

**A COMBINATION OF BOOK REVIEWS OF BOOKS
ABOUT THE APOSTLE PAUL BY N.T. WRIGHT**

N.T. WRIGHT-“PAUL, A BIOGRAPHY”

N.T. WRIGHT-“PAUL/*IN FRESH PERSPECTIVE*”

**N.T. WRIGHT-“PAUL FOR EVERYONE, ROMANS PART
ONE (CHAPTERS 1-8)”**

**N.T. WRIGHT-“PAUL FOR EVERYONE, ROMANS PART
2, CHAPTERS 9-16”**

**N.T. WRIGHT-“PAUL FOR EVERYONE, 1
CORINTHIANS”**

**N.T. WRIGHT-“INTO THE HEART OF ROMANS/A DEEP
DIVE INTO PAUL’S GREATEST LETTER”**

DECEMBER 10,2024

TITLES OF BOOKS: “Paul, A Biography”, “Paul/*In Fresh Perspective*”, “Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One (Chapters 1-8)”, “Paul for Everyone, Romans Part 2 (Chapters 9-16)”, “Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians”, “Into the Heart of Romans/A Deep Dive Into Paul’s Greatest Letter”.

AUTHOR: N.T. Wright, Who, until recently, was the Bishop of Durham, and who serves as Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews. He is a prolific author, and is considered to be one of the world’s leading Bible (particularly New Testament) scholars. He has taught New Testament studies at Cambridge, McGill and Oxford universities. He has, among his many books, authored *Surprised by Hope*, *Simply Christian*, *Simply Jesus*, and the series *Christian Origins and the Question of God*. His current project is to provide guides to each of the books of the New Testament, and in those guides he actually inserts his own Bible Translations, which are very enlightening and helpful and seemingly (at least to this Reviewer) to be entirely consistent with the thrust of other translation versions of the Bible.

Publishers and Dates of Publication:

Paul, a Biography: Harper Collins Publishers, 2018

Paul In Fresh Perspective: Fortress Press, 2005

Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One: Westminster John

Knox Press, 2004

Paul for Everyone, Romans Part 2: Westminster, John Know Press, 2004

Paul for Everyone, 1 Corinthians: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2004

Into the Heart of Romans, a Deep Dive Into Paul's Greatest Letter: Zondervan Academic, 2024.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND WHY THIS COMBINATION REVIEW OF ALL OF THESE BOOKS

You, the Reader, might legitimately inquire of me, your Reviewer, as to why I have chosen to combine all of these N.T. Wright books into this single review. That would be a legitimate inquiry. Candidly, I am not sure that I can really justify my inclusion of all of these books in a single review. My, perhaps selfish reason for doing so arises, entirely, out of my reason for reading all of these books, other than *Into the Heart of Romans* (the last book mentioned) in the first place. I did an earlier review of *Into the Heart of Romans* on March 9, 2024, and that review, which contained a more complete description of that book, is commended to you for your reading, and will not be repeated herein. That said, why did I read, and choose to review herein each of the other N.T. Wright books which are the subject matter of this combined Review?

Well, a number of causative factors led me to read all of the other N.T. Wright books (other than “*Into the Heart of Romans*”) discussed in this Review. First, I, like many Christians struggle with some of Paul’s letters (particularly his dense, packed letter to the Romans) which form such a large and essential part of the New Testament and which have led to the adoption by our various churches and denominations of many of their respective doctrines and, in some cases to controversies about those doctrines (e.g. “Are Women Barred from Senior Positions in Ministry solely by Reason of their Gender?”). Second, keeping in mind a basic hermeneutical rule that, in order to try to understand and apply any passage of Scripture the interpreter must account for the person who first wrote or spoke that passage, and must know something (in fact, hopefully a good deal) about that person, who he was and what his ministry was and what his relationship with the first audiences of that passage were. Third, Keeping in mind another basic hermeneutical rule that, in order to properly understand and apply a passage of Scripture one must know something (hopefully a good deal) about the Historical and Cultural Context of both the person who

first wrote or spoke that passage, and of his original audiences.

Fourth, since many of the Epistles (not just those of Paul) were directed to specific audiences in order to try to deal with a given situation of those audiences (in other words, the Epistle, the letter, was “situational”, in that its author was seeking to confront a given situation or situations of his audiences), one must seek to know a good deal about the situation of the original audiences of the Epistle. Fifth, I have embarked on a specific task of seeking to understand, and possibly confront doctrinal conclusions of some of our churches and denominations that the roles of women in Christian Ministry are to be restricted solely by reason of their gender, conclusions which I, quite frankly, find to be problematic, if not plain wrong, or to at least be such as impede the furtherance of God’s Kingdom and the Gospel.

Unfortunately, as of the writing of this Review I am still struggling with dealing with this task in a truly scholarly manner. However, one factor has become apparent to me, and that is that, since some of the strongest arguments for the restrictions of the roles of women are based upon passages in Paul’s Epistles (e.g. 1 Timothy 2:12) I need to know a whole lot more than I do know about Paul and how he viewed his Jesus assigned vocation and ministry.

Candidly, before I tackled these books I knew nothing about Paul, beyond the very sketchiest of information, and I knew nothing about his theology or how he viewed his mission, or, to put it simply, “what made him tick”. Furthermore, I struggle, quite pitifully, in trying to get any kind of decent grasp of Paul’s dense writings in Romans (probably his most important, most detailed, most carefully thought out by him, Letter), and a good deal of his other Letters. Now, and while I am anything but a “Pauline Scholar” or “Pauline Expert”, or “Expert Interpreter” of Romans or of any of Paul’s epistles, and while I find myself to be of totally insufficient knowledge of the Second Temple Jewish literature which formed a basis for much of Paul’s thinking (in fact, I know nothing about such literature, which gives me another task), I think that I have an at least basic (very basic, I admit it) understanding of Paul, and of who he was and what his theology became after his “Road to Damascus” experience, and how that theology drove him, and what he wrote and said. Unfortunately, N.T. Wright has not written a commentary or guide for the so-called Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus (in fact, and while I cannot speak for Dr. Wright, I think he even has substantial doubts that Paul wrote those letters). Therefore, I haven’t, as of yet, gotten any help in the performing of my task about the roles of women. However,

I at least have a greatly improved knowledge of Paul.

Reading and studying these books, and probably a number of others by N.T. Wright which deal with the New Testament letters from Paul will give you, the Reader, good insight into Paul, the worlds in which he lived and ministered, what happened to him on the Road to Damascus and thereafter (in the roughly 12 years after Damascus and during his subsequent visits to Jerusalem and during his ministry travels) and how these experiences changed him, his life and Jewish “hopes”, and his theology and how all of these factors and circumstances deeply affected his ministry, preaching and writings, but do not seem to have changed his “Zealous” personality and perseverance.

While I recognize that some of N.T. Wright’s views are controversial as they sort of set on their heads longtime Christian held views about heaven and “going to heaven” and salvation, I think that you, the Reader, will, from these books, find that his views are very persuasively stated, and are backed up by considerable Scholarly research and Scriptural and historical/cultural analysis. I, your humble Reviewer, find such views to be persuasively stated and acceptable. Furthermore, the Author’s writing is clear and concise. He writes in a manner which is clearly readable and understood. So, I, your Reviewer, strongly urge anyone who is seriously interested in trying to have a decent understanding of Paul’s letters to read and study these books. I think that you will be amazed at what you will learn. I think that you will, if nothing else, acquire a deeper, more profound respect for the Grand Narrative of Scripture, or what is sometimes called, “Scripture’s Meta Narrative”, a narrative which was an essential part of Paul’s theology (and that of N.T. Wright for that matter), and which ties together the Old and New Testaments. For my part, the part of your Reviewer, Paul’s theology gives wings to the mantra of “The Bible Project”, which is “We Believe that the Bible is a Unified Story that Leads to Jesus”.

WHAT IS THE AUTHOR DOING WITH WHAT HE IS SAYING

While the Author’s goal for each of these books is, obviously, a goal which differs from his goals for each of the others of these books, in my view, these books go hand in glove in helping the Reader/Student to learn about Paul, who he was, and what his theology was and how it evolved, and, then, how Paul’s

theology and, yes, his personality, impacted each of his Epistles/Letters. For example, what one learns from *Paul, a Biography*, and *Paul, In Fresh Perspective*, will greatly assist him or her in getting the best knowledge from the three books on Romans (one of Paul's last, and his greatest letter), which are included in the subjects of this Review. If you, Dear Reader, like me, your humble Reviewer, have struggled with trying to derive a deep understanding of Paul's theology from his letter to the *Romans*, then I think that you will be greatly helped towards achieving such an understanding by learning about Paul and his perspectives and his history and theology through a thorough reading of the *Biography and Perspectives* books before you approach the three N.T. Wright books on Romans (which are a part of the subject matter of this Review) and Romans itself. If you want to try to achieve a better understanding of 1 Corinthians, then a similar approach will help you to gain a greater knowledge from Wright's book on *1 Corinthians*, which is also one of the subjects of this Review.

In his *Biography of Paul*, Wright sets forth, as best can be done from the limited historical evidence (including the book of Acts and Paul's Epistles), the history of Paul's lifetime. He notes that:

- 1) Paul was, in his early years, a deeply devoted Jewish Zealot. He had a burning ZEAL for the Jewish faith and its traditions, and that Zeal gave rise to a belief held by other Zealots that killing/taking human life to protect the Torah, God's Covenant with the Jewish people and Jewish traditions was not only warranted, but oftentimes called for.
- 2) Paul's personality was, therefore, from the Get Go, one of Zeal, and while his views changed, dramatically, that Zeal formed an essential part of his personality and carried over into his Christian ministry, in which he demonstrated Zeal and perseverance in the face of numerous hardships and persecutions.
- 3) In His selection of Paul to further the Gospel, particularly among the Pagan Gentiles, Jesus did, as the Bible shows that God often did, He selected a flawed, even antagonistic person who had the personality and perseverance to go forward against almost impossible odds to carry forward with the message of Jesus, the Gospel, among the Jews and Pagans. He, Jesus, saw a man who was Zealous for the Word of God and was well- schooled in the Jewish Scriptures to demonstrate to

Jews and pagan Gentiles how those Scriptures pointed to Jesus as the God Promised Jewish Messiah and as the World's Messiah. In these respects, Paul was not unlike other God chosen, flawed individuals, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and other Prophets and Saints.

- 4) While we cannot know the details of what happened to Paul on the Road to Damascus, we know, from his letters (particularly Galatians and 1 Corinthians) that he actually saw Jesus. He did not just hear some "voice", but actually saw Jesus and was commissioned by Jesus as Jesus's apostle to the Jews and Gentiles. Paul seems to have considered an "Apostle" to be someone who actually saw the Risen Jesus, of whom he was one of the last. Either during this Road experience or the later few days in Damascus, or the following roughly 3 to 4 year period, Paul, a devout, well-schooled Jewish Scholar, became convinced that Jesus was the long awaited, Prophetically promised and hoped for among the Jewish people, Messiah. In other words, Paul was caused to believe that Jesus was the culmination of Jewish/Jewish Scriptural History and of the long-running Story (or Narrative if you will) of the Jewish people.

- 5) Paul's knowledge and his "complete theology", if you will, did not develop instantly or over- night, or in a few short days spent in Damascus after his Road experience.

He did not instantly become some sort of gifted preacher. While we don't know a lot, we know that, following Damascus, Paul spent several years in "Arabia" (possibly Mt. Sinai) and it is surmised (although certainly not known) that he there "learned", first hand, from Jesus (as Moses did there from God the Father). Paul writes in Galatians 1:12 that what he would preach he did not learn from men, but was revealed to him by Jesus. One can reasonably surmise that this occurred during his time in Arabia. Paul eventually went to Jerusalem, and met with the Apostles, who considered him to be a bit of a problem. He then returned to his home in Tarsus, where he resumed living with his devout, Jewish parents, and learned and practiced his trade as a tent maker, and, doubtlessly engaged in endless discussions and debates with various Jews, Greek Philosophers (Sophists and Epicureans) and others, and increased his knowledge and honed his thought processes and arguments. He spent, what is for us, a period of 10 years of silence (from Paul and about Paul) back in Tarsus. Paul, therefore, spent a

considerable amount of time in preparing himself for his subsequent missions. He was not some instantaneous evangelist.

- 6) There are debates about whether or not Paul was ever married. For a Jewish Pharisee to be unmarried, would have been a highly strange circumstance. So Wright surmises that: 1) Paul was married and his wife died at an early age, as did many young women of Paul's day, or 2) He was betrothed (engaged) to a young Jewish girl, and either she or her parents called the engagement off because of Paul's "amended", if you will (and in their views and the views of many other Jews extreme, heretical views) of the Jewish Scriptures, or 3) Paul's wife left him because of such views. Wright favors view 2) or view 3), but does so as a sort of "educated guess".
- 7) Paul was and remained Jewish in his being and in his thinking. He did not cease to be a Jew. He did not see that either he or Jesus was bringing about a "New Religion." He simply believed, or was caused to believe that the coming of Jesus was a fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures, a fulfillment of God's Plan for the redemption of the Jewish People and of His entire Creation, and of the Jewish hope for a Messiah. So, Paul, throughout his ministry and travels, would go to Jewish Synagogues and set forth, using the Jewish Scriptures, his position that Jesus was the Messiah who had been long promised to the Jews, and, furthermore, that this Messiah was not just a fulfillment of God's promise to the Jews, but was the actual savior of the entire World, including the Pagan Gentile nations. So, Paul would argue these positions using the story/narrative from Adam to Abram, to Moses, to David, to Jesus, and so forth. To Paul, the story, the narrative, was a Jewish Scriptural story
- 8) Paul, therefore, encountered huge resistance from: 1) Many Jews who found his views to be total heresy, 2) Some Jews who viewed him and his views as a threat to the favored status of the Jews in the Roman Empire, as they, unlike others under Roman rule were allowed to worship their One God and not the emperor and Pagan Gods, 3) Roman/Pagan officials who viewed him as causing a disruption in the peace of the empire and a threat to the emperor worshiping, Imperial cult, which had numerous, grand temples, 4) Pagans, who found that his denigration of pagan gods and of their worship threatened the very fabric of a society. In which the gods held huge sway over the people, and worship of the gods

and the emperor were an ingrained part of civil life. Paul actually lived in four worlds: 1) the World of Second Temple Judaism (its literature and meditations heavily influenced him (providing me with a humble awareness of the fact that I know very little about the Second Temple period or the writings or meditations of the Jewish scholars of that period)), 2) the world of Jesus and the Apostles, 3) the Pagan, multi-god world of the Pagan Roman and Greek Gentiles, and 4) the world of the so-called "Imperial Cult" of Emperor Worship for the Emperor of the Roman Empire. For Paul to seek to present the Gospel in most of these worlds (other than world 2)), each of which had, as a part of its culture, a worldview which was dramatically different than, and was antagonistic to their worldview, presented to Paul an unbelievably challenging job. The Pagan and imperial cult views and the views of many, if not most devout Jews were so extremely different than the worldview presented by Paul as to cause Paul to be considered by some as "strange", and by others as a "heretic", and by many as being a danger to the very fabric of society, and a subversive or treasonous individual. Paul was seeking to present a Gospel which provided a worldview in which there is but One God (not many gods), who is the Creator of All, and who (not the emperor) is the Lord/King of all, and that this God, in the person of Jesus, the Messiah, came to earth in human form in order to, by way of the incarnation, life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of His Messiah, redeem His people and eliminate the power of death for those who Believe (have Faith) that these things are true, and initiated His Kingdom, God's Kingdom on the earth. To say that this Gospel, this Worldview, was considered to be radical, if not in fact downright nutty to the people in the differing worlds confronted by Paul would be to make a masterful understatement. Just think about how devout Jews (who believed in "ONE GOD" as the very heart of their beliefs and that the Messiah would come to rescue and restore Israel, not the Gentiles) would have viewed this Gospel, or how the emperor worshipping folks of the imperial cult would have viewed it, or how those people who had grown up worshipping many pagan gods would have viewed it. Paul encountered a lot of opposition to his message, and was even subjected to beatings, floggings and imprisonment because his message was viewed as heresy, or as being treasonous or

subversive. At times he depressingly questioned whether what he was doing was succeeding in any way. He and the various small Christian communities which he founded, were constantly besieged by the False Teaching of some Jews and Pagan Gentiles

- 9) While the “saving of individual souls” was a matter of importance for Paul, for him and early Christians what mattered was not “saved souls being rescued from the world and taken to a distant ‘heaven’ but the coming together of heaven and earth themselves in a great act of cosmic renewal in which human bodies were likewise renewed to take their place in the new world.” To Paul, Jesus will come from heaven to save and transform the present world. You will find a full explanation of these parts of Paul’s theology in N.T. Wright’s *Into the Heart of Romans*, where he deals in depth, with Romans 8.
- 10) To Paul, there was no dualism between heaven and earth. God’s Creation is good and loved by God, and God’s plan is to save/redeem that creation, not destroy it and start over in some other world. Again see N.T. Wright’s books on Romans which are a part of the subjects of this Review, particularly *Into the Heart of Romans*.
- 11) To Paul, the Passover and Exodus remained significant events in Jewish history, and he viewed the coming of Jesus and the life, death on the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus (who Paul viewed as “Israel itself”, or as a representative of the entirety of Israel, a person fully obedient to God) as representing or providing a new Passover and a New Exodus, acts of the “Saving of God’s People” and of God’s World from the clutches of evil and of the Pagan gods and earthly rulers. In Paul’s view, these gods and rulers held the people in their grasp through the ultimate threat, the threat of death, a threat which was eliminated by the crucifixion, death and resurrection of the Messiah.
- 12) Paul “modified”, if you will, the Jewish belief that “God is One”. He did not change that belief, but expanded it (not sure that “expanded” is the correct word, but I know of no other) to a belief that Jesus and the Holy Spirit, are, with the Father, “the One God”. Of course, this change in Jewish belief created huge controversy among many Jews. So, to Paul, the Messiah was and is God and human.
- 13) Paul announced what we refer to as “Justification by Faith”, that being “Justification” in the eyes of God of

those who have Faith, a deep-set belief, that Jesus is God, and that He died on the Cross and was Resurrected, and that He lives and is Lord/King over God's People (those who have such Faith). This Justification acts now, in the present, and will act at the end, the time of final judgment. That is to say that the Justification is of immediate/present effect and is in effect at the time of final judgment. However, that is not to say that those who are justified, through such Faith, will not be judged before Jesus/God at the time of Judgment for the manner in which they have lived, and the acts and work of their entire lives. So, while we argue about this "Faith vs. Works" dichotomy, there is no such dichotomy. Yes, we are "justified" and "saved" by our faith, but we will ultimately be judged by the contents of our entire lives.

This judgment will, in some manner, affect our standing or positions in the Redeemed Creation/World. However, an individual who is Justified by Faith in this fashion receives God's Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Messiah, making him or her one of the Messiah's people, who, as Paul put it, are "In the Messiah". The Holy Spirit will, throughout the lifetime of the Justified individual, seek to help that individual to live and act "in the Messiah", meaning more like God/Jesus. The individual will, therefore, be aided in the seeking of his or her perfection in the Messiah and in his or her avoidance of sin and evil, by the indwelling within him or her of the Holy Spirit. So, again, we see how the strongest of Jewish doctrines, the doctrine that "God is One" and the Jewish view of God and of Who God Is, was modified by Paul, and how this "modification" would have been viewed by many devout Jews as being rank heresy. While Paul never used the word "Trinity", his view of God was a Trinitarian one, as he clearly viewed Jesus, the Messiah, God's Son as God, and viewed the Holy Spirit, who indwells all Believers, as being God.

14) In his earlier years, Paul thought and even taught that the return of Jesus was virtually at hand. He later concluded that this event might well not occur during his lifetime.

15) Kingdom of God: Jesus, by his life, death and Resurrection, brought the Kingdom of God to God's World, and has demonstrated how God's People are to live and conduct themselves in that Kingdom, under the Lordship of the Messiah. That Kingdom has been initiated. It exists, and it has existed since the time of

Jesus on this earth. However, that Kingdom will not come into full effect or be completely fulfilled until Jesus returns, and assume his rule of the world. We, therefore, live in a divided world, if you will, the World of the Kingdom of God and the World of the Present.

16) For Jesus and for Paul, and for others of the eras of the lifetimes of Jesus and Paul, and for peoples of the many eras before and after Jesus and Paul, the very idea of that there was a division between religion or religious traditions and civil governments or politics was a totally foreign view. In the ancient times of the Bible (Old and New Testament) and for eras thereafter politics, secular life, government and religion or religious traditions (whether they be Jewish or Pagan or otherwise) were closely tied together. You could not separate one from the other.

17) Neither Jesus nor Paul, and certainly not God, favored, in any way, civil chaos or disorder, and, most certainly, not anarchy. So “revolution”, as we think of it, was not a favored action. In fact, it was discouraged. To the extent that God’s people could submit to and obey civil governments without abandonment of their Faith, such submission and obedience was encouraged, it being recognized that, while God’s Kingdom is here it is not fulfilled and, therefore, imperfections in governing authorities have to be accommodated so that order can be maintained and chaos will not reign. While it might seem somewhat strange to our “freedom loving eyes”, Jesus and Paul did not dislike civil governments. Their encouragement to their people was that they seek to live at peace with such governments to the extent that they could do so without abandoning their Faith or acting contrary to that faith, in order that peace and order could be preserved.

This is just a bare bones outline of Wright’s conclusions about the history of Paul’s life and his theology and the development of that theology. He also, in his very extensive *Biography* of Paul, sets forth the history of Paul’s travels and of his various Epistles, and the impacts on those Epistles which was caused by the events affecting Paul and his life and travels, and even by Paul’s moods and attitudes, which sometimes shifted from encouragement to discouragement, if not downright depression.

At the conclusion of his *Biography*, Wright sets for a dated chronology of Paul’s life, travels and letters. Interestingly enough, Wright has a difficult time in fitting into his chronology

the Pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, which he finds were, at best, written either while Paul was in Rome or even during travels after Paul's time in Rome of which we know nothing, even whether they occurred). In fact, from the text of his Biography, he seems to conclude that there is doubt, at least in his mind, that Paul authored these letters, although no suggestion of an alternate author is provided.

If you read Wright's two books, his *Biography* and his *Perspectives*, and if you then read the three books on Romans and the one book on 1 Corinthians, I think you will note the ways in which Paul's life, personality and the events of his life, and his developing theology greatly impacted his important letters to the Romans and the Corinthians, and his other letters.

So, for a Reader or Student who seeks to gain a better understanding of one of one of Paul's letters (in the case of the books under Review herein, Romans and 1 Corinthians) it is strongly suggested that he or she should first be familiar with the *Biography* and *Perspectives* and should then read (and I submit enjoy) N.T. Wright's relevant "*Paul For Everyone*" book of which the relevant Epistle is the subject.

Again, to gain any reasonable interpretations of, and applications of Paul's letters, it helps, in fact it is essential, to know a good deal about Paul. So, again, I, your Reviewer, strongly recommend these books to any serious reader of Paul's letters.

ARE THESE BOOKS SUITABLE FOR RETENTION IN THE TEI LIBRARY OR FOR USE IN ANY TEI/ECLI CLASS?

As you might guess from this Review to this point, the answers to these questions are YES/OH MY YES! These books will be great library reference books. Insofar as their use in any Class is concerned, I would suggest that the "complete book(s)" cannot be assigned, as required reading, but their "reading" can be suggested (and perhaps demonstrated) as being an aid to proper exegesis of Paul's epistles, particularly Romans which I think presents an obstacle to all of us who want to have a deeper understanding of its dense contents. I understand that other scholars or theologians disagree with Wright's views. Such seems to be the almost compulsory state of affairs in theological scholarship. You can't write something which agrees with

someone else, and expect to get published. That said, in my view as a humble, non-theologically educated layman, you “have to pick your theologian” and go with him or her. Otherwise, you will drive yourself crazy in trying to wade through competing views. That is not to say that you should be afraid to read articles or books in which the views expressed by the author differ from those expressed by your favored theologian.

However, at least from my uneducated point of view, you have to latch onto the views of that theologian, whose views you find to be most thoughtfully and intelligently presented. In my case, N.T. Wright is “my guy”, for want of a better label. I understand him. I find his views, which favor a narrative approach to Scripture, as being highly persuasive.

HOW TO READ THESE BOOKS

This is always a difficult section, for me, of these Reviews.

When I “read” a book, I “read it”, meaning all of it, although I might skim or speed read (which I can do) through certain parts of it. I understand that folks want some real short cuts to the reading of a book, but I am not good at offering such short cuts.

However, each of the Wright books on *Biography* and *Perspectives* provides both an extensive Introduction and Conclusion or Concluding Summary, as well as an excellent Table of Contents. So, if you just familiarize yourself with the Tables of Contents, and the Introductions and Conclusions, and some of the Concluding remarks at the conclusions of each Chapter, you will gain a pretty good understanding of the contents of the book, and know whether or not you want to read all of it, or parts of it in detail, or just put it on the shelf for future reference use. All of Wright’s books on “*Paul for Everyone*”, including the four mentioned in this Review, should be consulted and read, in their entirety, by any Reader or Student who is seeking to have a better understanding of the particular Epistle which is the subject matter of the book. These books present complex, oftentimes dense theological writings of Paul in a concise, highly readable fashion. I think that, if you read all of these books you will see how Paul’s basic theology impacted virtually every part of his Epistle. You will see strains of that theology in every passage, or at least in most passages.

the Pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, which he finds were, at best, written either while Paul was in Rome or even during travels after Paul's time in Rome of which we know nothing, even whether they occurred). In fact, from the text of his Biography, he seems to conclude that there is doubt, at least in his mind, that Paul authored these letters, although no suggestion of an alternate author is provided.

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Again, to gain any reasonable interpretations of, and applications of Paul's letters, it helps, in fact it is essential, to know a good deal about Paul. So, again, I, your Reviewer, strongly recommend these books to any serious reader of Paul's letters.