



Reviews

REDEFINING FIRST CENTURY JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN IDENTITIES: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF ED PARISH SANDERS edited by Fabian E. Udoh, Susanah Heschel, Mark Chancey and Gregory Tatum, *University of Notre Dame Press*, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2008, pp. xxiv + 418, £49.50 hbk

Several generations of theological students will know E.P. Sanders as a name to be reckoned with. His paradigm-shifting book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977) initiated the so-called 'new perspective' on Paul whose shockwaves still reverberate around the world of Pauline studies. Oxford undergraduates of the 1980s were fed a rich and varied Sanders diet: his subsequent 1983 book *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, and his 1985 *Jesus and Judaism* were making a splash in Pauline and Jesus scholarship respectively. Some may even have had the privilege of hearing the lectures which anticipated his 1992 *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, a magnificent and hugely entertaining series which managed even to make heave-offerings sound interesting.

This three-fold interest in Paul, Jesus, and Judaism is reflected in the shape of this volume in his honour, the product of grateful students and respectful colleagues. The initial section reminds its readership of Sanders's achievements. It includes an assessment of his time at Duke by his colleague Moody Smith, and a fascinating autobiographical piece by Sanders himself, locating his *magna opera* in the context of his intellectual development, notably his growing love affair with rabbinic literature. It also contains an article by Jouette Bassler opening up themes of Jewish and Christian self-definition (a key theme of a series of volumes edited by Sanders in the early 1980s).

The remaining essays are subdivided according to the three areas to which Sanders has made such an abiding contribution: Judaism (Part 2), Jesus and the Gospels (Part 3), and Paul (Part 4). The Judaism section is particularly wide-ranging, reflecting the breadth and depth of Sanders's interests. Shaye Cohen demonstrates in his paper how Sanders's concept of 'common Judaism' is broadly supported by Greek and Latin Gentile writers of the period. Albert Baumgarten locates the crucifixion of Jesus within the context of attempts by the temple authorities to set limits on the actions of fellow Jews, while Cynthia Baker argues for the recognition of the limitations of our sources, and warns of the ethical implications of Jewish historiography in supporting or contesting regimes in the contemporary Middle East. The Mishnaic statement that 'All Israel have a portion in the world to come' is examined by Israel Yuval as a specific example of how the sages were compelled to respond to the creativity of early Christian exegesis. Martin Goodman's essay represents a robust demolition – building on Sanders – of the traditional portrait of the Sadducees as predominantly priestly, wealthy aristocrats who held authority in first-century Jerusalem, were closely allied to Rome, and who disappeared from the scene after 70. Like so much of Goodman's writing, this provocative article is well worth attention.

If Cohen's essay offers support for Sanders from classical authors, Eric Meyers draws upon material culture to find further evidence for 'common Judaism'. In particular, he examines archaeological evidence for burial practices, and the implications of faunal remains for Jewish dietary laws. This is taken further by Jürgen Zangenberg, who sides with Sanders's 'common Judaism' against the

alternative view of Hengel and Deines, namely that there were only sectarian manifestations of Judaism, and that the Pharisaic variety permeated popular Jewish culture.

Part 3 turns to Jesus and the Gospels, with the expected focus on Jesus's Jewish world. Seán Freyne, well known for his work on first century Galilee, makes a strong and nuanced case for the ongoing importance of the temple in the symbolic world of Galilean Jews, and therefore as the crucial backdrop for understanding Jesus's affirmation and critique of the institution. Peter Richardson draws upon primarily archaeological evidence to describe his understanding of a first century Jewish Galilee which avoids oversimplified generalisations, before offering a sketch which locates Jesus within this social setting. Adele Reinhartz revisits the evidence for challenging the claimed tensions between Judaism and Hellenism, preferring (with Sanders) a picture of Caiaphas as pragmatic politician rather than as a new Antiochus, confronting and ultimately crucifying Jesus the neo-Maccabean.

The remaining essays in this section engage more explicitly with gospel texts and chronologies. Paula Fredricksen describes her recent conversion to the Johannine chronology over that of the Synoptics (or at least the need to think with John as well as with Mark), and her reassessment of the historicity of the temple episode within the narrative of Christ's arrest and passion. An alternative account is provided by Stephen Hultgren, who attempts to meet Fredricksen's objections to maintaining a causal connection between the 'cleansing' of the temple and Jesus's death. John Meier's chapter revisits the question of Jesus and the sabbath. Importantly for historical study of this element of the tradition, he finds no pre-70 evidence that healing was considered a sabbath transgression, causing him to dispute the historicity of such sabbath-healing stories in the gospels.

If the Jesus section reflects the essentially historical concerns of Jesus and Judaism, Part 4 shifts the focus towards the intricacies of Pauline theology. Craig Hill reminds us of Sanders's explanation of what Paul found wrong with Judaism, and of alternative accounts found in post-Sanders scholars. Highlighting especially the Galatian crisis, Hill argues for a scenario whereby Paul's account emerged directly out of his Christian experience. Heikki Räisänen's contribution brings us up-to-date with scholarship on Paul and the Law since Sanders's *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*. Despite challenges and nuancing, he concludes that Sanders has been broadly vindicated in three areas: 1) Paul's effective break with Judaism; 2) inconsistency in his thought about the Law; 3) his 'backwards' thinking from solution (Christ) to plight (problem with the Law). Richard Hays revisits the conviction of Sanders that participation in Christ, rather than justification by faith, lies at the heart of Pauline theology. His contribution offers an advance on Sanders, setting out a plausible sketch of how 'participation in Christ' might be understood. If there is a criticism of Sanders here, it is for his underestimating the ecclesial dimension to Paul's soteriology. Stanley Stowers, in his essay on the same subject, accuses Hays of too quickly abandoning the framework of ancient cosmology and physics in his 'modernist' account. Stowers claims to show how Paul's participatory language might look very different if these are taken seriously. Finally John Barclay explores the relationship between divine grace and human cooperation, and how they relate to Sanders's central theme of participation in Christ, through an examination of five Pauline passages.

This is a fascinating collection of essays, testifying to the abiding respect and affection in which Ed Sanders is held, even by those who dissent from various aspects of his theses. It reveals not only the immense influence of his *magna opera*, but also the mileage still to be found in the many avenues these works opened up.

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