

**COVENANT RENEWAL AND THE
CONSECRATION OF THE GENTILES
IN ROMANS**

Volume 161

In his letter to the Romans, Paul describes the community in Rome as ‘holy ones’. This study considers Paul’s language in relation to the Old Testament, particularly accounts of the events at Mount Sinai that established the nation of Israel and consecrated its people as God’s holy people. Sarah Whittle illustrates how Paul reworks citations from Deuteronomy, Hosea and Isaiah to incorporate the Gentiles into Israel’s covenant-renewal texts. Analysing key passages, she further ties the covenant-making narrative to themes of sacrificed bodies and moral transformation, fulfilment of the Torah, the promises of the fathers and Paul’s priestly ministry. This volume argues that the latter has a climactic function in Paul’s letter, overseeing the offering of the Gentiles, who are ‘made holy by the holy spirit’. This study will be of interest to scholars of New Testament studies, Pauline theology and early Christianity.

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Sarah Whittle

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OF THE GENTILES IN ROMANS

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PREFACE

This book is a revision of my doctoral thesis, written at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, and submitted to the University of Manchester in 2011. It investigates the influence of Scripture's covenant-making and covenant-renewal narrative on Paul's letter to the Romans, arguing that his use of οἱ ἄγιοι to describe the people of God, now including the Gentiles, is a result of his reflections on the covenant-making event at the mountain, the literary crux of Israel's constitution and consecration as God's holy people.

Having demonstrated how Paul's Scripture citations from Deuteronomy, Hosea and Isaiah in chapters 9–11 of Romans function to incorporate the Gentiles into Israel's covenant-renewal texts, the study will go on to consider selected passages from 12–15 to explore how closely connected this covenant-making narrative might be to the themes of sacrificed bodies and the moral transformation, fulfilling Torah, the promises to the fathers, Paul's priestly ministry and the offering of the Gentiles. The conclusion is that events at the mountain, mediated through Scripture, shape Paul's description of the community in Rome, as this holy people is constituted and consecrated on the basis of God's mercy, in Christ, to all.

I am grateful to my research supervisor, Dr Kent Brower, and Mrs Francine Brower. I was a mature undergraduate student encountering theological education for the first time, and Kent encouraged my interest in biblical studies and teaching and learning; he has cared for and challenged me in just the right amounts and at the right times. Then there was the wonderful Brower hospitality, which has sustained the research activity of so many of us through the years. My second supervisor, Dr Peter Oakes, has always been ready with a rigorous response to my work and I have benefited from his expertise since he was my tutor at the University of Manchester. My examiners, Dr Dwight Swanson and Professor Steve Moyise, have been influential in the development of my

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own ideas in this study, and I appreciate their feedback and ongoing interest.

Research life has focused around the University of Manchester's Ehrhardt seminar, led by Professor George Brooke. As a weekly gathering for biblical studies papers, collegial debate and friendship, it continues to be a great resource. Professor Brooke's Jewish literature class played a large part in my fascination with Scripture, and I am grateful for his continued warm support. This research was carried out at Nazarene Theological College, where I now have a faculty position. It is a real joy and privilege to work in a community dedicated to research and learning and teaching in the context of a life of worship and formation. And I could not wish for a better Academic Dean than Dr Peter Rae. It is a special place, which has shaped me greatly.

Professor N. T. Wright's long-awaited *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* emerged late in the production of this book. I have not engaged with his latest offering here but am confident there will be opportunity to do so in the future, and I look forward to that. His influence will be apparent throughout the study. Professor Wright has been responsive and encouraging in communication and was kind enough to read and comment on aspects of this research. I am grateful to the series editors who oversaw the process of the acceptance of the book, both Professor John Court and Professor Paul Trebilco. Laura Morris of Cambridge University Press has always been helpful and delightful in communication, as has Alexandra Poreda. Michaila Roberts and Sam Taylor worked hard at various stages of the preparation of the typescript – the very best kind of friends. All of this is testimony to the grace of God, for which I am deeply grateful.