



## Romans: A Social Identity Commentary

William S. Campbell

"Campbell brings a career of uncommon insight and careful investigation to this splendid commentary, the work of a patient and intrepid scholar. Close attention to Paul's argumentation allows us to see the fraught cultural and political context into which the apostle sought to intervene—a situation in which presumption and prejudice threatened to derail the Christ movement almost from the start. This is at once an indispensable historical and theological resource." - Rev Dr Neil Elliott, USA

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William S. Campbell provides a comprehensive commentary on Paul's most challenging letter. In conversation with reception history and previous scholarship, he emphasizes the contextuality of Romans as a letter to Rome, using social identity theory combined with historical, literary and theological perspectives to arrive at a coherent reading of the entire letter. Because Paul has never visited Rome and is not the founder of the Christ-movement there, Campbell argues that his guidance and teaching are formulated more cautiously than in his other letters. Yet the long list of people who had previous links with him and his mission to the 'gentiles' demonstrates that Paul is well-informed about the situation in Rome and addresses issues that have arisen.

With Christ the Messianic Time is beginning, but there was some lack of clarity in Rome about the implications of this for Jews and gentiles. Rather than *ethne* in Christ replacing Israel, as some in Rome possibly concluded, Campbell stresses that Paul affirms the irrevocable calling of Israel, and that simultaneously the identity of *ethne* in Christ as also called alongside the people Israel; thus, the integrity of the identity of both is affirmed as indispensable for God's purpose now revealed in Christ. Campbell fully demonstrates how Paul in Romans achieves this by the social and theological intertwining of the message of the gospel.

**William S. Campbell** is presently Senior Research Fellow at the Abraham Geiger College, University of Potsdam, Germany, and was formerly Reader in Biblical Studies at the University of Trinity Saint David, UK.

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