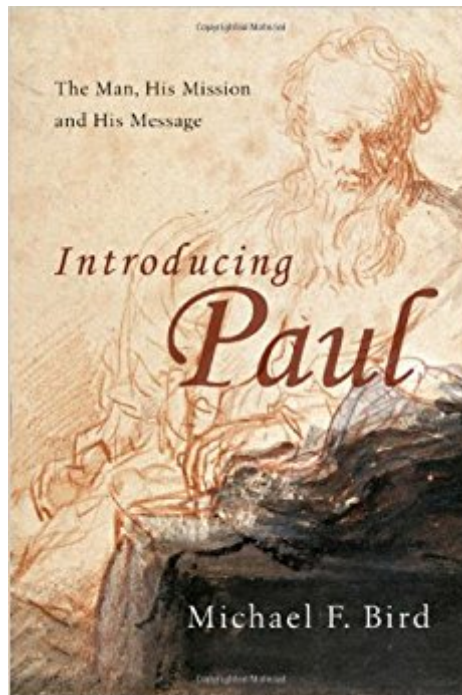




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# Introducing Paul: The Man, His Mission And His Message



## Synopsis

Many Christians who know and love the Bible think they know the apostle Paul. He's a theological master, a pastoral mentor, a spiritual adviser and a missionary hero. Yet just when we think we have him in our grasp, he slips through our fingers. At the point where we suppose we have finally understood him, Paul again confounds us. But he also beckons us to explore God's ways more deeply. Michael Bird suggests that if the Paul we claim to know looks and sounds a lot like us, it's probably a warning light that we don't know him as well as we think we do. But if we let Paul be Paul, allowing him to speak for himself in his language, on his terms and for his purposes, then we stand a chance of meeting him anew. *Introducing Paul* is an animated and penetrating survey of Paul's life and teaching. It covers all the basics students need, while offering new insights with a light touch. Blending life and study, Bird aims to get us excited about reading Paul's letters, sharing his gospel and living the Christian life the way he thought it should be lived. For beginning students and laypeople, *Introducing Paul* is a valuable entrance into the contemporary study of Paul.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"For anyone who would like to get 'up to date' on issues of Pauline scholarship, in a way that will help student, teacher or preacher, this book is thoroughly recommended." (James Purves, *The Pneuma Review*, Winter 2011)"Bird has written a useful entry-level book for undergraduates, informed laypersons, and for ministers seeking to stay current within Pauline studies.

Recommended for those seeking to understand the contours of Paul's thought in a way that is

engaging, relevant, and highly readable." (J. Brian Tucker, , Criswell Theological Review, Spring 2010)"Bird has written a wonderfully helpful introduction to Paul. He is clearly well informed on the issues, and he writes thoughtfully in an engaging style. As a student of Paul, I found the book marvelous, a wonderful summary and reminder of key issues in Pauline studies, presented in a fresh manner." (E. Randolph Richards, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, June 2010)"Author Michael Bird offers much that should educate and inspire readers about this vitally important historical figure." (James A. Cox, The Midwest Book Review, June 2009)"Introducing Paul is wonderfully written, intermingling scholarly observations and humor throughout. I highly recommend Bird's primer as a resource to assist new readers of Paul in understanding the essential elements of Paul's theology." (Mark A. Jennings, Religious Studies Review, March 2010)"A wonderful introduction to the Apostle Paul that manages to be both brief and substantive. . .A wonderful introduction to Paul's theology." (Trevin Wax, American Theological Inquiry, 2009)"A valuable and timely contribution. . .a fine introduction to the current shape of Pauline studies. A great way for any student of the Bible to catch up on the current conversation." (Christopher R. Bruno, Themelios, November 2009)"A brief, readable, sensible summary of Pauline studies in a usable format. . . A good overview in a helpful manner, summarizing key aspects of Paul's life and message along with a good dose of humor." (Preaching, January/February 2010)"The value of the book is in Bird's ability to produce a volume that exhibits both breadth and simplicity in exploring and summarizing areas of Pauline study while also maintaining an appropriate depth for a work of introduction. Bird appears to have achieved his explicit aim to go deeper into Paul without losing his readers in the mire of scholarly debates and complex technicalities, while also hoping to show Paul both relevant and riveting to today's church." (Brian Allred, Mid-America Journal of Theology, 2009)"Bird has a knack of vividly putting in current context the radical nature of some New Testament claims and the way they were perceived 2,000 years ago." (Marvin Olasky, WORLD, August 1, 2009)"An excellent book. It is well thought out, documented, and presented. Bird argues well for his analysis of Paul and what he was like and what he believed. Bird writes well and with conviction, personality and passion." (Joan Tyvoll, 1340mag Books (1340magbooks.com), April 2009)"A wonderful introduction to the Apostle Paul that manages to be both brief and substantive. Some books on Paul focus on the theology of the apostle expressed in his letters. Others provide a biographical look at the apostle's life and missionary journeys. Introducing Paul combines the best of these approaches. Bird delves into Pauline theology, the specific letters, the story of Paul's life. And he accomplishes these tasks in less than 200 pages." (Trevin Wax, Kingdom People (trevinwax.com), April 22, 2009)"In less than 200 pages, Bird not only covers the basics, but he

acquaints the uninitiated with the basics of the various discussions and controversies going on in Pauline studies. I recommend this book for college students and new Bible students. As far as basic books go, this is certainly an excellent basic text for any study of Paul." (Internet Monk (internetmonk.com), April 13, 2009)"This is the first book to put in the hands of the student or layperson who wants to know what Paul is all about. The super bonus of this book is that it navigates current discussions about Paul without burdening the reader. Introducing Paul sparkles with wit." (Scot McKnight, Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies, North Park University)"Michael Bird offers an insightful, readable and serious (yet occasionally witty) introduction to Paul in conversation with the best scholarship on the apostle. It will be especially useful for those who think they know Paul well but have the courage to take a fresh look and have their assumptions challenged. Particularly important are Bird's discussions of justification and of the gospel itself. Let those who have ears to hear listen to what the Spirit--via Paul and Bird--is saying to the people of God in a world that seems increasingly similar to Paul's." (Michael J. Gorman, dean, Ecumenical Institute of Theology, and professor of sacred Scripture, St. Mary's Seminary & University, Baltimore, Maryland)

Reviews & Endorsements "Michael Bird offers an insightful, readable and serious (yet occasionally witty) introduction to Paul in conversation with the best scholarship on the apostle. It will be especially useful for those who think they know Paul well but have the courage to take a fresh look and have their assumptions challenged. Particularly important are Bird's discussions of justification and of the gospel itself. Let those who have ears to hear listen to what the Spirit--via Paul and Bird--is saying to the people of God in a world that seems increasingly similar to Paul's." --Michael J. Gorman, dean, Ecumenical Institute of Theology, and professor of sacred Scripture, St. Mary's Seminary & University, Baltimore, Maryland "This is the first book to put in the hands of the student or layperson who wants to know what Paul is all about. The super bonus of this book is that it navigates current discussions about Paul without burdening the reader. Introducing Paul sparkles with wit."

An excellent look into the life and ministry of this amazing person of history. I highly recommend you read this and then read Acts and the Epistles, it will give a whole new living color to those works and help you understand where he was coming from so much better. It's all too easy to gloss over his history just reading through the New Testament, he tends to get lost in all the other amazing men of the Bible. However, this fellow here was so instrumental in teaching us what it means to be a

Christian and how that differs from being a Jew. Short of Jesus, and maybe Peter, Paul has shaped the history of the Christian church more than any other.

I love reading about Paul, although it's hard to keep the details in my head concerning his life and missionary journeys. his was a required reading resource. It gives one just enough information on Paul, makes some thought provoking "aha's" about his mission and his life. Although required, you normally just "survey" the book, but once I started reading it and it made perfect sense to me, I read the whole thing. So, if you love Paul, and want to see a different perspective on him, read this book.

I like it.

Easy for students to read, Bird presents a scholarly view of Paul and his letters in a form that appeals to readers without sounding stilted and highly academic. Epistles, for example, are "Reading Someone Else's Letters." This is an excellent beginning on a long journey of studying the Apostle Paul, all his letters, his theology and his heart.

Very good work, a must read for college and seminary students.

Educational and Engaging. Being an ex-member of the commonwealth myself, I appreciate Michael's communication style. It brings a freshness and brightness to theology. Thank you sir.

I learned a lot from this little gem of a book, but at times found it to plod along. Still recommend both for long-time scholars as well as novices.

Ministry in the image of God is a very beautiful and inspiring book to read. I would recommend it to anyone who is doing some ministry work now to read it.

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