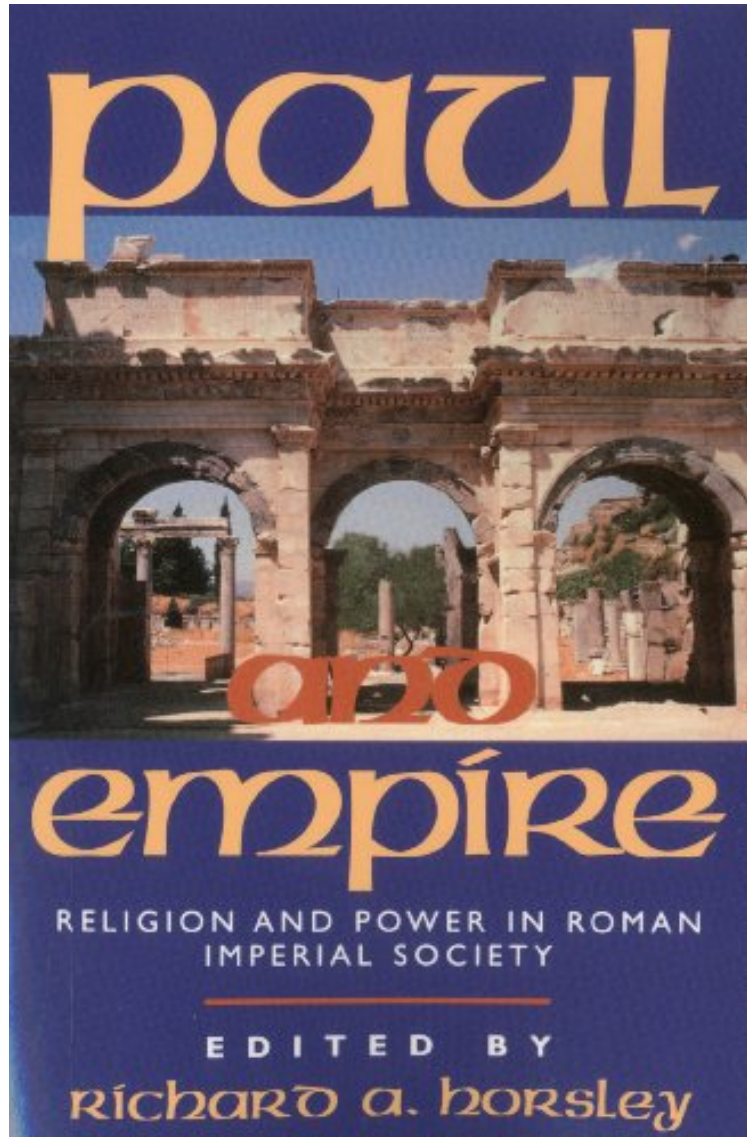


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## Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society

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From Bloomsbury TT Clark : **Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society:

14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Well Done! By The Rev. Dr. Daniel J. G. G. Block Professor Horsley's anthology of essays (primarily by other authors), and his introductions, do much to appropriately redefine Saint Paul's writings within social and political contexts. Explicitly rejecting the notion that Paul is to be read

exclusively as religious literature intended for a religious community, Horsley (et al.) painstakingly demonstrates that the preaching of the crucified Christ was a direct challenge to the Roman Empire. Similarly, the building of Christian communities around the proclamation of the resurrection were intentional rejections of secular values and order. Living in an age when religion has too often been high-jacked by fundamentalists of all denominations and faith groups, to serve only petty theological agendas, Horsley's collection stands for us as a useful reminder that faith can be something more.<sup>9</sup> of 11 people found the following review helpful. A Useful anthology By R. Griffiths This is a useful anthology on an important subject in Pauline studies. Although the fourteen essays presented here have been published elsewhere, it is very helpful to have them collected in one place. Further, Richard Horsley's introductory material offers a significant synthesis of the material. In short, the collection depicts St Paul as developing an explicitly anti-imperial movement, in opposition to the all-pervasive emperor cult of Rome. Three aspects of this movement are focussed on: Theology (Parts 1 and 3), Patronage (Part 2) and church as an alternative society (Part 4). I would recommend this book to undergraduate students of the Bible, and indeed to anyone who doesn't see what politics has to do with the New Testament. I would also recommend Neil Elliott's 'Liberating Paul', some of which is reproduced in this volume.<sup>0</sup> of 0 people found the following review helpful. Helpful scholarly resource for New Testament studies. By Jan Jenkins An excellent resource for those who want to get a deeper understanding of the milieu of Paul's day.

Over the centuries, Paul has been understood as the prototypical convert from Judaism to Christianity. At the time of Paul's conversion, however, Christianity did not yet exist. Moreover, Paul says nothing to indicate that he was abandoning Judaism or Israel. He, in fact, understood his mission as the fulfillment of the promises to Israel and of Israel's own destiny. In brief, Paul's gospel and mission were set over against the Roman Empire, not Judaism. This anthology brings together incisive and groundbreaking essays on: 1) "The Gospel of Imperial Salvation," revealing how the imperial cult, by its dominance in urban public space, created a pervasive presence of imperial beneficence and salvation integrated into traditional Greek religion; (2) "Patronage and Power", disclosing the networks of patronage relations that held the empire together, so as to render occupying troops and imperial bureaucracy unnecessary in urbanized areas such as Corinth and Ephesus, key centers of Paul's mission, (3) "Paul's Articulation of an Alternative Gospel", discerning how Paul borrows much of the key language of the imperial religion in preaching his own gospel of a Lord who had been crucified by imperial rulers but vindicated by God as the true universal Lord, (4) "The Assemblies of an Alternative International Society," exploring ways in which the assemblies Paul founded in Asia Minor and Greece were to embody patterns alternative to the hierarchical human relations that dominated Roman imperial society. Richard A. Horsley is Professor of Classics and Religion at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He is author of *Galilee: History, Politics, People and Archaeology*, *History, and Society in Galilee: Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis*, both published by Trinity Press International.

"...a set of informative essays (most of them previously published) that emphasize that Paul's concern was not driven simply by specific doctrinal issues such as justification nor only by relationships to Judaism or the Gentile world. Rather, Paul's ultimate concern was confrontation with Roman imperial power and all that it entailed. Because this sort of political and religious perspective has often been submerged in Pauline interpretation, this work is a very helpful counterweight." *The Bible Today (The Bible Today)* "...the individual essays... offer students and scholars of religion a valuable window into Roman imperial society." *The Journal of Religion (Journal of Religion)* "Richard Horsley has collected from a variety of mainly published sources a set of fourteen essays illuminating Paul in the setting of the Roman Empire as re-established and stabilized by Augustus shortly before the apostle's lifetime... Substantial and masterly introductions to the various sections are provided by the editor. The whole work is to be highly recommended." L. Houlden, *Theology (L. Houlden Theology Today)* "...encompassing both Christian sources and general Roman socio-political issues relevant to our understanding of earliest Christianity. It will be informative for pastors and general readers with a solid background in New Testament history." Carolyn Osiek, *Catholic Theological Union*, reviewing for *Currents in Theology and Mission*, February 1999 (Carolyn Osiek *Currents In Theology and Mission*) "Tired of traditional descriptions of Paul? Then spend some time with Paul and Empire. Paul, you'll find, is not just the theologian you knew, but a political and religious activist, too... Paul and Empire provides a handy introduction to the work of some of the most respected scholars in Roman and New Testament studies. Further, Horsley's concise, readable introductions pull together these many threads while highlighting the significance of each." Steven Friesen, reviewing for *Biblical Archaeology*, May/June 1999 (Steven Friesen *Biblical Archaeology*) "Reading through a political lens, these authors explore the political dimension of key Pauline terms and suggest how Paul engages imperial, political rhetoric... All will profit from exploring the political aspects of Paul's context and letters." Kenneth L. Cukrowski, *Lubbock Christian University*, reviewing for *Religious Studies*, April 1999 (Kenneth L. Cukrowski *Religious Studies*) "...outstanding collection of essays... the Horsley collection provides an assembly of groundbreaking, almost classical articles that are in many cases not readily available." Walter F. Taylor, Jr., Ernest W. and Edith S. Ogram Professor of New Testament Studies, reviewing for *Trinity Seminary*, Fall/Winter 1999 (Walter

F. Taylor, Jr.)"It will be informative for pastors and general readers with a solid background in New Testament history...This is a good way of updating on these aspects of recent Pauline scholarship. Carolyn Osiek, Catholic Theological Union (Carolyn Osiek, Catholic Theological Union Currents In Theology and Mission)"Richard Horsley has collected from a variety of mainly published sources a set of fourteen essays illuminating Paul in the setting of the Roman Empire as re-established and stabilized by Augustus shortly before the apostle's lifetime...Substantial and masterly introductions to the various sections are provided by the editor. The whole work is to be highly recommended." L. Houlden, Theology (Sanford Lakoff Theology Today)"...encompassing both Christian sources and general Roman socio-political issues relevant to our understanding of earliest Christianity. It will be informative for pastors and general readers with a solid background in New Testament history." Carolyn Osiek, Catholic Theological Union, reviewing for Currents in Theology and Mission, February 1999 (Sanford Lakoff Currents In Theology and Mission)"Tired of traditional descriptions of Paul? Then spend some time with Paul and Empire. Paul, you'll find, is not just the theologian you knew, but a political and religious activist, too... Paul and Empire provides a handy introduction to the work of some of the most respected scholars in Roman and New Testament studies. Further, Horsley's concise, readable introductions pull together these many threads while highlighting the significance of each." Steven Friesen, reviewing for Biblical Archaeology , May/June 1999 (Sanford Lakoff Biblical Archaeology )"Reading through a political lens, these authors explore the political dimension of key Pauline terms and suggest how Paul engages imperial, political rhetoric... All will profit from exploring the political aspects of Paul's context and letters." Kenneth L. Cukrowski, Lubbock Christian University, reviewing for Religious Studies , April 1999 (Sanford Lakoff Religious Studies )"...outstanding collection of essays...the Horsley collection provides an assembly of groundbreaking, almost classical articles that are in many cases not readily available." Walter F. Taylor, Jr., Ernest W. and Edith S. Ogram Professor of New Testament Studies, reviewing for Trinity Seminary , Fall/Winter 1999 (Sanford Lakoff)"It will be informative for pastors and general readers with a solid background in New Testament history...This is a good way of updating on these aspects of recent Pauline scholarship. Carolyn Osiek, Catholic Theological Union (Sanford Lakoff Currents In Theology and Mission)About the AuthorRichard A. Horsley is Professor of Classics and Religion at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He is author of Galilee: History, Politics, People; Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis; and editor of Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society, all published by Trinity Press.