

Though the first century A.D. saw the striking rise and expansion of Christianity throughout the vast Roman Empire, ancient historians have shown that an even stronger imperial cult spread far more rapidly at the same time. How did the early Jesus-followers cope with the all-pervasive culture of emperor worship?

This authoritative study by Bruce Winter explores the varied responses of first-century Christians to imperial requirements to render divine honours to the Caesars. Winter first examines the significant primary evidence of emperor worship, particularly analysing numerous inscriptions in public places and temples that attributed divine titles to the emperors, and he then looks at specific New Testament evidence in light of his findings.

"This volume presents Winter's careful re-evaluation of the extraordinarily rapid spread of social pressure among both Gentiles and Jews, across the first-century Greek East, publicly to honour living Roman emperors as divine beings. His geographically and chronologically focused approach especially reveals a diverse range of responses to this phenomenon both among the Jews and among the first Christians whose primary allegiance was to Jesus as Messiah. By analysing the primary, non-literary sources and building on the scholarship of other ancient historians, this study advances the field in particular and important ways."

— **Andrew D. Clarke**
University of Aberdeen

"Takes account of much important new research on emperor worship and will be required reading for ancient historians as well as for students of the New Testament."

— **Stephen Mitchell**
University of Exeter

BRUCE W. WINTER is the former warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge, and a respected authority on the historical background to the New Testament. His previous books include *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* and *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*.