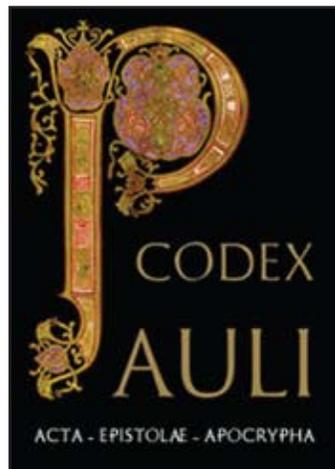


משיח MASHIACH

Apostolic
Writings
Messiah
Hebrew Bible
Second Temple
Judaism

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:17–20, “This is the rule I lay down in all the congregations. Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised... Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him.” New Testament scholars are increasingly making the argument that Paul’s metonymic statement in 1 Corinthians 7:18—“do not put on foreskin”—required Yeshua-believing Jews



in his congregations to continue to live the circumcised life as a matter of *calling* and not to assimilate into Gentile lifestyle.

This interpretation of Paul’s rule in all the congregations, which Augustine defended (*Op. mon.* 11 [12]), remains a minority view in New Testament studies. However, my observation is that this interpretation is beginning to move from the margins to the center of the discussion over Paul’s perspective on the relationship between Yeshua-believing Jews and Torah.

But what of the many Pauline texts that seem to point in a different direction?—“You are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14)...“There is no longer

Jew or Greek...for all of you are one in Messiah Yeshua” (Galatians 3:28)...“To the Jews I became as a Jew in order to win Jews” (1 Corinthians 9:20)—to name just a few. We are now seeing a steady flow of post-supersessionist interpretations of these texts in books, articles, dissertations, and conference papers each year. As one who specializes in Pauline studies, I do my best to keep track of these critical reassessments, but it is becoming difficult because there are so many. To mention just a few gems that came out in 2009, Mark Nanos wrote three thought-provoking articles: “Paul and Judaism” (published in *Codex Pauli*); “The Myth of the ‘Law-Free’ Paul Standing Between Christians and Jews,” and “Paul and Judaism: Why Not Paul’s Judaism?”¹ And Fortress published Magnus Zetterholm’s new book *Approaches to Paul: A Student’s Guide to Recent Research*, in which he introduces this new school of thought that has emerged in Pauline studies.

These scholars argue that Paul continued to view himself as part of *kol Yisrael* (all Israel), and that he remained a Torah-observant Jew after becoming a believer in Yeshua (not merely for missiological reasons, but on the basis of covenant and calling) as he writes in 1 Corinthians 7 and Romans 9–11. Luke provides a similar portrait of Paul in Acts 26 when he says to King Agrippa, “...according to the strictest party of our religion *I have lived* [aorist active indicative] as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to *our fathers*, to which *our twelve tribes* hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day” (Acts 26:5–7; cf. 21:17–26).

1 See www.marknanos.com.



David Rudolph, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of Bible and Theology at Messianic Jewish Theological Institute, and Chair of the Theology Committee of the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations.