For these reasons, this volume is especially valuable: it provides readers not just with interesting exegetical tidbits, but it introduces them to a way of seeing Scripture and the world through the eyes of some of the most significant voices of the premodern church. At a time when early Christian interpretation is receiving increasing scholarly attention and various new critical and theological approaches to the interpretation of Scripture are seemingly proposed daily, this series stands out among the crowd as an invaluable exercise in *ressourcement*: it reminds us that the tradition to which those early Christians belong is indeed still living, ready to be engaged with and entered into. Therefore, in the process of shedding light on the Gospel of John, this volume serves as a worthy guide for the scholar and interested layperson alike into the very heart of the Christian tradition.

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Romans, Frank Thielman, Zondervan, 2018 (ISBN 978-0-310-10403-2), 814 pp., hb $59.99

Frank Thielman, Presbyterian professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama, makes a noteworthy contribution to New Testament studies with his commentary *Romans*, published in the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary of New Testament series. Thielman is certainly qualified to write a commentary on this 'daunting' epistle (p. 13), having previously published numerous texts, including his *Theology on the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Zondervan, 2005) and *Ephesians* (Baker Academic, 2010).

Thielman begins this commentary with a twenty-two-page introduction to the background of Romans (pp. 21–43). This introduction provides a helpful overview of the city of Rome in the mid-first century CE, discusses the setting of Rome in Paul's ministry, explains Paul's purpose in writing Romans, and offers an in-depth analysis of the length of Romans (i.e., Rom 14–16). After stating that 'by the mid second century Romans was circulating in two forms: the sixteen-chapter form that appears in modern editions and a fourteen-chapter form …' (p. 39), Thielman weighs the textual evidence. He concludes that Rom that originally ended in 16:27, was shorted by two chapters and slightly edited to universalize the text (p. 41). This helpful analysis of an important text-critical matter is one of the few instances in his commentary that Thielman discusses

text-critical issues (yet see his text-critical discussion of Rom 5:1 on pp. 264–265). More regular analyses of text-critical problems throughout the commentary would have strengthened *Romans*.

Thielman offers several additional in-depth analyses in his commentary, consisting of 'Righteousness Language in Romans' (pp. 84–92), 'Paul's Understanding of the "Conscience"' (p. 139), 'The Works of the Law' (pp. 190–195), 'Jesus as the Biblical "Mercy Seat"' (pp. 209–211), 'Adam's Sin in Early Jewish Thought' (pp. 284–285), 'The Identity of the "I" in Romans 7:7–25' (pp. 365–370), 'Are "Height" and "Depth" in 8:39 Astrological Terms?' (pp. 428–431), 'The Origin of Paul's Understanding of Israel's Stumbling' (pp. 482–486), 'The Origins of Paul's Understanding of Israel's Stumbling' (pp. 482–486), 'Paul's Use of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Romans 10:6–8' (pp. 493–496), 'Are 'Be Conformed' and 'Be Transformed' Synonymous?' (pp. 569–572), 'Who Are the "Strong" and "Weak" in Romans 14:1–15:13?' (pp. 627–630), 'Paul's Ministry to the Poor among the Saints in Jerusalem' (pp. 691–694), and 'Prisca, Aquila, and the Church in Their Roman House' (pp. 713–716). These in-depth analyses constitute important themes that Thielman rightly considers essential for understanding the thought and flow of Romans. The introduction is followed by a selected bibliography (pp. 45–52), followed by 33 chapters (pp. 53–750) of commentary on Romans. The commentary concludes with a section entitled 'Theology of Romans' (pp. 751–764), which Thielman classifies as follows: 'Romans is about who God is and how his character explains the relationship he has with the universe he created and especially the human created within it' (p. 751).

In accordance with purpose of Zondervan Exegetical Commentary of New Testament series, Thielman structures *Romans* into seven reoccurring sections: (1) Literary Context, where he discusses how the specific passage 'functions in the broader literary context of the book' (p. 10); (2) Main Idea, 'a one-sentence or two-sentence statement of the big idea or central thrust of the passage' (p. 10); (3) Translation and Graphical Layout, 'to help the reader visualize, and thus better understand, the flow of thought' (p. 10); (4) Structure, a description of the flow of thought (p. 11); (5) Exegetical Outline, primarily for teachers and preachers (p. 11); (6) Explanation of the Text, where all Greek words are translated into English and commented on (p. 11); and (7) Theology in Application, where Thielman reflects on the theological contribution of the passage at hand (p. 12). This commentary's freedom from most typos and errors is commendable (yet there should be an 'an' after '… (1:26) and' on p. 110; Hubner on p. 810 should be Hübner). The footnoting problems that Anthony Rivera identified on pp. 497–762 of this text in his *RRT* review seem to have been corrected.

Throughout this commentary, Thielman makes several conclusions that call for further observation. According to the author, 'Paul implies, then, that his readers are *predominantly* gentile' (p. 64), which suggests

that some of readers of Romans were Jews who placed their faith in Jesus. When Thielman makes this statement, he does not cite the increasing number of scholars who think that Paul composed Romans solely for Gentile readers who believe in Jesus (cf. e.g. Stanley Stowers, *Rereading Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* [Yale University Press, 1994], pp. 227–50; Lloyd Gaston, *Paul and the Torah* [University of British Columbia Press, 1987]; John Gager, *Reinventing Paul* [Oxford University Press, 2000]; Jennifer Wright Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* [Colombia University Press, 2005]. At times throughout Romans, Thielman proposes that Paul spoke to an imaginary, unbelieving *Jewish* dialogue partner. This, claims Thielman, is the case in 1:18–32 (pp. 98, 107, 108). This Jewish interlocutor continues speaking in 2:1–29 (p. 118). Thielman refers in a single footnote to four commentators who note that Paul does not call his fictional debating partner a Jew until 2:17 (p. 119). Nevertheless, Thielman finds the evidence that Paul constructs a Jewish debating partner in 2:1–16 'too weighty' to make a more general reading convincing (p. 119). Thielman could have strengthened his argument in this section by interacting with the thesis of Stowers, who devotes Chapter 3 of his book *Rereading Romans* (pp. 83–125) to explain why the discussion partner in Rom 1:18–2:16 is an imaginary Gentile. By overlooking Stowers's thesis about the imaginary Gentile speaker in 1:18–2:16, Thielman perhaps misses important details related to Paul's intended audience.

Thielman's translation of πιθυμία in Rom 6:12 functions as a possible example of his method of translation. Thielman translates Rom 6:12 as follows: 'Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body with the result that you obey its *lusts* (τας πιθυμίαις)'. Although Thielman translated τας πιθυμίαις as 'lusts' in 6:12, in his explanation of this verse, he refers to the lexeme respectively as 'the sinful impulses of their (believers') bodies' (p. 310), 'impulses' (p. 310), 'lusts' (p. 310), 'cravings' (p. 310), 'illicit cravings' (p. 311), and 'desires' (p. 310). Thielman probably renders the lexeme πιθυμία in a variety of ways in order to vary his speech and engage the reader – a noble goal. Nevertheless, I have several hesitations about this endeavor. Perhaps the English translations 'lusts', 'impulses', 'cravings', and 'desires' carry slightly different nuances. For example, 'lust' might be associated with sexual overtones, which may not be the case with 'impulses'. None of Thielman's translations of πιθυμία necessarily capture Paul's use of the lexeme in 6:12. Further analysis of πιθυμία in the New Testament and in Roman imperial texts might illumine πιθυμία in 6:12.

Commenting on Paul's use of the 'I' in Rom 7:7–25, Thielman suggests there is 'an autobiographical element to this passage', extending to Paul's readers what he knows to be true about himself (p. 349). Thielman cites Stowers, who demonstrates that in 7:7–8:2 Paul makes use of a 'speech-in-character' (προσωποποιία) (p. 369; cf. Stowers, *Rereading Romans*, p. 16). Unlike Stowers, however, Thielman concludes that Paul used this

speech-in-character to address all humanity and as a 'fair representation of his own pre-Christian struggle' (p. 369), as opposed to Gentiles who try to keep the law (Stowers, *Rereading Romans*, p. 273). As a result, Thielman concludes, '[I]t is best to understand Romans 7:13–25 as a description of the plight from which God's Spirit has freed, *or is freeing*, the believer. *It is not likely to* be a description of normal Christian experience' (p. 370, emphasis added). Thielman, like most New Testament scholars, makes use of Stowers' thesis on the speech-in-character in Rom 7:7–8:2. Stowers, however, suggests that this speech-in-character characterizes 'not every human or every human who is not a Christian but rather *gentiles*, especially those who try to live by works of the law' (*Rereading Romans*, p. 273, emphasis added). Thielman thus employs Stowers' thesis regarding a speech-in-character in 7:7–8:2 to argue the exact opposite of Stowers: According to Thielman, Paul depicts, not the Gentiles inability to keep the law (Stowers) but his own as well as other Christians struggle to obey the law (p. 364).

In the introduction to the series, Clinton E. Arnold explains that readers who 'want to benefit from the results of the latest and best scholarly studies' will benefit from Thielman's commentary on Romans. In light of this, I was disappointed not to see a single reference to Michael Wolter's recent and insightful two volume commentary *Der Brief an die Römer* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014/2018). In Thielman's bibliography that consists of six pages, he refers to twelve German authors and makes use of them far less frequently than his English sources. Eckhard J. Schnabel offers a good example, whose works Thielman cites eight times (p. 812; cf. pp. 35, 36, 50, 210, 523, 685, 689, 690). The reader must turn to the bibliography on p. 50 to find out precisely which texts of Schnabel Thielman interacts with. The reader discovers on p. 50 that Schnabel published three texts, namely, *Der Brief and die Römer: Kapitel 1–5* (Brockhaus, 2015), *Der Brief and die Römer: Kapitel 6–16* (Brockhaus, 2016), and *Paul and the Early Church* (IVP, 2004). After looking up the eight references to Schnabel in Thielman's commentary, I discovered that Thielman cited Schnabel's 2015 commentary *Römer: Kapitel 1–5* twice (pp. 36, 210). The other references correspond either to Schnabel's *Paul and the Early Church* (pp. 35, 685, 689), to an essay by Schnabel that was not cited in the bibliography ('The Identity and the Mission of Believers in Jesus the Messiah', *Mishkan: A Forum on the Gospel and the Jewish People* 48 [2006]: pp. 42–47), to a page that contains no references to Schnabel's texts (p. 690), or to the bibliography listing Schnabel's three texts (p. 50). Although Thielman listed Schnabel's most recent commentary (*Römer: Kapitel 6–16*) in his bibliography, he does not refer to this text a single time. This is typical of Thielman's use of German literature: He either overlooks recent German texts or vrefers to it in passing, contrary to the stated purpose of the editor of the series. While references to Schnabel in the Author Index comprise two lines, consisting of eight references, references to Dunn's works

comprise twenty-one lines, references to Jewett's works comprise twenty four lines, references to Moo's commentary comprise sixteen lines. Thielman, therefore, seems to interact with recent English literature on Romans but to overlook recent German publications on this important text. Additionally, in the Author Index, Stowers is given two lines totaling five references. By broadening the scope of his interaction, Thielman could have provided a more balanced discussion of Romans.

As Thielman's commentary explains in the series introduction, it was composed for readers seeking 'expert guidance from solid evangelical scholars' (p. 9). To be sure, students should read commentaries by scholars holding various theological convictions, including those written by evangelical scholars. Thielman, however, perhaps presumes that some of his readers will not question his more evangelical statements. In his preface, for example, Thielman thanks fellow members of the small prayer and Bible-study group for helping him spiritually and for praying for his work on the commentary (p. 13). Also in his preface, Thielman hopes that his commentary will open 'the door to Romans and then quickly stepping out of the way so that others might 'enter' the letter itself, sit at the feet of the apostle Paul, and in the apostle's voice, hear the voice of God' (p. 14). This is quite an ambitious hope. Thielman has a very high view of Scripture, what he calls both the Old Testament (p. 68) as well as the New Testament, which includes the writings of Paul. Commenting on Rom 1:17, Thielman states, 'The Scripture to which he refers is Habakkuk 2:4, also quoted in Galatians 3:11 … In neither place does Paul follow exactly the text of any known form of Habakkuk 2:4. Every other independent witness to this text from antiquity has a personal pronoun in the phrase … Paul, then, must have known the text in a form that had a personal pronoun … He clearly felt free to modify Habakkuk 2:4 to some extent to bring out the point he wanted to make' (pp. 83–84). The reader is prompted to ask if Paul held the same view of 'Scripture' as Thielman. On p. 67 without a footnote Thielman says, 'As the written witness of the apostle, it [Romans] is Scripture, and it serves as a touchstone for claims about what Christians should believe'. Without providing footnotes, Thielman claims that disputed texts in the New Testament were written by the authors attributed to them. For example, he claims on p. 621 (without citing a reference) that 1 Tim. and Titus were composed by Paul. This is also the case on pp. 732–733, where Thielman thinks that Eph; Col, 2 Thess; 1–2 Tim; and Titus were composed by Paul. Despite making this claim, Thielman cites only his own commentary on Eph as evidence that this letter is Pauline (p. 733). On p. 748 Thielman remarks, 'The apostle John wrote three letters to Christian assemblies within his own sphere of responsibility in the wake of the kind of disruption that Paul was trying to avoid in Rome'. Yet again, there is no reference to support this claim. Thielman continues on p. 749: 'The same pattern appears in

Jude and 2 Peter …' (pp. 312–313 for Thielman's statement that the authorship of Jude, James, Matthew, and John should not be questioned). There are well-known New Testament scholars who support the authorship of many of Thielman's claims, yet Thielman refers to none of them except his own commentary on Ephesians. Finally, although a minor point, Thielman does not explain his decision to refer to dates in the modern era as AD, as opposed to CE. This was especially noteworthy in his introduction, where the first sentence contained 'AD' and the abbreviation appeared a total of four times on p. 21 (pp. 22, 29, 30, 35, 709). Thielman does explain his decision to refer to the Jewish Scriptures as the 'Old Testament' (p. 340); a clarification of his choice to use 'AD' would have been useful as well.

In summary, Thielman's commentary is a recent addition written from an evangelical perspective that interacts with the text of Romans and with recent English literature. Readers would do well to read Thielman's commentary mindful of other important literature related to the Romans. Two texts, mentioned above, will prove particularly helpful. Stowers (*Rereading Romans*) makes an important contribution by arguing (1) that Romans was written for a Gentile audience, and (2) that the speech-in-character in Rom 1:18–2:16 and 7:7–8:2 is made by a Gentile, rather than a Jew. For a recent German commentary not cited by Thielman, readers will find the commentary of Michael Wolter, *Der Brief an die Römer*, EKK, 2 vols (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014/2018) particularly insightful.

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Deep Medicine, Eric Topol, Basic Books, 2019 (ISBN 978-1541644649), xiii + 378 pp., hb $17.99

Medicine is facing deep transformations driven by innovators outside the traditional clinical and academic settings. Data science and machine learning can now collect information from all type of sources and identify relevant information about individual health and disease. The impact of deep machine learning or artificial intelligence (AI) will go far beyond the organization of information. AI creates an algorithmic patient built from unstructured clinical and nonclinical data. This technology is potentially able to predict individual risks of disease, response to environment, food and drugs and provides more information about our past and future than we are aware of. The relationship between patients and their