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Elliott, Neil, and Mark Reasoner, eds.

Documents and Images for the Study of Paul

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This helpful teaching tool is not only a collection of primary texts but also a helpful compendium of recent research on various elements of Pauline study. Wisely, there is no

claim that any contextual material is a source for Paul, only that it is illustrative of the sociocultural, literary, rhetorical, and theological world in which Paul moved. There are study questions and bibliography at the end of each chapter and explanations of important terms in boxes in the text, along with helpful tables, such as a simplified family tree of the very complicated Julio-Claudian lineage. The many pertinent illustrations help

lighten the heaviness of abundant text in fairly small print.

After an introduction, six chapters follow. Each gives extensive introduction and discussion of current scholarship. "Paul's Self-Presentation" includes contemporary models such as the philosopher, Paul's self-titles, his use of political language, and autobiographical details. "Paul's Gospel and Letters" deals with genre and basic elements

of Pauline theology with extensive comparative texts. "The Gospel of Augustus" presents

imperial propaganda, especially Virgil. "Paul's People Israel" illustrates Judaism in the Roman world. "The Communities around Paul: The *Ekklesiāi*" discusses purity issues and

the challenge of living community in the Roman world. Lastly, "Paul's Legacy" presents the many images of Paul in mostly deuteropauline literature, with some use of Irenaeus,

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Origen, the Damasian inscription in Rome, and a fleeting glimpse of Augustine. As a specific example of the wide range of literature included, the chapter on "Paul's Gospel and Letters" features selections from Seneca, Cicero, Pseudo-Libanius, Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom, Philodemus, Crates, Pseudo-Demetrius, Philo, the papyri, Pliny, Aristobulus,

Cleanthes, Apuleius, Polybius, Ovid, 4 Maccabees, Virgil, and Horace, all within various subthemes with solid introductions.

Sometimes the organization is puzzling. For example, why is the discussion of Paul's use

of political language, obscurely titled the "Obedience of Faith among the Nations," included with Paul's self-presentation rather than his gospel? It is sometimes not completely clear how title fits topic and how subtopics fit the overall theme of the chapter.

On smaller points, there is a good map at the beginning of the book that seems to try to include all major New Testament sites, yet strangely omits Beroea, Syracuse, Rhegium,

Puteoli, and, most important, Malta, even though there is room in the right places. In the first topical chapter, there is an explanation that *ethnē* will be translated “non-Jews” instead of Gentiles, yet the equally problematic terms “Jews” and “Christians” are not questioned.

The stated intention is that the book be a “resource” for courses. It would perhaps be a better fit at the graduate and seminary level than the undergraduate level, where it might

prove too heavy going. At \$35.00, it is an expensive supplementary text and probably would not be suitable as a main text on Paul. Nevertheless, there is a treasure of resources

here to support the presentation of Paul as part of the Roman world all the while living and preaching a distinct message.