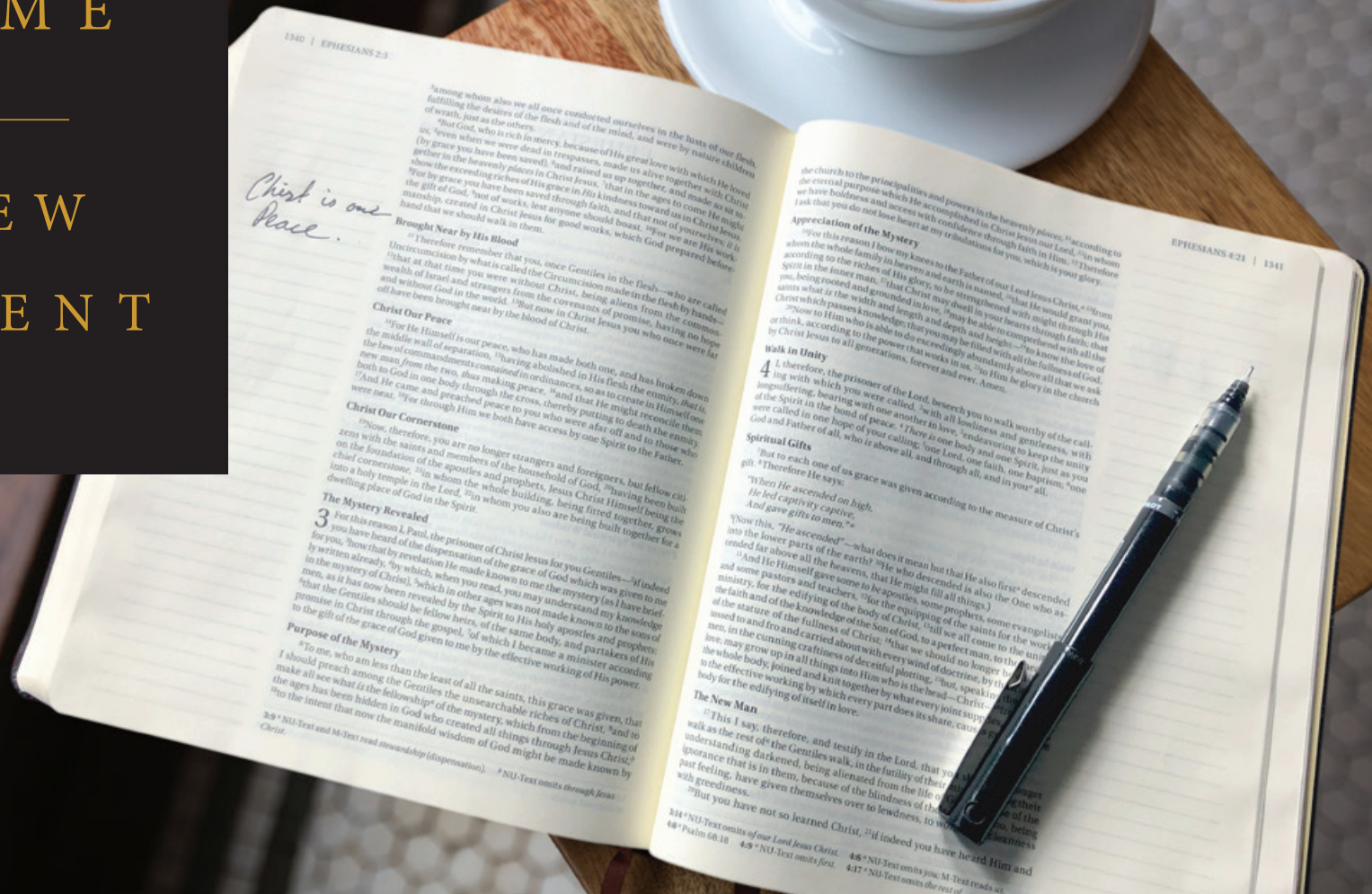


# AT HOME — IN — THE NEW TESTAMENT



A GUIDED TOUR THROUGH 5 OF N.T. WRIGHT'S  
FAVORITE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

## Note:

**You can watch N. T. Wright's essay online, or even download the video.**

People often ask me, "What's your favorite book of the New Testament?"

That's a bit like being asked, "Which are your favorite of Beethoven's symphonies?" or, "Which is your favorite among your own children or grandchildren?" Of course they're all different, and you like them in different ways.

Nevertheless, when I think about which books of the New Testament have meant the most to me, and perhaps are *continuing* to mean the most to me, there's a kind of a short list I have in my mind. And I think of it rather like rooms in a house.

## The Living Room: Ephesians

There are some New Testament books that I really like just to relax and feel at home in. And I feel that about the letter to the Ephesians:

- In Ephesians 1, Paul talks about heaven and earth coming together in the messiah.
- In Ephesians 2, he talks about Jew and Gentile coming together in the messiah.
- Ephesians 3, he says that when this happens, this is the church calling the principalities and powers to account.

And so on we continue into the unity and the holiness of the church in the second half of the letter, and then particularly the coming together of man and woman in the messiah in chapter 5, and lastly then the battles with the principalities and powers in chapter 6.

When I look at a book like Ephesians, I think, yes—this sums up so much. (Some people don't think Paul wrote it, but whoever did write it certainly knew Paul's mind extremely well and might have actually had the same name as well.)

With a book like Ephesians, I just feel at home.





## The Kitchen: Galatians

Then there are other books that make me feel like when I go into the kitchen, when there's serious work to be done. I feel like that about Galatians.

In Galatians we're really doing business with some gritty, tough stuff. But as we work at it, as we cut it up properly, as we cook it up and figure out what's going on, then there's some wonderful stuff which emerges for us to enjoy.



## The Dining Room: Romans

The dining room might be Romans.

This is where the table is spread, and it's a wonderful four-course meal, with the four great sections of Romans: 1–4, 5–8, 9–11, 12–16.

Paul has spread it out grandly, and says, *here is the vision*. This is the saving plan of God: Adam, Abraham, Moses, the Messiah, the Holy Spirit, the new creation. You can't get better than that.





## A Room with a View: Revelation and the Gospel According to John

There's something else I want in a house: a view. A wide, sweeping view, so that I can not only enjoy being in the house, but see outside it as well. And there are two books which particularly do that for me.

One is the Revelation of John, where suddenly at the end of the Bible, you have this command to lift up your eyes and see from the end to the beginning. And it's all kind of lurid imagery, picture language, and symbols—all coming together in ways that it's actually hard to rationalize about. But that's the point.

When you're looking at the view, you're not necessarily wanting to rationalize what every single thing in the view is doing. You're saying, "Wow, just look at the sweep of the divine purposes from the beginning to the end." It's glorious.

But at the heart of the New Testament is another book which does this for me even more.





The Gospel of John begins with that amazing opening: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh, and set up his tent in our midst” (that’s what the Greek word means), “and we gazed upon his glory.”

This pulls in that great Old Testament theme, that one day God would come back in His glory, and would reveal himself, like He had done in the Temple beforehand.

And so John spreads out this vision before us that in Jesus the living God has come back and revealed His glory. But it isn’t glory as in a blaze of light, a flash of lightning that just scares everybody, because the glory, for John, is revealed fully and finally on the cross. And Jesus goes to the cross in order to unveil the glory of God, so that we can not only gaze upon it, but actually profit from it, and find it to be the very center of history—the very center of our lives, the center of the world.

So as I read John, I find myself forced to look on a much bigger scope and scale—particularly because I’ve spent a lot of my life studying Paul. And I find again and again, yes, the details matter, but here is this huge sprawling narrative about glory, about love, about the gospel, about Jesus.

At the end of John, there’s that wonderful line—when Peter is there on the shore with Jesus, and John is following them—in which Peter says, “Lord, what about him? What’s he going to do?” Jesus says those words, which seem to me to sum up the whole thing:

“If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me.”

You have this whole sweep of glory—that’s the great view. And then the very personal command, “You, follow me.”



Want to hear N. T. Wright unpack the New Testament in detail? Check out *The New Testament in Its World* by N. T. Wright and Michael F. Bird. The book will help you think like the first Christians, see the New Testament spring to life, and unlock more insight for life and mission today. Get your copies at [NewTestamentWorld.com](http://NewTestamentWorld.com).

