

David J. Rudolph. *A Jew to the Jews: Jewish Contours of Pauline Flexibility in 1 Corinthians 9:19–23*. WUNT 2/304. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011. xii + 290 pp. \$137.50.

This expanded Cambridge dissertation (submitted in 2007, written under the supervision of Markus Bockmuehl) aims to demonstrate that “scholars overstate their case when they use 1 Cor 9:19–23 as incontrovertible evidence that Paul was not Torah observant,” and, as a “secondary aim,” that 1 Cor 9:19–23 can be understood as “the discourse of a Torah-observant Jew” (p. 18).

The Introduction (pp. 1–19) presents the case for the “traditional view” of 1 Cor 9:19–23, viz., that Paul was Torah-observant among Jews but not among Gentiles and that he essentially no longer regarded himself as a Jew. Rudolph briefly lists problems with this view (pp. 12–13), and asserts the need for reassessment. The next three chapters constitute Part I. Chapter 2 investigates “intertextual issues” that bear upon Paul’s Jewishness in relation to Christian identity (pp. 23–89): texts that assert that being Jewish is inconsequential in Christ (Acts 16:3; 1 Cor 7:19; 10:32; Gal 1:13; 2:14; 3:28; 5:6; 6:15; Rom 14; Phil 3:8), and texts that describe Jewishness as a calling in Christ (Acts 21:17–26; 1 Cor 7:17–24). Chapter 3 treats “contextual issues” (pp. 90–109), in particular Paul’s stance on food sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8:1–11:1). Chapter 4 examines “textual issues” (pp. 110–70), specifically Greco-Roman thought (e.g., on the motif of the servile flatterer), Jewish thought (regarding Jews associating with Jews, Jews associating with Gentiles, Gospels traditions, and comments on specific Greek terms in 1 Cor 9). Rudolph concludes Part I by stating that he focused on “destabilising the traditional view of 1 Cor 9:19–23” by pointing out “holes” in the intertextual, contextual, and textual arguments of the consensus reading of this text (p. 170).

Part II, which consists of ch. 5 (pp. 173–208), entitled “Imitating Christ’s Accommodation and Open Table-Fellowship,” discusses the “exegetical context” of 1 Cor 9:19–23, “interchange” in Paul’s letters, Paul’s knowledge of the Jesus tradition, Jesus as “all things to all people” in the Gospels, and, finally, Paul as “all things to all people.” The latter section (pp. 190–208) discusses 1 Cor 9:19–23 in an attempt to prove the thesis that Paul remained a Torah-observant Jew. Rudolph seems to sense that the brevity of this section, which must bear the burden of his thesis, is a problem. Delineating his aims, he admits that “the objective is not to prove that Paul was a Torah-observant Jew (this is beyond the scope of this study and perhaps the available evidence)” (p. 18). However, since Rudolph’s stated aim is to demonstrate “how one might understand 1 Cor 9:19–23 as the words of a law-abiding Jew” (p. 19), this seems precisely what he intends to do, unless he sees a difference between the statement “Paul was a Torah-observant Jew” and his stated aim of “understanding 1 Cor 9:19–23 as the words of a law-abiding Jew.” His acknowledgment that the evidence may not allow us to conclude that Paul was a Torah-observant Jew (p. 18) undermines ch. 5.

While “destabilising” a particular view (pp. 18, 170, 209) can be helpful, even necessary if the traditional (consensus) view has problems, and while “inviting” scholars to take a fresh look at a text (p. 209) is a refreshingly humble stance for a dissertation, this rhetoric seems to suggest that Rudolph is not at all certain about his thesis, even though the latter is presented not so much as a conclusion reached as the result of rigorous exegesis of all available evidence, but presumed as an alternative to the consensus reading.

While Rudolph readily sees weaknesses in the views of other scholars, he does not point out problems in his own interpretations (if only to suggest possible answers). For example, as regards Paul's statement in 1 Cor 9:20, "I am not under the law," Rudolph criticizes the traditional view that νόμος refers here to the Mosaic Law in general or to its distinctively Jewish commandments (pp. 153–57), before he presents as a "possibility" (p. 157) the view that νόμος refers to "Pharisaic or particularly strict standards of Torah observance" (p. 159). He does not explore the problems that this interpretation entails, e.g., the question whether the predominantly Gentile Christian church in Roman Corinth would have understood νόμος as denoting here the Pharisaic interpretation of the law. If Paul indeed wanted to say, "To those under [a Pharisaic interpretation of] the law I became as one under [a Pharisaic interpretation of] the law (though I myself am not under [a Pharisaic interpretation of] the law) so that I might win those under [a Pharisaic interpretation of] the law" (p. 157–58), he could have said, τοῖς κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαίοις πολιτεύω τῇ Φαρισαίων αἵρέσει κατακολουθῶν μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον τῶν Φαρισαίων ("to those who are Pharisees in regard to the law, I conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees, even though I am not under the law of the Pharisees;" the Greek combines formulations in Phil 3:5 and Josephus, *Vita* 12). Paul's simple statement τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, simply means: "to those under the law I became as one under the law, though I myself am not under the law." If Paul needs a qualification, he will provide one, as he does in 1 Cor 9:21, and as he does with regard to the Pharisaic interpretation of the law in Phil 3:5. The fact that νόμος can denote different meanings in other contexts (pp. 154–58, 196–201) does not permit us to introduce qualifications into 1 Cor 9:20 without explicit contextual support, which Rudolph does not provide (he extensively quotes the views of A. L. C. Heidenreich, P. Richardson, M. Bockmuehl, and R. Phua; cf. pp. 158–59).

Did Paul consider himself to be a Jew after his conversion to faith in Jesus? Certainly. Did he consider himself to be a Christian Pharisee? Hardly likely, given his aversion to party terms (1 Cor 1–2; Phil 3:5 does not prove the point: in Phil 3:6 he references the fact that "as to zeal" he persecuted the church). Did Paul continue to observe the food laws? In view of 1 Cor 9:20, he would certainly have done so when he lived with Law-abiding Jews. Did Paul continue to observe the food laws, interpreted less strictly than the Pharisees, if he ate with unbelieving Gentiles? In view of 1 Cor 9:21, this is hardly a plausible assumption: it would mean either that Paul refused to eat some of the food that was offered, or that Paul informed his Gentile hosts what food they should buy and/or prepare, or that his Gentile hosts knew what Paul would refuse to eat and consequently offered a menu acceptable to a Torah-observant Jew. If we assume that the Gentiles Paul shared meals with were God-fearers, who attended synagogue services, and knew what Jews would and would not eat, this scenario is plausible. If we assume that Paul also wanted to reach "pure" pagans with the gospel, this scenario is not plausible. How does Rudolph know that "most Jesus-believing Gentiles in Rome, out of sensitivity, brought food to communal meals that conformed to the Lev 11 dietary laws" (pp. 40–41)? What about Gentile believers that did not do what "most" did: would their food be rejected? Was there an examination of the food brought by Gentile Christians to the communal meals as regards to their conformity to the Jewish dietary laws? Who was responsible for such an examination? And what about the Gentile believers in Roman Corinth? I suggest that there are indeed very good reasons to

think that Paul's "don't ask" policy with respect to accommodation "represented indifference to Jewish food laws" (p. 206): when Gentile hosts served meat, bought from a pagan butcher, it would have contained blood (whether the animal had been strangled or not), which a Law-observant Jew could not eat. If Paul was "discriminating in what he ate" (p. 206), determined not to violate the dietary laws of the Mosaic Law, he would have to ask the host where he bought the meat. In other words, if Paul *always* lived as a Torah-observant Jew who followed the dietary laws of Leviticus, a "don't ask" policy does not make sense. Paul's bold, concise, unqualified statement about his loyalty to "the law" suggests that his behavior was not controlled in every instance by every requirement that Jews "before Christ" were expected to keep.

Rudolph formulates in ch. 6 implications for the Jewish-Christian dialogue, asserting that the traditional interpretation leads Jewish writers to understand Paul as a proponent of "trickery" or "pious fraud," suggesting that the proposed interpretation of Paul as a Torah-observant Jew supports "rapprochement between Jews and Christians" (p. 211). Since Paul describes in 1 Cor 9 his *modus operandi* as a missionary, it would have been important to formulate implications for missionary work among both Jews and Gentiles as well. If we interpret 1 Cor 9 not only as the words of Paul but as the word of God for the church of all ages, Rudolph's thesis suggests that not only Jewish Christian missionaries among Gentiles (like Paul) follow the dietary laws of Leviticus, but that Gentile Christian missionaries among Gentiles follow the dietary laws of Leviticus (like Paul) as well. If some Jewish authors accuse Paul of "pious fraud" in the context of the traditional interpretation of 1 Cor 9:20, we must not forget that some Jewish authors accuse Paul of much worse on account of his conviction that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth is the risen Lord and Israel's Messiah. If Paul was not consistently Law observant, his testimony is not by necessity a lie and a deceit (notwithstanding C. K. Barrett's view; cf. p. 210): Paul's Jewish Christian opponents could point out that he circumcised Timothy, but not Gentile believers, agreeing with the former and demanding the latter. Assuming that Paul no longer offered sin and guilt offerings in the Jerusalem Temple on account of his conviction that Jesus' death atoned for all sins of both Jews and Gentiles (cf. Rom 3:25 in the context of Rom 1:18-3:25), Paul is clearly not "consistently" Law observant. Abandoning sin offerings as a matter of principle is much more consequential for Jews than abandoning the food laws of Leviticus.

Rudolph has written a provocative dissertation that raises important questions about a wide range of passages. He underscores the Jewish identity of Paul, which is an important emphasis. His suggestion that Paul kept the dietary laws of Leviticus, even when eating with Gentiles, is, however, unconvincing.

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Ben Witherington III. *A Week in the Life of Corinth*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012. 158 pp. \$16.00.

If you're looking for something enjoyable to read that is exciting as well as informative for the Christian life and its facets in the first century, Ben Witherington III's book, *A Week in the Life of Corinth*, is just that. His work in the rhetoric of the NT and the accompanying commentaries on each book of