



*Exile: A Conversation with
N. T. Wright*

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"In this volume, James Scott has assembled a wonderful cast of scholars to prod, evaluate, critique, and engage Wright's thesis about exile in biblical theology, Jewish literature, and as a theological idea in the New Testament. It's the best exploration to date of what it meant for the Jewish people, including the early church, to look forward to the day when 'many will come from the east and west to recline in the company of Abraham.'"

— **Michael F. Bird**, lecturer in theology, Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia

N. T. Wright Dialogues with Scholars on His Thesis of Israel's Ongoing Exile

Few New Testament scholars of recent decades have set the pitch for academic discussion and debate in their field like N. T. Wright. His signature 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. Even though Israel returned, the majority of Jews of the second temple era regarded themselves in paradoxical exile under Roman rule, still awaiting their full restoration. It was this crisis of exile that reached its climax and resolution in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This, according to N. T. Wright, is the controlling narrative that shaped the thinking of Jesus and Paul.

While many find this a compelling key to understanding the New Testament, critical responses also abound. In *Exile*, Wright clearly restates his thesis in a programmatic essay. Scholars such as Walter Brueggemann, Philip Alexander, Jörn Kiefer, Dorothy Peters, and Scot McKnight then interact with Wright's thesis from various perspectives: Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, early Judaism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament. Hans Boersma and Ephraim Radner engage Wright's thesis from theological perspectives. Wright concludes with a lively response to his interlocutors.

Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright is essential reading for anyone engaged with Wright's work and the Jewish setting of Jesus and Paul, and it provides the following contributions to the scholarly community:

- Reexamines the vexing questions around N. T. Wright's thesis of an ongoing exile in the New Testament with renewed vigor and fresh perspectives
- Allows N. T. Wright to respond to the contributors' essays, extending the conversation around this topic
- Engages the topic from the perspective of theologians who are not biblical scholars, a unique feature of this book

Exile is edited by James M. Scott (DTheol, University of Tübingen), professor of religious studies at Trinity Western University, British Columbia, Canada. He is the author of *Paul and the Nations* and *Adoption as Sons of God*, and is a recognized expert on the topic of exile and restoration in Jewish and Christian perspectives.

"My original motivation for this book was that I had been thinking along similar lines to N. T. Wright's thesis of an ongoing exile in the New Testament," Scott writes. "I knew that

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James M. Scott, editor of
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his work on the subject had been the object of withering criticism by various New Testament scholars who disputed various aspects of the thesis, including its alleged Old Testament and Jewish roots and its actual relevance for understanding Jesus and Paul. I wanted to see whether we could redouble our efforts to explore the subject of exile more thoroughly with the help of scholars addressing the issues from their unique perspectives and expertise.”