

Preface

In 2013 I completed an eight hundred-page commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians.¹ While researching and preparing those pages, I kept encountering the enthusiasm of scholars for various narratives in the Hebrew Bible that Paul was drawing on or assuming as he wrote. For any given narrative, there is a long list of scholarly endorsers. The enthusiasm is not limited to the Hebrew Bible, although the majority of the narratives derive from its pages. I had also been serving as an invited member of the Paul and Scripture Seminar of the Society of Biblical Literature, which concluded its work in 2011. The first published volume from those proceedings included some of the initial discussions of these narrational patterns, patterns that beg further examination, especially in terms of methodology.² Some scholars have even claimed that the apostle Paul is incomprehensible apart from the narrational logic that forms the substructure of his theology.³ Unspoken assumptions that would have been clear in a first-century context have since been lost in the intervening millennia. This volume attends to the often-unspoken biblical narratives supposed in Paul's letters and theology, but especially as they impact his letter to the Galatians. These

1. A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014).

2. See, e.g., Stanley E. Porter, "Allusions and Echoes," in *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, SBLSymS 50, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 29–40.

3. See esp. in this regard N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

“grand thematic narratives” have never been the object of sustained, critical scholarly examination.

Any author is indebted to those who went before. With the recent passing of a generation of esteemed teachers and mentors, Paul J. Achtemeier and J. Louis Martyn, as well as a former advisor, Abraham J. Malherbe, the world of Pauline scholarship has been emptied of some of its most beloved voices. I am grateful to Prof. Christopher Stanley of St. Bonaventure University for his review of the manuscript, especially the first chapter. My mother, Rebecca Das, and my wife, Susan, both read over the manuscript and offered suggestions. I am appreciative of the permission of Concordia Publishing House to develop and expand on some of the kernels of thought already lurking in the commentary. Ultimately, I am thankful for the warm reception and interest of Neil Elliott and Fortress Press and their willingness to see the scholarly discussion of Paul’s grand thematic narratives advanced.