

Preface

Romans is well-served with strong academic commentaries, but sparser on the end of concise, academically informed commentaries for a general audience. I hope that this brief commentary will contribute to that niche. I trust that readers will recognize that I could not cover every point in a commentary this size. I have covered what I could, but retain research notes to produce a much larger commentary on Romans if time permits. I am grateful to my co-editor for allowing me more space than some shorter volumes in the series, so that I did not need to end my comments, like some early manuscripts of Romans, with chapter 14 (or at least to omit the cover).

I have included only a fraction of my research documentation in the notes for interested readers to follow up, endeavouring at the same time to avoid distracting readers who choose such a volume for its conciseness.¹ Less technical readers should not feel intimidated by the footnotes, but should simply feel free to ignore them. Use of footnotes allowed me to keep the main text more readable, focused on the points that seemed most central to Paul's case.

To keep the series balanced, the editors' first two choices for a Romans commentator offered perspectives and backgrounds different from mine; I have offered mine here only because our first choices' other commitments precluded their participation. I am grateful to E. P. Sanders for conversation in the fall of 2008 about my understanding of the rhetoric of Paul's argument, and editorial feedback from my Palmer colleague Julia Pizzuto-Pomaco regarding Romans 16. Thanks to Chris Spinks and Heather Carraher at Wipf and Stock. Special thanks go to Michael Bird, my co-editor for the series, hence the only objective editor for this volume. Michael is the series' original designer, but having invited my participation, negotiated very flexibly both with respect to the series as a whole and with regard to my own volume (while reminding me of the series constraints where necessary).

1. Because I treated the background for some topics in Romans in greater detail in other works, I refer readers there at appropriate points to conserve space here. Nevertheless, readers will find many of my primary references new to Romans research.