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The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts

David J. Downs

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The monetary fund that the apostle Paul organized among his Gentile congregations for the Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem was clearly an important endeavor to Paul; discussion of it occupies several prominent passages in his letters. In this book David Downs carefully investigates that offering from historical, sociocultural, and theological standpoints.

Downs first pieces together a chronological account of Paul’s fund-raising efforts on behalf of the Jerusalem church, based primarily on information from the Pauline epistles. He then examines the sociocultural context of the collection, including gift-giving practices in the ancient Mediterranean world relating to benefaction and care for the poor. Finally, Downs explores how Paul framed this contribution rhetorically as a religious offering consecrated to God.

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