

Review: Collected Essays of N.T. Wright

July 23, 2020

Interpreting Scripture: Essays on the Bible and Hermeneutics

Interpreting Paul: Essays on the Apostle and His Letters

Interpreting Jesus: Essays on the Gospels

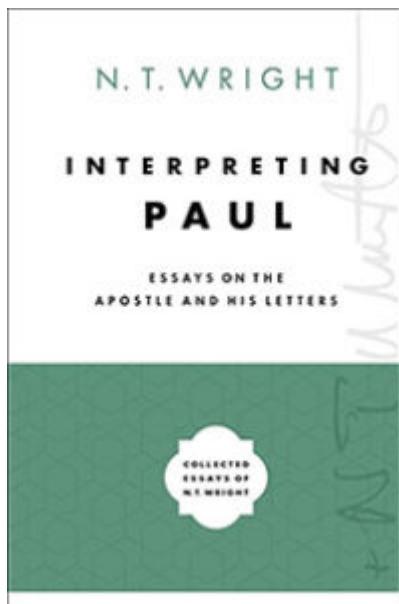
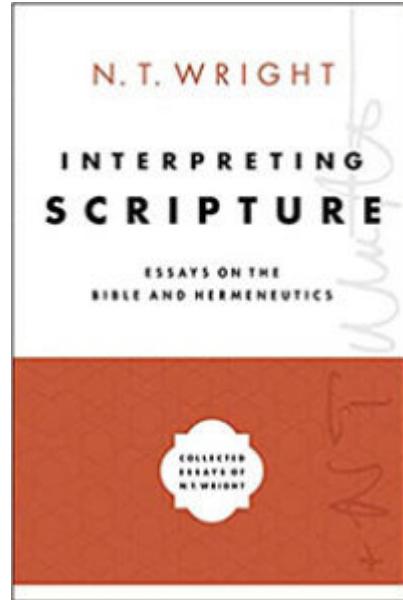
By N.T. Wright (Zondervan)

The Collected Essays of N.T. Wright, a newly released three-volume set by Zondervan, provides readers access to some of the key thinking about biblical interpretation, the Apostle Paul's writings and the four Gospels by one of today's most influential New Testament scholars.

This collection contains something for everyone. Curious about the key themes in Wright's major works but lack the time or inclination to read thousands of pages of dense theological treatises? Try an 11-page essay on "The Bible and Christian Missions," a 21-page essay on "Revelation and Christian Hope" or a 25-page essay on "Imagining the Kingdom." On the other hand, readers who already have tackled Wright's serious *Christian Origins and the Questions of God* series but want to know more can feast

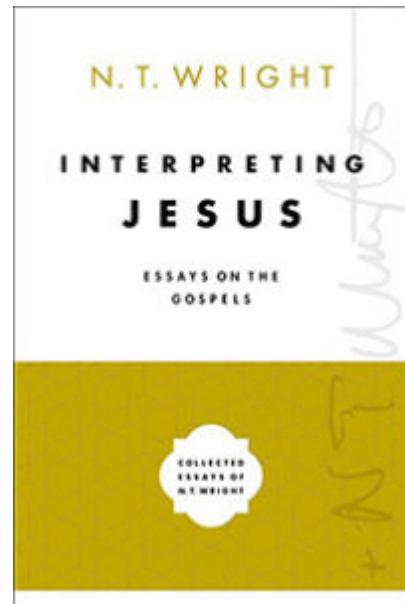
on essays that ask “How Greek was Paul’s Eschatology?” or “Whence and Whither Historical Jesus Studies in the Life of the Church?”

Interpreting Scripture contains 22 essays written between 1997 and 2020, including previously unpublished lectures. One doesn’t have to hold a Ph.D. in theology to gain practical insights for Christian living from essays such as “The Lord’s Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer.” Even essays that may trigger disagreement from a Baptist audience—such as Wright’s defense of the established Church of England in “God and Caesar: Then and Now”—contain pearls such as this: “Some sneer at ‘implicit religion’ and the inarticulate faith that, for instance, turns up at an Advent carol service but can’t say why. I don’t sneer at it; I want to work with it and nurture it, to take every spark of faith and help it, in its own time, to become a flame.”



Interpreting Paul takes a somewhat different approach. Given Wright’s longtime emphasis on the Apostle Paul’s writings, it may seem surprising that this volume is the slimmest in the three-volume set, at barely more than 200 pages. However, its 12 essays all were written since the 2013 publication of Wright’s major work, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*. Readers who may have suspected Wright had nothing left to say—and they had nothing left to learn—after completing that massive tome will discover new insights and additional food for thought.

Interpreting Jesus is a treasure. The 17 essays in this volume span 30 years and provide a balanced diet of thoughtful reflection on the Gospels for serious lay students of Scripture, as well as serious exploration of scholarly issues related to studies of Jesus. Wright firmly but respectfully refutes some of the more radical views of the Jesus Seminar, while also challenging conservative Christians to examine critically some of their preconceived ideas about what the Gospels say.



Any of these volumes or the whole set would make a wonderful gift to your pastor or to a current seminary student. Just be sure to ask in advance to borrow it for your own enlightenment after the recipient of your gift has finished reading.

Ken Camp, managing editor

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