

Preface

The debate about Paul and apocalyptic has experienced significant growth spurts in recent scholarship. One needs only to glance through the major Pauline theologies that have appeared in the past couple of decades to observe that so-called apocalyptic readings are not only in vogue, but that wrestling with the questions and themes raised by such readings (e.g., cosmology, eschatology, epistemology, agency) has become mandatory for any responsible treatment of Paul's worldview. It is equally apparent, however, that not all apocalyptic readings have adequately conversed with one another. This volume is an attempt to facilitate such a discussion between the major perspectives on Paul and apocalyptic, as well as to plot ways forward. The volume's contributors represent the two primary approaches on Paul's apocalyptic imagination, and our hope as editors is that the conversation will advance precisely because these different viewpoints have been placed alongside of and in conversation with one another.

Several of the chapters in this book were presented during a special session of the same name at the 2014 Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in San Diego. We thank the authors for their contributions both to that event and to this volume. We really could not have asked for a better team—their enthusiasm for the project was evident from the start, and we are grateful to each contributor for carving out time in their busy schedule to participate in this stimulating dialogue. We especially wish to thank John Barclay, who provided invaluable guidance at the initial planning stages. Thanks

are also due to Neil Elliott and the Fortress Press team for accepting the volume and seeing it through to publication. We are indebted as well to Joshua Bremerman for compiling the indexes. As always, we are enormously grateful to our respective families and academic institutions—without their unending support, this book would not have been possible.

We wish also to acknowledge our debt to two important scholars who, though not directly involved in the book, have shaped many of the ideas that appear between its pages. First, we wish to recognize John J. Collins, whose work on Jewish apocalyptic literature has been hugely formative for the framework of many who engage in apocalyptic readings of the NT in general—and of Paul, in particular. Astute readers will detect in the title of this book an allusion to Collins's seminal volume *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (Crossroads, 1987; 2nd ed., Eerdmans, 1998). Although he himself is not a Pauline scholar, Collins's impact on the current debate about Paul cannot be exaggerated, and our choice of title is a reflection of the widespread influence of his scholarship.

Finally, we (the editors on behalf of all the contributors) wish to acknowledge and give thanks to Richard B. Hays for his many significant publications on Paul (apocalyptic and otherwise) throughout his illustrious career. Hays's work has already influenced and inspired an entire generation of scholars, including all who have contributed to this particular project. Many of the important advances that have occurred in modern Pauline research would not have been possible without the penetrating and measured reflections of this distinguished scholar. It is, therefore, to him that we warmly dedicate this volume.

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Fall 2015