

Preface

This work began life within the context of my preaching and pastoral ministry at Evesham Baptist Church. The desire to communicate the Bible clearly and thoughtfully in a way that connected with the lives of the congregation gave rise to the research that forms this book, which is substantially the same as my PhD thesis submitted at the University of Wales, Trinity St. David, in 2012. During that time of pastoral ministry, my old friend Alan Pain initially encouraged me to “take seriously” the possibility of academic research. His friendship and encouragement over the last thirty years or so is much appreciated. My supervisors Kathy Ehrensperger and Bill Campbell at the School of Theology, Religious Studies, and Islamic Studies at the University of Wales, Trinity St. David, have been constant companions and encouragers throughout the process of research, writing, and submission. I am particularly indebted to Kathy for her encouragement to participate in academic conferences. I have immensely appreciated the debate, conversation, and encouragement of many friends and colleagues in the process of delivering papers at conferences in Rome, New Orleans, Louvain La Neuve, Winchester, Tartu, Bangor, Atlanta, London, Thessaloniki, San Francisco, Lampeter, and Amsterdam. I am grateful to the congregation of Evesham Baptist Church, of which I have been pastor for nearly eighteen years; they have demonstrated the spiritual fruit of kindness and generosity toward my family and me in abundance. This book is dedicated to my wife, Sarah, and to our children, Zoe and Isaac: your love, life, and laughter has kept me (relatively) sane.

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