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Wright's "Exile: A conversation with N. T. Wright" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Wright, N.T. (2017). *Exile: A conversation with N. T. Wright*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 343 pp. \$40.00. ISBN 9780830851836

While many find this a compelling key to understanding the New Testament, critical responses also abound. *Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright* engages a variety of scholars in conversation with Wright's thesis in academic discussion and debate in their field of expertise. It takes the discussion of exile as a second temple Jewish theme to a new level. Wright's main contention, that Israel's continuing exile was a pivotal issue in the emergence of Christianity, has found a central place in contemporary New Testament scholarship. Israel had grievously sinned against Yahweh and suffered the judgment of exile from its land. In this work, Wright clearly restates his thesis of an "ongoing exile" in a methodical essay, which is followed by eleven essays from leading scholars like Walter Brueggemann, Philip Alexander and Scot McKnight. These essays interact with Wright's thesis from various perspectives: the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, early Judaism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the New Testament, and theological perspectives. The book finishes with a response from Wright in regards to the presented perspectives. It is an informative read and interesting to note that even though Israel had returned to its land, the majority of Jews of the second temple era regarded themselves in exile under Roman rule and were awaiting their full restoration. It was this crisis of exile that reached its resolution in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This, according to Wright, is the controlling narrative that shaped the thinking of Jesus and Paul.

Finally, Wright offers a lively response to his fellow scholars. *Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright* not only takes our understanding of this critical issue to a new level, I would say it is essential reading for anyone engaged with Wright's work and the Jewish setting of Jesus and Paul with the insight it provides from a wide group of scholars.

Reviewer

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