



Romans: A Social Identity Commentary

William S. Campbell

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Paperback | 480 pp | June 2024 | 9780567709967 | £34.99 £27.99

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 never visited Rome and was not the founder of the Christ-movement there, Campbell argues that his guidance and teaching were 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 was well-informed about the situation in Rome and addressed issues that had arisen.

With Christ the Messianic Time began, 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 affirmed the irrevocable calling of Israel, and that simultaneously the identity of ethne in Christ was also called alongside the people of Israel; thus, the integrity of the identity of both was affirmed as indispensable for God's purpose now revealed in Christ. Campbell fully demonstrates how Paul in Romans achieved 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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