



## Q & A



### **Resurrecting Justice** *Reading Romans for the Life of the World*

Available September 29, 2020 | \$26, 248 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5276-5

**Douglas Harink** (PhD, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology) is professor of theology and dean of the faculty of arts at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta. He is the author of *Paul Among the Postliberals* and *1 and 2 Peter* in the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. He is also the editor of *Paul, Philosophy, and the Theopolitical Vision: Critical Engagements with Agamben, Badiou, Žižek, and Others*.

## The Good News of Justice

### What led to your interest in studying the connection between Romans and justice?

**Douglas Harink:** Romans is an endlessly intriguing letter. At some point in my years of studying it, I began to realize that (among other things) Romans has a profound message about justice—a message that speaks directly and powerfully into contemporary Christian conversations about justice (specifically) and our political commitments (more generally), whether on the “right” (tough on crime) or the “left” (social justice) or the “center” and whether our hope for justice is placed in societal structures, judicial systems, or political processes. The “good news of justice” which Romans inserts into those conversations, cannot be co-opted by any “side” or party or system because it comes from the triune God; its name is Jesus Christ. What difference does that make in how we think, talk about, and practice justice? And therefore, what difference does that make in how we go about healing social and political divisions, nurturing fullness of life, and being God’s peace in the world?

### What is your main thesis in *Resurrecting Justice*?

**Harink:** Almost everyone who studies Romans believes its message is about “the righteousness of God.” That’s not simply wrong. But is that all? Paul did not have one Greek word that meant “righteousness” and another that meant “justice.” He had one Greek word, *dikaïosynē*, which could mean “righteousness” or “justice” or both. So why not *also* justice? Why have we narrowed this multidimensional word down to one meaning: righteousness? This book ventures into the thought that Paul is also saying a lot about *justice* in Romans. If so, what must we learn from him? Where does the good news of “the justice of God” lead us in thinking and practicing Christian witness in a politically divided, suffering, and warring world? This book invites readers to discern their own answers to those questions through a guided reading of Romans from beginning to end.

### Who did you have in mind as you were writing this book?

**Harink:** I have written and constructed *Resurrecting Justice* to appeal to a wide audience of Christians who want to think seriously about justice, using Romans as a critical guide. I would expect the typical reader to have some college education, but not necessarily a college degree. This book is not written primarily for professional Paul scholars or theologians but for *theologically, socially, politically engaged general readers*. That said, I do expect scholars will also read it, whether they are primarily interested in Paul and Romans or in themes of justice; they are likely to find much in the book that is surprising, intriguing, controversial, and worthy of further scholarly reflection.



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