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SCHOLAR GIVES UP BISHOPRIC AND HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENT TO PUBLISH LANDMARK EXPLORATION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL November 2013 Study Investigates Paul's Relationship to His Ancient World

In 2008, the media and traveling schedules of N. T. ("Tom") Wright, then Bishop of Durham and member of the United Kingdom's House of Lords, were packed. His contributions to New Testament scholarship through his Christian Origins and the Question of God series and his many popular writings, including his take on Christian teaching about the afterlife in his book *Surprised by Hope*, made him a sought-after speaker and media guest. He was a leading participant in the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops and also the Anglican Observer at the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops in the Vatican. In Fall 2009, Wright took a four-month sabbatical at the Center of Theological Enquiry in Princeton, aiming to complete his long-awaited work on the apostle Paul and then resume his duties as Bishop. But the research developed in several new ways, and when Wright returned to Durham it was clear that he had to choose between the two elements of his vocation. He left Durham in summer 2010 to take up his present post at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, where his landmark study of Paul was completed.

The resulting picture is one of Paul as the pioneer of "Christian theology," then a completely new enterprise: Paul created a new thing based upon his epoch-changing belief that the crucified Jesus had been raised from the dead, vindicated as Israel's Messiah and exalted as the world's rightful Lord. Not surprisingly, this picture emerges from Wright's holistic approach to understanding the world in which Paul learned, thought, wrote and taught. The highly anticipated study will be available in the November 2013 as *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Fortress Press).

Established as a foremost scholar in the study of the New Testament over twenty years ago, Wright's *The New Testament and the People of God* and subsequent publications in the series Christian Origins and the Question of God advocate a "critical realist" historical approach, approaching the early Christian movement within its complex historical and cultural setting in the interplay between ancient Jews, Greeks and Romans and the overlapping worlds of philosophy, religion and politics. He insists on giving priority to first-century questions rather than focusing on the questions asked by the sixteenth-century Reformers, the nineteenth-century modernists or today's postmodernists, resulting in a historically grounded and theologically fruitful understanding of the early Christians.

N. T. Wright is the former Bishop of Durham in the Church of England and one of the world's leading Bible scholars. He is now research professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews and is a regular broadcaster on radio and television. He is the author of over sixty books, including *The New Testament and the People of God* (1992), *Jesus and the Victory of God* (1996) and *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (2003), all published by Fortress Press.

Paul and the Faithfulness of God

by N.T. Wright in the series **Christian Origins and the Question of God**

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