

David J. Rudolph, *A Jew to the Jews*. Jewish Contours of Pauline Flexibility in I Corinthians 9:19-23 (WUNT II/304; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). Pp. 290 + XII. € 69,00. ISBN 978-3-16-149293-8

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*A Jew to the Jews* is an updated version of the Cambridge University dissertation which won the 2007 Franz Delitzsch Prize from the Freie Theologische Akademie. The author, David J. Rudolph, is the Rabbi of Tikvat Israel Messianic Synagogue in Richmond, Virginia, and the New Testament teacher at the MJTI School of Jewish Studies. He published numerous books and articles on the New Testament, Second Temple Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations. *A Jew to the Jews* is contained of six chapters, the first and the last being respectively “Introduction” and “Conclusion and Implications”. The four remaining chapters, which form the core of the publication, are divided into two parts: Part I (Chapters 2-4) entitled “A Reassessment of the Traditional View of 1 Cor 9:19-23” and Part II (Chapter 5) entitled “A Proposed Interpretation of 1 Cor 9:19-23”. The publication is provided with rich Bibliography, comprising mostly German and English speaking scholars, with Index of Ancient Sources, Index of Modern Scholars, and Subject Index.

In Chapter 1, Rudolph presents intertextual, contextual and textual arguments of the scholars arguing that the writer of 1 Cor 9,19-23 was not a Torah-observant Jew (the so called traditional view). Subsequently, he points at weaknesses of the traditional view with the basic one – it simply does not fit the first-century socio-historical context and the missionary strategy of Paul. Next, Rudolph discusses three studies that attempted a reassessment of 1 Cor 9:19-23 traditional view. Their limitations call for an additional study provided by the author. In the concluding paragraphs of Introduction, Rudolph presents the aim of the study, its method and overview of the argument. The purpose is to show that scholars overstate their case when arguing that 1 Cor 9:19-23 precludes a Torah-observant Jew, and to propose a fresh interpretation of the passage in question.

Chapter 2, “Intertextual Issues: Understanding Paul’s Jewishness in Relation to Being in Christ”, addresses the first rationale given for why 1 Cor 9:19-23 precludes a Torah-observant Jew, namely, 1 Cor 9:19-23 belongs to the group of texts in Paul and Acts that present Jewish identity as inconsequential in Christ. Among the texts selected by the author for his analysis we find Acts 16:3 (Timothy’s circumcision), 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:6; 6:15 (circumcision is nothing), Gal 3:28 (no longer Jew or Greek), 1 Cor 10:32 (mention of the “church of God”), Rom 14 (“weak in faith” language), Gal 1:13; Phil 3:8 (“former way of life” and “rubbish”), Gal 2:14 (“live like a Gentile”). According to Rudolph, the issue of Timothy’s circumcision verges on its timing, not on the circumcision itself. Consequently, the statements of “nothingness” of Jewishness should be understood as rhetorical devices stressing the value of Christ; the mentions of Paul’s former life refer not to common Judaism, but to its Pharisaic right wing; while Peter in Gal 2:14 judged as “living like a Gentile” is described by Paul also with the use of Pharisaic language. Subsequently, the author thoroughly analyzes Acts 21:17-26, the text which describes Paul’s offerings and actions undertaken in Jerusalem, judging it to be Paul’s own testimony on his Torah observance. The language that appears here, the imagery of Acts 21, the role of James confirming Paul’s Jewishness, and the logic of narration prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Paul observed the Law. Next, the author refers to the arguments of scholars offering a counter-narrative to explain Paul’s actions in Acts 21:17-26, namely, Paul lapsed in his faith, James tricked Paul, James and Paul fooled the Jews, Paul was inconsistent, Luke’s account is a pious fraud, Paul’s accommodative stance. Rudolph patiently and convincingly shows the inadequacy of these interpretations. The author’s argument on Paul’s Torah observance is additionally strengthened by the analysis of Paul’s circumcision and Jewish “calling” language in 1 Cor 7:17-24.

Chapter 3, “Contextual Issues: Paul’s Stance on Food Offered to Idols (1 Cor 8:1–11:1)”, addresses the second rationale given for why 1 Cor 9:19-23 precludes a Torah-observant Paul, that is, Paul’s permissive stance on idol food in 1 Cor 8–10. The author starts with the overview of the exegetical problems of the passage in question, namely, the unity of the analyzed section, the identity of the factions addressed by Paul, the conditional character of Paul’s solutions, and the relationship between Paul’s stance and the apostolic decree in Acts 15. The position of Paul in 1 Cor 8–10 can be viewed as a practical application of the general apostolic rule from Acts 15. Consequently, the author demonstrates the Jewishness of Paul’s view in 1 Cor 8–10, which draws on Hebrew Scriptures condemning idolatry, uses typically Jewish language, and has Lev 19 as its background. Finally, a brief point on 1 Cor 9 is made to stress its unity with the whole argument of 1 Cor 8–10.

Chapter 4, “Textual Issues: Variations on the Setting and Language of 1 Cor 9:19-23”, addresses the third rationale given for why 1 Cor 9:19-23 precludes a Torah-observant Paul. According to some scholars, the nomistic language of this section proves that Paul does not consider himself to be under Law. The author first analyzes the proposals of exegetes reading 1 Cor 9 against the background of Greco-Roman thought. They perceive Paul as playing the role of “servile flatterer”, being similar to Antisthenes’s Odysseus, reflecting the *topos* of “enslaved leader”, acting as “conciliator of the factions”, or using Epicurean psychagogic techniques and Sophistic deception. With no explicit vocabulary links between Greco-Roman background and 1 Cor 9, the all above presented interpretations, according to the author, must be considered mere conjectures which shed no light on Paul’s monistic language in the analyzed section. Having stated this, Rudolph passes to Jewish accommodation setting which demonstrates more textual and conceptual links to 1 Cor 9:19-23. The author starts with the picture of Jews associating with other Jews, namely, the Pharisees living as priests, Pharisaic accommodation to mainstream Jews, the limits of Pharisaic accommodation, and the standards of table-fellowship at Qumran and in Pharisees homes. The focus is on commensality issues to establish a background for reading 1 Cor 9:19-23. Fundamental to pharisaic identity was the imitation of the priests and stricter than normal Torah observance also in meals and dinning context. Compared to Sadducees and Essenes, however, the pharisaic *halakah* appears to be more flexible and accommodation-oriented. The limit of the accommodation was established by purity laws and the contact with ritually and morally impure.

The same accommodation principles may also be spotted in Jewish association with Gentiles. Some Jews would eat with Gentiles under the two conditions: avoiding idolatry and keeping their dietary precepts. The table fellowship with Gentiles can also be read in light of the Pharisaic proselytizing methods which are put forward by Chadwick as a possible background for 1 Cor 9:19-23. Subsequently, Rudolph presents recent scholarship on Jewish missionary-apologetic activity in the first century and analyzes the topic of ideal guest and host from Jewish literature, pointing at its convergence with the stance taken by Paul in 1 Corinthians. The author briefly mentions the Gospel tradition and Jesus’s teaching as a possible source of influence on Paul, to pass then to a thorough reading of 1 Cor 9:19-23. In the passage in question, Paul considers himself to be free not from Mosaic law, but from human masters; he can accommodate both to the Pharisaic *halakah* (those “under the law”) and to the Gentiles “without the law”; and he stays faithful to the law of Moses interpreted and lived by Jesus (the meaning of

the expression “to be in the law of Christ”). Ultimately, Rudolph shows that Paul’s rationale in 1 Cor 9:19-23 bears numerous marks of Jewish practices and rules governing table-fellowship, and thus cannot be read as a discourse made by Jew who abandoned the Law.

Chapter 4 practically paves the way for Chapter 5, “A Proposed Interpretation of 1 Cor 9:19-23”, in which the author shows that 1 Cor 9:19-23 can be understood as a discourse of the Jew faithful to the Mosaic law. First, Rudolph discusses the exegetical context of 1 Cor 9:19-23 pointing to the crucial motif of *imitatio Christi* present here. Then, claiming that Paul was aware of Jesus tradition, he presents the NT examples of Jesus’s rule of adaptation (slavery language, eating with sinners, Pharisees, and ordinary Jews), and demonstrates how it is reflected in Pauline epistles. The final step is the interpretation of 1 Cor 9:19-23 in the light of Jesus’s rule of accommodation with respect to commensality. Paul, guided by the example of Christ and keeping with the Jewish ethic of hospitality, became “all things to all people”, a Jew for the Jews and a Greek for the Greeks.

Finally, in “Conclusion and Implications”, the author enumerates five notable implications of his work: 1) the interpretation of the phrase “though I myself am not under the law” which means that Paul, still remaining within the bounds of Mosaic law, didn’t view Pharisaic *halakah* as a final authority in his life; 2) the reading of the expression “to be as one without the law” which does not compromise Paul’s status of Torah-observant Jew; 3) the analysis of the statement “(being) all things to all people” which refers to Paul’s open table-fellowship with Jews and Gentiles; 4) the stress that Paul remained within the bounds of law which has a bearing on Jewish-Christian dialog; 5) the conclusion that in his communities Paul promoted Jewish continuity understood as a particular calling from God.

*A Jew to the Jews* by David J. Rudolph is a great scholarly work on the meaningful and difficult passage of 1 Cor 9:19-23. The book is written with a clear, approachable language, which should be understandable even for those who are not experts in Pauline exegesis. The plethora of literature and scholarly views confronted by the author are aptly summarized and categorized in a fair and honest manner. One should agree with Rudolph, that the present publication’s significant contribution to scholarship is, first of all, the critical reassessment of the traditional view on 1 Cor 9:19-23. The author calls for a fresh look on this important biblical passage and, drawing on ancient and modern commentators, proposes an interesting and well founded reading of the text in question. A vast area of research comprising Pauline letters, Gospel tradition, and Jewish literature must obviously result in a general or too modest analysis of some textual aspects, like the

*David J. Rudolph, A Jew to the Jews. Jewish Contours of Pauline Flexibility*

mention of the utility of rhetorical reading of Cor 8–10 (p. 92). This sort of reading could actually prove very advantageous in demonstrating the role of 1 Cor 9 in Paul's rationale (pp. 107-108). Yet, some minor lacks cannot blur the fact that *A Jew to the Jews* is a formidable book that demonstrates in a very well-balanced and reasonable way Paul's Jewish identity. Every scholar and student exploring 1 Corinthians, the issue of Paul's Jewishness, and his missionary strategy, should get familiar with this publication.