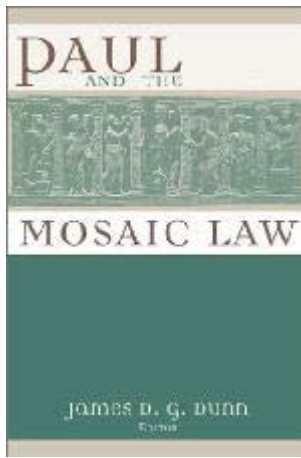


RBL 10/2002



**Dunn, James D. G., ed.**

***Paul and the Mosaic Law: The Third Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism, Durham, September, 1994***

Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001. Pp. xi + 363,  
Paperback, \$35.00, ISBN 0802844995.

Mark D Nanos  
Lees Summit, MO 64064

This collection of essays represents papers revised following their presentation and discussion at the prestigious 1994 Third Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism. Although originally published by Mohr Siebeck in 1996, this collection translates several German essays in the Mohr volume into English. Following a preface and introduction by James Dunn, the essays are as follows: “The Understanding of the Torah in the Judaism of Paul’s Day: A Sketch,” Hermann Lichtenberger; “The Attitude of Paul to the Law in the Unknown Years between Damascus and Antioch,” Martin Hengel; “Paul’s Reasoning In Galatians 2:11-21,” Jan Lambrecht; “Defining the Faithful Character of the Covenant Community: Galatians 2.15-21 and Beyond: A Response to Jan Lambrecht,” Bruce W. Longenecker; “The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ—Galatians 3.1-6.2,” Graham Stanton; “Letter and Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3,” Karl Kertelge; “The Law in Romans 2,” N. T. Wright; “Three Dramatic Roles: The Law in Romans 3-4,” Richard B. Hays; “The Adam-Christ Antithesis and the Law: Reflections on Romans 5:12-21,” Otfried Hofius; “Hermeneutics of Romans 7,” Hans Hübner; “Paul and the Law in Romans 9-11,” Stephen Westerholm; “Faith, Works and Election in Romans 9: A Response to Stephen Westerholm,” Heikki Räisänen; “Response to Heikki Räisänen, Stephen Westerholm; “Paul’s Jewish Background in View of His Law Teaching in 1 Cor 7,” Peter J. Tomson; “‘All Things to All People’: Paul and the Law in the Light of 1 Corinthians 9.19-23; “‘Do we undermine the Law?’: A Study of Romans 14.1-15.6,” John M. G. Barclay; “In Search of Common Ground,” James D. G. Dunn.

Anyone familiar with the topics and participants can anticipate deeply held and often oppositional positions to be articulated. And that is one of the strengths of this work. James Dunn’s final essay, “In Search of Common Ground,” provides a useful

forum for brief reflection on a few of these strengths as well as some of the weaknesses of the collection.

Dunn develops his comments around the themes of continuity and discontinuity, noting in particular that which arises between the testaments, Israel and the Church, and gospel and law. Many useful insights result. He observes that to define Paul's perspective on Torah it is necessary "to clarify the understanding of the Torah within Judaism at the time of Paul" (311). Dunn emphasizes that the eschatological tension of the already and the not-yet that emerges in Paul's thought "is not so very different from what we find in those prophets and writers who denounced superficial obedience and looked for obedience from the heart," and thus he questions whether "we do have to recognize a stronger line of continuity between the function of the law in OT and Second Temple Judaism and a continuing function for the law into the new age inaugurated by Christ" (333-34). Most participants expressed agreement with E. P. Sanders that Torah represents a way of life for those who were already defined as the people of Israel, not a way to become such people. And for most participants the question of justification is approached along the lines set down by Krister Stendahl, within the context of the inclusion of gentiles (sinners) among the people of God rather than as formulated by Luther, Bultmann, et al.

In addition, Dunn proposes that consensus does seem to be shared on the "common ground between Paul and his fellow Christian Jews with whom he was in dispute" (309). Coupled with several other statements of this nature, such as the perception that these Christian Jews opposed Paul's gospel (312), Dunn expresses a presupposition assumed to be largely if not entirely beyond debate: the dispute is an intra-mural one between "Pauline" and "Jewish" Christianity. He also claims that defining the issues in this way "cuts the nerve of much of the charge of anti-Judaism laid against Paul," since it moves the dispute away from one with non-Christian Jews (310). Perhaps those who participated share these perceptions, but are they beyond dispute—or rather, should they be? Although I deeply appreciate the intent expressed, I do not see the ideological payoff to which Dunn appeals; Jews who value Jewishness (continuity)—unlike this Paul—still constitute the problem in these formulations, even when the boundaries of discontinuity are moved within "Christian" space (cf. 316-17). What needs to be substantiated instead of assumed is first, whether these perceptions of the parameters of the group tensions represent those of the historical parties and texts being examined, and second, whether the anti-Jewishness traditionally attributed to Paul's voice has actually been overcome, or only re-targeted.

The discussions of Romans 7 and 9-11 demonstrate continued disagreement among the participants, even in the way the issues are posed. This reviewer finds promise in the lack of consensus here, perhaps an indication that new methodologies and insights are beginning to disrupt and threaten the conventional approaches of pre- and preliminary historical-critical times. These tears in the fabric of traditional Pauline theology should not be too quickly sewn; perhaps new answers will emerge, instead of simply new ways of reaching the same conclusions. Thus Dunn perceptively asks if it is "Paul's theology we wish to uncover," or "issues subsequent to Paul's writing," and thus whether the

search for new categories reveals an effort to “simply pull the threads of Paul’s thought into another pattern of our own designing?” (325). Any conclusions about Paul and the Mosaic Law should be evaluated accordingly.