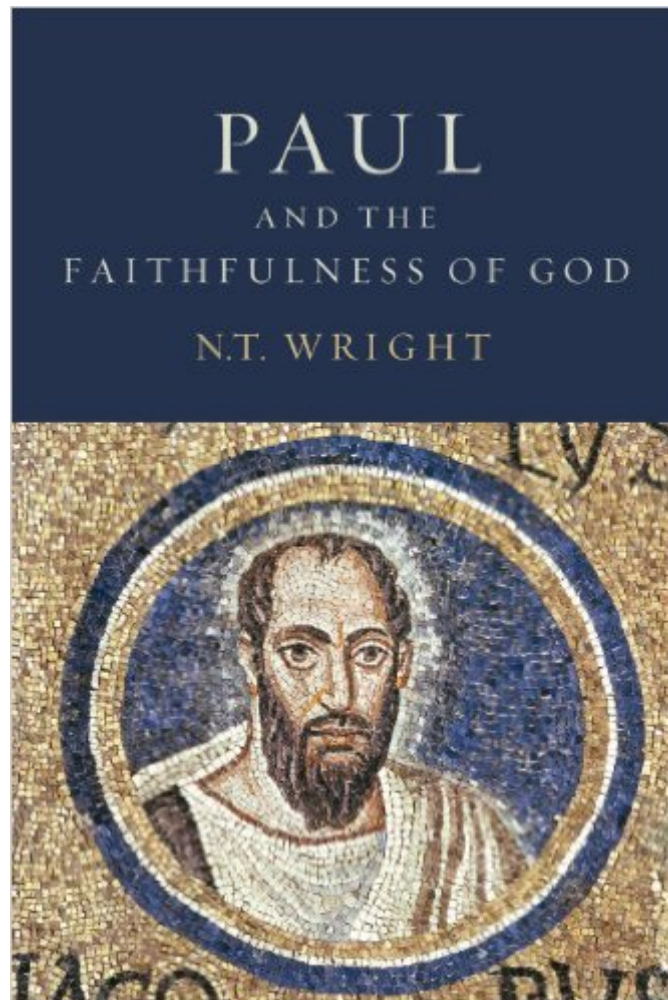


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Paul And The Faithfulness Of God



Synopsis

This highly anticipated two-book fourth volume in N. T. Wright's magisterial series, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, is destined to become the standard reference point on the subject for all serious students of the Bible and theology. The mature summation of a lifetime's study, this landmark book pays a rich tribute to the breadth and depth of the apostle's vision, and offers an unparalleled wealth of detailed insights into his life, times, and enduring impact. Wright carefully explores the whole context of Paul's thought and activity; Jewish, Greek and Roman, cultural, philosophical, religious, and imperial; and shows how the apostle's worldview and theology enabled him to engage with the many-sided complexities of first-century life that his churches were facing. Wright also provides close and illuminating readings of the letters and other primary sources, along with critical insights into the major twists and turns of exegetical and theological debate in the vast secondary literature. The result is a rounded and profoundly compelling account of the man who became the world's first, and greatest, Christian theologian.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

N.T. Wright has put his readers to task, no less those foolish enough to choose to review his book. *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* is a mammoth - both in its length and impact. It breaches 1600 pages and aims to represent Paul as a thoroughly coherent and innovative Christian theologian. Due to the sheer magnitude of his fourth volume, I have broken up my review into two parts, mirroring the division of the book itself. Part one of my review will aim to summarize (hopefully succinctly) and

evaluate the content of Parts One and Two of Wright's magnum opus, while Part two of my review will naturally do the same for Parts Three and Four of his book. Clearly much will be left unsaid, however, I hope to faithfully chart out the general argument that Wright lays forth and offer my own perception of its success. A daunting task, no doubt, yet one that I am honored to do. Many thanks to Fortress Press for graciously sending me a review copy. After a brief preface laying forth the outline of the book, Wright begins his masterful symphony: Part One - Paul and His World Chapter One: Return of the Runaway? This chapter, in some sense, takes the place of an introduction, however, it does far more than introduce the task at hand. Wright begins by setting the Apostle Paul and Pliny the Younger side by side. Both were men of authority in their sphere's of influence, both were Romans near the beginning of the Christian movement, and both had written letters addressing slaves. Paul wrote to Philemon about Onesimus, and Pliny wrote to Sabinianus about an unknown slave whom Sabinianus had recently set free. There is much of interest at hand here, however, most important is the incredible distinction in worldview between Pliny and this Paul figure.

This masterwork by Tom Wright completes the series of four volumes which addresses the issue of "Christian Origins and the Question of God), written over the space of 20 years. The other volumes in the series includes "The New Testament and the People of God," "Jesus and the Victory of God," and "The Resurrection of the Son of God." Combined, their pages number a whopping 3,753. Bookshelves can sag under such weight. But it's worth it! Never, to my knowledge, has so much valuable interpretation been assembled in one organized collection. That said, there are similarities and differences between the volumes. All together they each provide one seamless proclamation from the beginning of the Bible to its end. Too often the Old Testament (a.k.a. Hebrew Bible) is treated by Christians as the prelude to the real revelation: the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the early years of the building of the Christian Church. Nothing could be farther from the truth, Wright time and again reminds us in this volume, as Paul very forcefully says in chapters 9-11 of Romans. The Hebrew Bible, and Jewish faith, are the roots upon which our faith is built (11:18) -- cut that root off and we risk being cut off from YHWH (pronounced Yahweh), the creator God and the source of Jewish and Christian faith. To help us make this seamless transitions between the two testaments, Wright uses several powerful, yet subtle, symbolic words. For instance: 1. He rarely uses the word "Christ" when speaking of Jesus, but instead uses the Jewish term, "the Messiah." Christ comes from the Greek, and Messiah comes from the Hebrew. Both mean the same, "the anointed." 2.

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