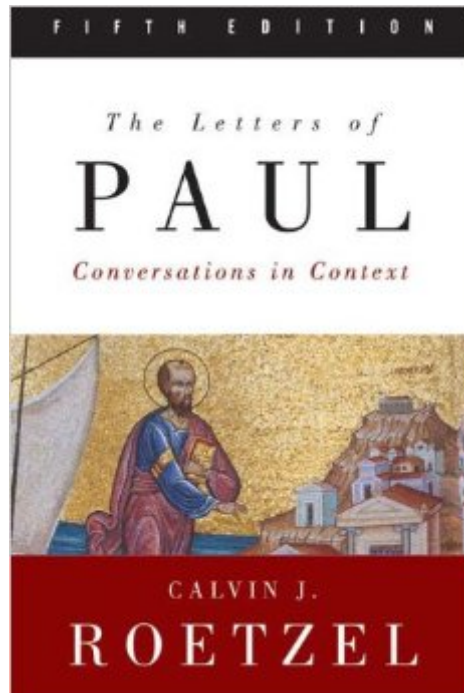


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The Letters Of Paul, Fifth Edition: Conversations In Context



Synopsis

Calvin Roetzel's *The Letters of Paul* has long been established as the most effective textbook for introducing Paul and Paul's writings to undergraduate and seminary students. This new edition updates the text to include new scholarship developed after the fourth edition's release in 1998. The result is a wonderful basic textbook on Paul's letters.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Letters of Paul was written by a retired professor of Religious Studies at Macalester College. His former teaching career is evident when reading this book, although he admits in the preface it is written for the "nonspecialist." (ix) I got the sense that this book, first published in 1975 (ix), was a textbook for students. Roetzel himself describes it as a book for "those who are systematically reading Paul's letters for the first time as well as those returning to Paul for a fresh look." (xi) He says that the book is meant to be read before looking at Paul's actual letters, a point I disagree on; at least a perfunctory reading of the letters would be helpful before reading this book. Roetzel's aim is to have readers see the letters "less as repositories of static truth than as lively and sometimes turbulent exchanges over the nature of the gospel," (xi) and to "help the novice reader read the letters in light of their social and cultural background." (5) He is also trying to guide students in how they approach the study of Paul, and to help them understand basic structural and functional aspects of letters in Paul's time (xi). Roetzel opens the introduction skillfully, drawing the reader in with a discussion of Paul's views on women. He then touches on some other controversial

contemporary issues. Roetzel presents other dichotomous views of Paul. These "contrary impressions" (1) effectively tease the reader, and hint at the issues to be dealt with in the book. The book concludes well by picking up where the introduction left off. It discusses controversial issues in a little more detail, but they make more sense now because of the background of the book.

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