

# THE PAIDEIA LETTER

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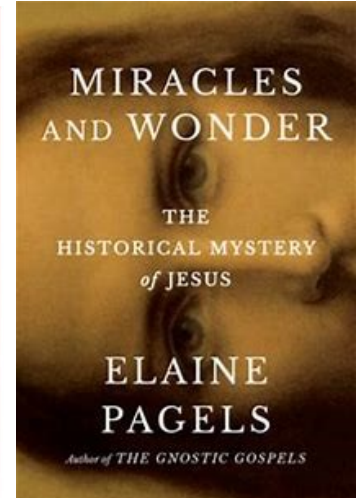
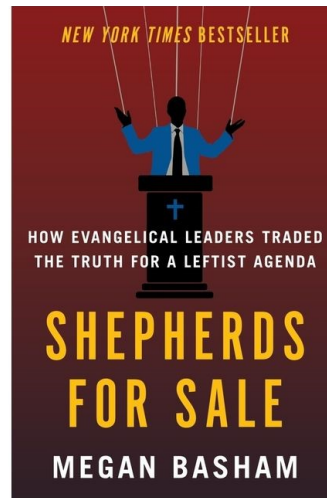
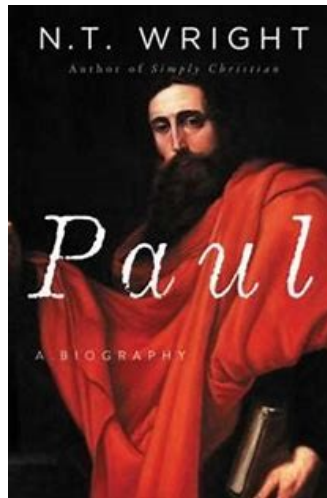
## WHAT BOOKS ARE ON MY BEDSIDE TABLE?

I have a habit (peculiar to some, common among others) of reading more than one book at a time—not simultaneously, of course, because that’s not possible; but carrying forward the reading of several books, reaching their completion, then picking up the next book wherever I left off. Sometimes this leads to a stack of as many as a half-dozen books on my already crowded bedside table where sit a lamp, a Bose FM radio, and a cluster of pill bottles for my early morning or late evening doses.

Only three books currently occupy that space, each of them reflecting my interest in biblical studies and the proclamation of the gospel.

But how different is each of these books from the other!

First, a biography of the man known from his birth as Saul of Tarsus, but after his new birth on the Damascus road, renamed as the Apostle Paul.



The author is **N. T. Wright**, former Anglican Bishop of Durham, recently chair of the Department of New Testament and Early Christianity at the **School of Divinity, St. Andrews University**. His given name is **Nicholas Thomas Wright**, known to his friends as **Tom Wright**, one of the leading and few remaining evangelicals in the hierarchy of the **Church of England**. He has been the subject of a feature article in *The Atlantic* (December 2019) and called (by *Christianity Today*) “*the most important apologist for the Christian faith since C. S. Lewis.*” Two of his other 70+ books echo the titles of Lewis books: *Simply Christian* and *Surprised by Hope*.



Wright introduces his work on Paul’s life with a strong utterance in favor of the biblical text and its account, rejecting the liberal opinion and method of most disbelieving scholars: “*I do not regard it a virtue to decide ahead of time against either the Pauline authorship of some of the letters or the historicity of the Acts of the Apostles. . . . I have found that these hypotheses make excellent sense of the historical, theological, and biographical data.*”

Wright does not underestimate the seriousness of the task he undertakes, acknowledging that what St. Paul wrote and “*said about Jesus, and about God, the world, and what it meant to be genuinely human, was*