



A Week in the Life of a Slave A Week in the Life Series

Available July 2, 2019 | \$16, 168 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-2483-0

John Byron (PhD, University of Durham) is professor of New Testament at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, Ohio. He previously served as a lecturer of New Testament and Greek at the University of Durham, as a teaching assistant at Jerusalem University College, and as a youth pastor at Fountain of Life Christian Fellowship in Middletown, Pennsylvania. Visit John's website and blog at thebiblicalworld.blogspot.com.

An Interview with John Byron

Why did you decide to contribute this particular book to a Week in the Life Series?

John Byron: I have long been fascinated by Paul's letter to Philemon. I first encountered it as part of a family devotional reading when I was a teenager. That encounter sparked interest in the letter and the topic of slavery in the New Testament. Philemon was the focus of my master's thesis and slavery in Paul's letters was the focus of my PhD dissertation. Since those days I have written books and articles on the topic. Yet, I could not escape my initial interest in Philemon. It captured my imagination, yet it also leaves so many unanswered questions. So when the chance to write a historical fiction presented itself with the IVP series, I knew that I needed to write on Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus.

What do you hope readers experience and understand from *A Week in the Life of a Slave*?

John: In the book I attempted to construct a fictional account based on historical information. And by doing so I wanted people to understand what slavery was really like in antiquity and to even highlight its grittiness. It's not unusual for people to imagine slavery in the biblical period in a more sanitized manner and even a bit romantic. Somehow we assume that Philemon's conversion to Christ suddenly changed the way he treated his slaves. But as we can see from hints in the letter and what we know about human nature, people do not always embrace change and/or adapt quickly. So I wanted to give readers a peek at what it might have been like for early church members to encounter believing slaves among their numbers and highlight the challenges that would have arisen.

What is unique about this particular Week in the Life book?

John:

- It brings a substantial amount of information about slavery in the first century in contact with Paul's letter to Philemon.
- It helps readers think about slavery from the perspective of the slave.
- It helps readers appreciate the real-world challenges early Christians faced.



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“There’s no one better to take us into the daily plight and experiences of a first-century Roman slave than John Byron, who has distinguished himself as a specialist in this area through two important academic books and several articles. Here he blends expertise and imagination together in a winsome invitation into the lives of Paul, Philemon, and, most importantly, Onesimus, the slave whose coming to faith challenged Philemon to live up to his own.”

David A. deSilva, author of *Day of Atonement: A Novel of the Maccabean Revolt*

Author of A Week in the Life of a Slave

John Byron (PhD, University of Durham) is professor of New Testament at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, Ohio. He previously served as a lecturer of New Testament and Greek at the University of Durham, as a teaching assistant at Jerusalem University College, and as a youth pastor at Fountain of Life Christian Fellowship in Middletown, Pennsylvania.

Desiring to serve both the church and the academy, he enjoys teaching at churches and seminars and frequently travels around the world to teach and research. He participates in Ashland Theological Seminary’s Tel-Gezer project, which allows groups to tour Israel and excavate ancient sites. Byron’s research and writing interests include New Testament and Christian origins, the Pauline epistles, history and literature of early Judaism, rewritten Bible, slavery in antiquity, and archaeology and historical geography of Syro-Palestine.

His books include *1 and 2 Thessalonians (The Story of God Bible Commentary)*, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry*, *Recent Research on Paul and Slavery*, and *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism & Pauline Christianity*. Byron’s research has been recognized with several honors and widely published in academic journals. He has served the Eastern Great Lakes region of the Society of Biblical Literature in many roles, including vice president, president, executive secretary, and chair of the noncanonical Jewish and Christian writing section. He was also elected to membership in the Studiorium Novi Testamenti Societas in 2012.

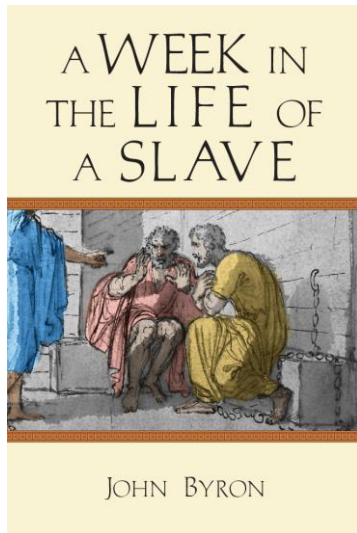


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DETAILS



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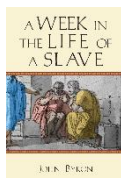
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A Week in the Life Series from IVP

Ever wanted a first-century view of the world of the Gospels? The volumes in A Week in the Life Series capture a view of Jesus' world from the outer framework looking in. Splashed with informative sidebars and images, it is entertaining historical fiction.

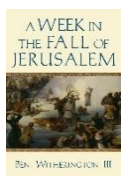
In these imaginative and absorbing narratives, New Testament scholars lead us behind the veil of centuries to see and experience the historical and social realities of this important era. Allowing the light of what we know to conjure possible events, these books are a fun and informative journey into the wrinkles and folds of lost stories.

In addition to the new release, *A Week in the Life of a Slave*, titles in A Week in the Life Series include:



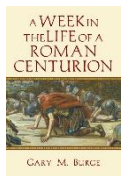
A Week in the Life of Rome by James L. Papandrea, February 19, 2019, 223 pages, \$16, 978-0-8308-2482-3

Illuminated with images and explanatory sidebars, we are invited into the daily struggles of the church at Rome just a few years before Paul wrote his famous epistle to them.



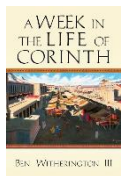
A Week in the Fall of Jerusalem by Ben Witherington III, August 22, 2017, 160 pages, \$17, 978-0-8308-5173-7

It's AD 70, and Jerusalem is falling to the Romans, its temple being destroyed. As Jews and Christians try to escape the city, we travel with some of them through an imagined week of flight and faith. In this imaginative and entertaining narrative, Ben Witherington leads us behind the veil of centuries to experience the historical and social realities of this epochal event.



A Week in the Life of a Roman Centurion by Gary M. Burge, April 6, 2015, 192 pages, \$20, 978-0-8308-2462-5

In this fast-paced, fictional account, we follow Appius, a Roman centurion, and Tullus, his Jewish slave, from battles to the gladiator arena and finally to the village of Capernaum where they encounter a Jewish prophet from Nazareth.



A Week in the Life of Corinth by Ben Witherington III, March 30, 2012, 159 pages, \$18, 978-0-8308-3962-9

In this work of historical fiction, Ben Witherington III provides a one-of-a-kind window into the social and cultural context of Paul's ministry.



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