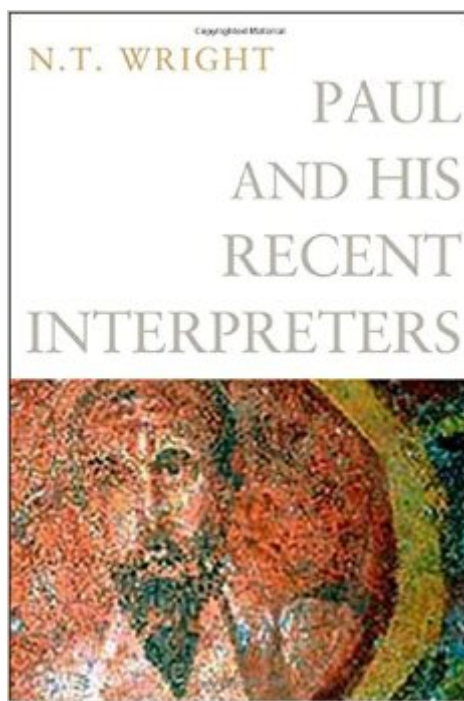


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# Paul And His Recent Interpreters



## Synopsis

This companion volume to N. T. Wright's *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* and *Pauline Perspectives* is essential reading for all with a serious interest in Paul, the interpretation of his letters, his appropriation by subsequent thinkers, and his continuing significance today. In the course of this masterly survey, Wright asks searching questions of all of the major contributors to Pauline studies in the last fifty years.

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## Customer Reviews

Trying to summarize anything N.T. Wright has written is incredibly difficult-- this particular work is deep and complex, summarizing, correcting, and resynthesizing many theological, historical, and cultural streams while creating new ones. He attempts to straighten out a centuries-long Gordian knot of Pauline interpretation, first by critiques of the major concepts and their proponents: From the idea that there can even be a 'Judaism' or 'Hellenism' to force Paul into or remove him from, or a separation of religion and its history from that of the political and cultural thought and language in which it is embedded. And further, what exactly is the relationship of Torah to the Resurrection, or the Biblical Greek of the Septuagint to the street vernacular of Koine' Greek a couple of centuries later? Even a summary of the topics discussed is impossible....I also enjoyed Wright's ability to laugh at himself-- asking if the persecuted church in other cultures would consider any of this more than arrogant trivia.... an extremely relevant question. Wherever you wind up in regard to his conclusions (which make good sense to me), you will not think about Pauline interpretation the

same way again, particularly if you think you had him figured out. There are too many new avenues to follow, too many new windows to look through. Much fresh air comes through these windows. A great read.

For anyone who has read Mr. Wright's colossal *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, one may have noticed the countless references he makes to some great names in the history of Pauline scholarship such as Albert Schweitzer and Ed Sanders. While you can piece together what those authors said from Mr. Wright's references, but it can be like putting together a broken glass cup. But thanks to this supplementary volume, Mr. Wright gives us a short, mostly narrative history of the last 100 years of Pauline studies in the West while also engaging and assessing their arguments. He breaks it down into three parts that break these authors into the categories of New Perspective, Apocalyptic, and Social History. Having read Mr. Wright's series *Christian Origins and the Question of God* as well as PFG's other supplementary volume, *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013*, I can say that this is Mr. Wright's most accessible scholarly work. It is short and incredibly insightful as it touches upon all the great intellectual movements within Pauline studies. It is also insightful for Mr. Wright's own scholarly work because of how often he cites and interacts with them. However, there is one chapter where Mr. Wright addresses critics of the New Perspective, of which he is a part of, and seems to go a little overboard and then uses the same lament that every scholar ends up using with their critics: "If only they had actually read my work..." It feels rather petulant and distracts from some of the good. Still, I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is thinking about tackling Mr. Wright's scholarly work or has already read PFG. It will help illuminate all of Mr. Wright's work.

Technically accessible if you have studied NT scholarship in seminary or other schools. Clear, concise, yet complete in his review of Paul's interpreters. The book helps put the recent scholars' perspective into focus. I recommend it to any serious student.

I liked how in depth he went critiquing other theologians' views on Paul's letters. Very interesting points that I had not considered before or some things I just took for granted that everyone believed.....like the fact that Paul was a Hebrew of Hebrews and therefore his teachings had the background slant of Judaism even though it was a gentile audience.....some theologians think he disregarded his Jewish upbringing when he became Christian.....this is not for the beginner or casual bible reader, this is for someone wanting in depth hardcore behind the scenes history of how

Paul thought in his day and time.

The apostle Paul is popular, yet is his message not easy to catch in a single phrase, theme or agenda. Countless theologians, historians, preachers and laypeople have read the epistles in the New Testament and tried to understand and apply his appeal to follow Christ, organize congregations and propagate personal and collective spiritual growth. The reason I chose to read N.T. Wright's 'Paul and His Recent Interpreters', was that this British Bible scholar is read and promoted heavily in Dutch Christian magazines. "The four tasks facing all serious readers of Paul are history, theology, exegesis and application. These four intertwine and impinge on one another, however hard we might try to stop them." As a couple of warnings upfront: this book is not for beginners, neither it's a book-by-book commentary on Paul's writings. Wright sketches the various streams of thinkers and their agendas for interpreting Paul, jumping back and forth to Early Church Fathers, Reformation forerunners like Luther and Calvin, and contemporary theologians. You may argue whether Paul was a true Jew, and which branch of first century religion he really based his own theology on. Paul's social and cultural context, or discarding context at all can be ways to interpret. You may emphasize on Christ as depicted by Paul, the apocalyptic messages, soteriology, eschatology, Paul's own interpretation of the Hebrew Bible (a.k.a. Old or First Testament). "Agendas are what get people, even historians, out of bed in the mornings, though one might hope that, once at the desk, they allow the data to challenge the hypotheses they have dreamed up overnight" And that's exactly what crept into my mind after hours of reading along. Which church or congregation will benefit these personal convictions and beliefs? Where's the actual text? What should all these people better read instead reacting to the interpretations of fellow scholars? A pleasant reading of Wright's Paul and His Recent Interpreters requires a familiarity with the theologians and books discussed. I praise Wright's competence to have a helicopter view, but in all honesty, this wasn't my cup of tea.

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