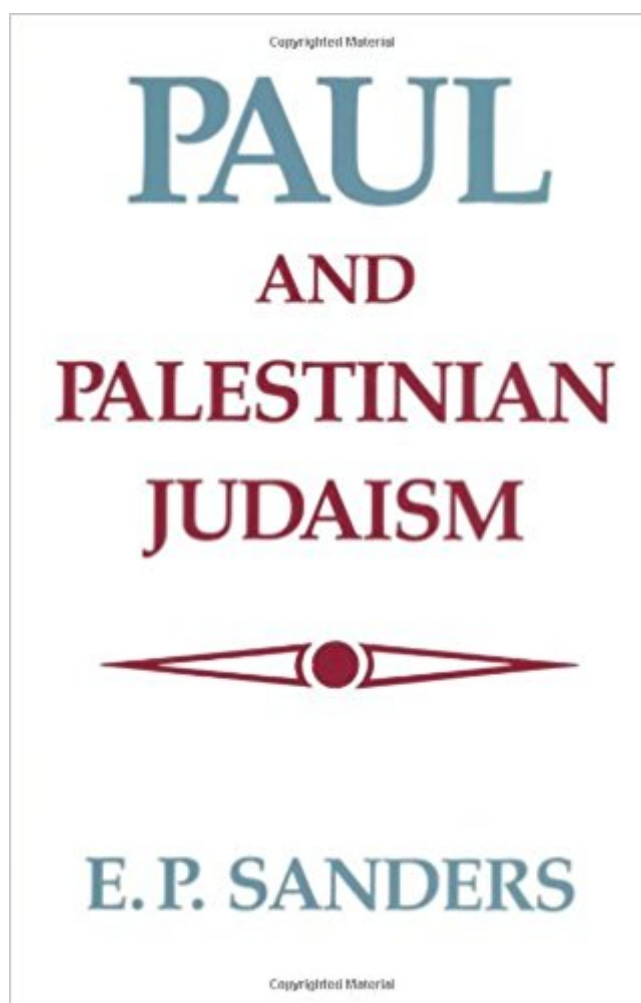


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Paul And Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison Of Patterns Of Religion



Synopsis

In the past three decades reasons have accumulated for a transformation of our whole picture of Judaism in first-century Palestine. Sanders has listened to those reasons; he has done his homework; and he undertakes here to shift the question about Paul's relation to that Judaism into a fundamentally different perspective...

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Customer Reviews

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good to find this book.

Excellent research, fine writing, and easy to follow the premise and minor premises! I highly recommend this work. It is a terrific research tool.

none

I appreciate Sanders branching out from traditional thought on Paul even if I do not agree with all of

his arguments. I agree that Paul's belief was one of participationist eschatology (Paul also believed the end was near): the only way to become one of the People of God was through faith in Christ ("dying to Christ") and the old covenant was no longer sufficient. I agree that Paul had a connection to Judaism but, I do not agree with Sanders keeping with the ideal that Paul was a Pharisee just because Paul says so (he doesn't provide support for this). I found his 'covenantal nomism' interesting but, I would like to do some more research on the subject. Sanders' does touch on Paul's break from the Jewish religion and his Hellenistic ideals which was helpful in the quest to understanding Paul.

I give it 3 stars from my perspective as a layman and non-specialist. This seems like a rather scholarly book, packed with references to and interactions with other scholars. But if the reader is not familiar with all these other scholars and debates, it's kind of difficult to follow. (I found Sanders' book "Jesus and Judaism" much more understandable and useful). But I was able to get some useful things out of this book.

The best book on Palestinian Judaism available. Sanders is one of the best in his field. Excellent research. Presented well for all who have interest and some background.

I have not read the book yet, but from the recommendation given it should be a great study for future study.

If anything is to be said about this volume, its impact has changed Pauline scholarship until the present time. Many distinguish between pre-Sanders and post-Sanders Pauline scholarship. This was in many ways the beginning of the movement now known as the "new perspective on Paul." Most of this volume is an evaluation of second temple Judaism. Sanders believes that in the second temple period there was a united pattern of religion. This falls into the rubric of soteriology. This pattern of religion Sanders calls Covenantal Nomism. This idea is that those in the covenant with Israel are in the covenant by grace, and they remain in by obedience to the law, however, not in such a way as to say salvation is earned. Obedience does not earn but maintains one's covenant status. Sanders fights against the idea that Jewish soteriology was simply a "weighing of the scales" where one's merits and demerits were weighed against one another. This idea was popularized by Weber and despite the fact that several Jewish scholars have fought against it, it was universally accepted. Sanders certainly has valid criticisms of previous second temple scholarships, however,

he overreacts. Rather than seeing Judaism as a religion of works, Sanders sees Judaism as a religion of grace. When looking at the evidence from this period however, neither picture is accurate. There is a much greater diversity of opinions in second temple literature than either position will admit. For example, Josephus, who seems to be entirely ignored in this volume does not talk in terms of national covenant. Also, Philo talks in very different categories. Books like IV Ezra (which Sanders admits) and II Enoch do portray a type of legalism. On the other hand, the Testament of Moses sees both entrance and continuation in the covenant as matters of grace. Sanders treatment of Paul in the second section of this book has not been as influential as his evaluation of second temple literature. He believes that Paul talks not so much in forensic as participationist categories. For Paul, the law never required perfect obedience. In fact, he never saw a problem with the law until he found Christ. His thought was from solution to plight. He saw that Christ was the only way to righteousness, therefore law-righteousness must be inadequate. Sanders famous line states that "Paul's problem with Judaism was that it was not Christianity." Sanders treatment of Paul is really only largely evaluated in his next volume "Paul, the law and the Jewish People"

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