

**PAUL AND JUDAISM**  
**AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL**  
**APPROACH**

Second Edition

**TIMO LAATO**

*For Anne,  
with love.*  
Proverbs 31:29

---

*Erstlich soltu wissen, das die heilige Schrift ein solch Buch ist,  
das aller ander Bücher zur narrheit macht.*

*Firstly, you should know that the Holy Scriptures constitute a book  
which turns the wisdom of all other books into foolishness.*

Martin Luther



Published by Concordia Publishing House  
3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968  
1-800-325-3040 • cph.org

This edition © 2026 Timo Laato  
First edition © 1995 Timo Laato

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House.

Unless otherwise indicated, quotations in this volume are translated from the German edition.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations marked NETS are taken from *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, © 2007 by the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Inc. Used by permission of Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.

The quotation above from Luther is from *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 50 (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1914), 659; *Luther's Works: American Edition*, vol. 34 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 285.

Manufactured in the United States of America

---

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Laato, Timo, 1963– author

Title: Paul and Judaism : an anthropological approach / Tim Laato.

Other titles: Paulus und das Judentum. English

Description: Second edition. | Saint Louis, MO : Concordia Publishing House, [2026] | Translation of: Paulus und das Judentum. | Text in English. Translation from German.

Identifiers: LCCN 2026007646 (print) | LCCN 2026007647 (ebook) | ISBN 9780758682017 paperback | ISBN 9780758682246 ebook

Subjects: LCSH: Paul, the Apostle, Saint—Relations with Jews | Bible. Epistles of Paul—Theology | Bible. Epistles of Paul—Social scientific criticism | Jews in the New Testament

Classification: LCC BS2655.J4 L2313 2026 (print) | LCC BS2655.J4 (ebook)

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2026007646>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2026007647>

---

# CONTENTS

---

Preface to the Second English Edition	v
Preface to the German Edition	vii
Why This Second Edition of <i>Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach</i> ?	ix

## Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach

---

1. Introduction	3
2. An Overview of Research	7
2.1. The Weberian Position	7
2.2. The Anti-Weberian Position	14
2.2.1. The Development Up to E. P. Sanders	14
2.2.2. E. P. Sanders	23
2.3. The State of Research	27
3. E. P. Sanders's Method: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion	33
3.1. Definition	33
3.2. Application	36
3.3. Toward a Judgment of the Method	39
3.3.1. Critique of Definition	39
3.3.2. Critique of Application	50
4. Anthropological Presuppositions of the Jewish and Pauline Pattern of Religion	64
4.1. Human Freedom	64
4.1.1. Judaism	64
4.1.2. Paul	71
4.2. Is Paul Consistent in His Pessimistic Anthropology?	73
4.2.1. Romans 2	73
4.2.1.1. The View of H. Räisänen	73
4.2.1.2. The Moral Situation of the Gentiles	74
4.2.1.3. The Moral Situation of the Jews	80
4.2.2. Romans 5:12	87
4.2.2.1. The Problem	87

4.2.2.2. Various Solutions	89
4.2.2.3. The Relation Between Adam's Sin and Human Sinfulness	92
4.2.3. Romans 7:14–25	98
4.2.3.1. Introduction	98
4.2.3.2. W. G. Kümmel's Argumentation	100
4.2.3.3. Text	103
4.2.3.4. Context	120
4.2.3.5. Parallels	130
4.3. Conclusions	136
5. The Significance of Anthropology for the Jewish and Pauline Pattern of Religion	138
5.1. The "Getting In"	138
5.2. The "Staying In"	144
5.3. Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins	151
5.4. Conclusions	155
6. Paul's Conflict with the Jewish Pattern of Religion in the Light of His Anthropology	157
6.1. Material	157
6.2. The Epistle to the Galatians	159
6.3. Romans 3:27	168
6.4. Romans 4:2–5	176
6.5. Romans 9:30–10:3	181
6.6. Philippians 3:3–9	185
6.7. Conclusions	191
7. Paul's Mindset: From Solution to Plight?	194
8. Summary	202
Epilogue: A Farewell to the New Perspective and the Start of a New Quest for Paul	204
1. Introduction	204
2. J. D. G. Dunn	207
3. N. T. Wright	212
4. J. M. G. Barclay	225
5. Summary	232
6. The New Quest for Paul	233
Abbreviations and Works Cited	240

# PREFACE TO THE SECOND ENGLISH EDITION

---

THE FIRST EDITION of *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach* has been out of stock for a long time. It was written as a doctoral thesis in German and published in 1991 by Åbo Academy Press. Fairly soon thereafter it was translated into English and then published in 1995 in the series South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism. Since its publication, it has been a recognized contribution to the ongoing discussion about the New Perspective on Paul that was triggered by E. P. Sanders's well-known masterpiece and standard work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Without doubt, his book set the ball rolling in the current direction.

Hence, I am pleased to publish the second edition of *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach*. In comparison with the first edition, I have made minor changes throughout and polished the English. I have added here and there and expanded my argumentation. Additionally, I have strengthened and intensified my line of reasoning. Chapter 7, "Paul's Mindset: From Solution to Plight?" is new, as is the epilogue on the new quest for Paul.

Once again, I thank Bror Erickson for correcting my English. He has been of invaluable aid for me, as always. The original German text of the first edition was translated into English by T. McElwain.

It was Bror Erickson and Professor John Pless who contacted Concordia Publishing House and recommended the second edition of this book for publication. Dr. Jacob Corzine, vice president of publishing at Concordia Publishing House, soon picked up the reins and brought the whole process to a swift conclusion, together with Jonathan D. Schultz, president and CEO of Concordia Publishing House. Laura Lane as an editor for the professional book team has done a marvelous job. Especially Joshua H. Cook and Dawn Mirly Weinstock have upheld a high level of competence and know-how in preparing my manuscript for print. I would like to applaud their great skill and express my deep gratitude to you all.

Further, I appreciate very much that I have regained the rights of my book from the University of South Florida. In addition, I have made use of the following articles of mine in the second edition of my book:

“Paul’s Anthropological Considerations: Two Problems.” In *The Paradoxes of Paul*, 343–59. Vol. 2 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*. Edited by D. A. Carson, P. T. O’Brien, and M. A. Seifrid. WUNT 2/181. Mohr-Siebeck, 2004.

“‘God’s Righteousness’—Once Again.” In *The Nordic Paul: Finnish Approaches to Pauline Theology*, 40–73. Edited by L. Aejmelaeus and A. Mustakallio. Library of New Testament Studies 374. ESCO 374. T&T Clark, 2008.

“*Simul Iustus et Peccator* through the Lenses of Paul.” *JETS* 61, no. 4 (2018): 735–66.

Some parts or passages of these articles are inserted in this book with permission.

Last, I am fully aware of the fact that our books are nothing in comparison with God’s own Word. They are even less than nothing if his holy name is not glorified in everything we do. Therefore, I do hope that this book will confirm the biblical and confessional Lutheran teaching in all respects.

*For we cannot do anything against the truth,  
but only for the truth. (2 Cor. 13:8)*

*Timo Laato*

# WHY THIS SECOND EDITION OF *PAUL AND JUDAISM: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH?*<sup>1</sup>

---

**P**AULINE RESEARCH CONTINUES to triumph. The debate broadens and deepens, yet it also becomes more difficult and complicated. The present debate was launched in 1977 with the publication of E. P. Sanders's extensive work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Later, there has been talk of a whole new perspective: the New Perspective on Paul.<sup>2</sup> This concept comprises a large number of scholars who do not always agree on interpretations. Yet they do have something in common, otherwise it would not make any sense to speak of a new wave of research. The Christological argument can at least be mentioned as one common denominator: Paul did not discard the Jewish religion based on its assumed legalistic soteriology—that it was built on merit and led to vainglory. His main reason was simply (and slightly simplified) that it was not *Christianity*; in other words, it denied Christ as Savior, Messiah.<sup>3</sup> This argument is also accompanied by a strong emphasis on salvation that is meant for everyone, heathen as well as Jew. As an apostle to the Gentiles, Paul had to regard God's plan of salvation as broader than before. He could no longer

- 1 Here, I follow some preliminary remarks in my article “‘God’s Righteousness’—Once again,” in *The Nordic Paul: Finnish Approaches to Pauline Theology*, ed. L. Aejmelaeus and A. Mustakallio, ESCO 374 (T&T Clark, 2008), 40–41. The quotations from other sources are taken from the originals.
- 2 To read more closely about the research history, see S. Westerholm, “‘The New Perspective’ at Twenty-Five,” in *The Paradoxes of Paul*, vol. 2 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, P. T. O’Brien, and M. A. Seifrid, WUNT 2/181 (Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 1–38. See also chapter 2 below. For the concept of “the New Perspective on Paul,” see chapter 2.3. below.
- 3 E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Fortress Press, 1977), 501. His short and provocative thesis was: “In short, *this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity*” (552).

stay inside the narrow boundaries of Mosaic Law. Particularism had to give way to universalism. The old covenant had been replaced by the new.<sup>4</sup>

The debate has since advanced. The Christological argument has been accompanied and, in a way, explained by anthropological analysis: Paul's view on man's ability to obey the Law became much more pessimistic after he experienced conversion on the road to Damascus. He no longer believed in the ability of free will to break the power of sin. No man can help himself. The synergism of Judaism (cooperation of God and man within the prerequisites of the Sinaic covenant) must be rejected as worthless. It leads man to trust in the "flesh" and to boast of self-righteousness (Galatians; Rom. 3:27; 4:2–5; 9:30–10:3; Phil. 3:3–9). Man is totally corrupt and therefore fully unable to save himself or even contribute to his salvation. His only hope lies in the boundless mercy of God, which is received on account of Christ through faith alone. In this we hear a reformation heartbeat—naturally!—although at some point it was thought or claimed to be silenced, and the most enthusiastic hastened to toll the death knell in order to precipitate the burial.

The anthropological analysis that completes the Christological argument has been elaborated especially by T. Laato in his doctoral thesis, originally published in German: *Paulus und das Judentum: Anthropologische Erwägungen* (Åbo, 1991). It was translated into English and published under the title *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach* (trans. T. McElwain, South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 115 [Scholars Press, 1995]). Although at this point it is too early to draw any final conclusions, it seems that the anthropological analysis has entered the present debate on the relationship between Paul and Judaism to stay. It cannot be ignored—except in tendentious research.

There is still disagreement on many details, but the importance and centrality of the main subject is the most significant and essential point. To support this claim, some brief scientific surveys of the present state of the debate are presented here. D. A. Hagner concludes:

The result is that Paul abandoned the synergism of Jewish soteriology for the monergism of total dependence upon the grace of God in Christ. Laato concludes, rightly in my opinion, that Paul thus repudiates the Jewish understanding of righteousness and the Jewish soteriology. We may compare these conclusions to those of Stephen Westerholm [. . .].<sup>5</sup>

---

4 Especially E. P. Sanders: *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Fortress Press, 1983). After him many others.

5 D. A. Hagner, "Paul and Judaism: The Jewish Matrix of Early Christianity: Issues in the Current Debate," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 3 (1993): 122.

Furthermore, S. Westerholm performs a broad survey of Jewish literature. He basically corroborates the findings of Laato and concludes finally:

The anthropologies of Paul and Judaism cannot, then, be considered in isolation from their respective “soteriologies”: different plights demand different solutions, and (as Sanders has reminded us) different solutions demand different plights. Broadly speaking, our survey of the literature supports the notion that Paul’s anthropology, in corresponding to his “soteriology,” is a good deal more “negative” than the anthropology typical among his contemporary Jews.<sup>6</sup>

In another context, Westerholm writes:

But (the post-Damascus) Paul believes that human beings, at enmity with God and in slavery to sin, have neither the ability nor the inclination to submit to God’s law. (Laato, among others, has reminded us that the pessimism of Paul’s “anthropology” is not typically Jewish, and that it inevitably leads to a distinctive soteriological emphasis.) It follows (as those who stress the “apocalyptic” aspects of Paul’s thought are wont to remind us) that, for Paul, a new divine act of creation is needed before people can be “put right” with God.<sup>7</sup>

M. Seifrid agrees fully:

The very issue that Sanders’s paradigm isolates within Paul’s post-Damascus thought and thus removes from consideration, namely, the nature of the human plight, turns out to be the pivotal juncture at which Paul engages his contemporaries.<sup>8</sup>

Earlier, he wrote accordingly:

In anticipation of our following discussion, we may say that Paul’s surprising statements concerning the law make sense given his view of the fallen state and moral inability of the human beings (Laato 1995).<sup>9</sup>

Also, C. A. Gieschen asserts:

Timo Laato, a Finnish Lutheran scholar, has challenged Sanders’s position on the role of the works of the Law in maintaining one’s righteous status with his 1991 dissertation that was later translated and published as *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach*. Laato argues that a key difference between first-century Judaism and Christianity was the anthropological presuppositions of their respective soteriologies or, to put it simply, their respective

6 See S. Westerholm, “Paul’s Anthropological ‘Pessimism’ in Its Jewish Context,” in *Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment*, ed. J. M. G. Barclay and S. J. Gathercole, Library of New Testament Studies 335 (T&T Clark, 2006), 71–98.

7 Westerholm, “The ‘New Perspective,’” 37.

8 M. Seifrid, “Unrighteous by Faith: Apostolic Proclamation in Romans 1:18–3:20,” *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2: *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, P. T. O’Brien, and M. A. Seifrid, WUNT 2/181 (Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 144.

9 M. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 9 (InterVarsity Press, 2000), 95.

understandings of man's nature after the fall and the role that fallen nature is able to play in salvation.<sup>10</sup>

P. T. O'Brien affirms:

[...] there are significant anthropological differences between Judaism and Paul. [...] Sanders' contention, however, has been challenged: the anthropological presuppositions of Judaism clearly differ from those of the apostle.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, T. George states:

In one of the most incisive criticisms of the new perspective published thus far, Timo Laato, building on the work of H. Odeberg, has compared the anthropological presuppositions of covenantal nomism, as sketched by Sanders, and Paul's own soteriology. He has shown [...].<sup>12</sup>

H. Blocher concludes:

Exegetical studies in the present volume have shown that Paul did elaborate the doctrine of human guilt, helplessness and condemnation as the foundation of his gospel.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, T. R. Schreiner generally states:

E. Sanders (1977) rightly criticizes the caricature of Jewish legalism that has infiltrated biblical scholarship. But he goes too far to the other extreme. Laato (1991) contends rightly that Paul repudiates a synergism that was present in Jewish theology [...].<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, in another context Schreiner concludes:

Laato (1991) argues that the central difference between Paul and Palestinian Judaism lay in their estimate of anthropological ability. I believe he is largely correct here.<sup>15</sup>

---

10 C. A. Gieschen, "Paul and the Law: Was Luther Right?" in *The Law in Holy Scripture: Essays from the Concordia Theological Seminary Symposium on Exegetical Theology*, ed. C. A. Gieschen (Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 132. He has the following sub-heading II D: "The Contrasting Anthropologies of First-Century Judaism and Paul."

11 P. T. O'Brien, "Was Paul a Covenantal Nomist?" in *The Paradoxes of Paul*, vol. 2 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, and M. A. Seifrid, WUNT 2/181 (Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 270. In his article, he often refers to Laato.

12 T. George, "Modernizing Luther, Domesticating Paul: Another Perspective," in *The Paradoxes of Paul*, vol. 2 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, and M. A. Seifrid, WUNT 2/181 (Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 453.

13 H. Blocher, "Justification of the Ungodly (*Sola Fide*): Theological Reflections," in *The Paradoxes of Paul*, vol. 2 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, and M. A. Seifrid, WUNT 2/181 (Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 484. Among others, he refers to Laato.

14 T. R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT 6 (Baker, 1998), 174.

15 *Ibid.*, 154 n. 14 *et passim*.

J. R. Harrison summarizes the present state of research as follows:

T. Laato (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism: An Anthropological Approach* [Atlanta 1995]) is a sound example of the approach required. He charts from the intertestamental and rabbinic literature how Judaism embraced an optimistic anthropology in its concentration on human free will (*ibid.*, 65–75). The synergistic approach of Judaism, Laato argues, stands in contrast to Paul who, because of his pessimistic anthropology of human depravity (*ibid.*, 75–146), emphasized salvation by grace alone (*ibid.*, 147–168).<sup>16</sup>

Apparently, the first person to give a positive statement like the previous ones was L. Aejmelaeus in his German review of Laato's dissertation:

Laato's dissertation is a clearly written and sharp apology for the apostle to the Gentiles, who has received a bad reputation in recent decades because of his polemic against Jewish "works-righteousness." In this book a model is constructed with which a person can make sense of the Pauline logic and argumentation in his opposition with the Jews without thereby simultaneously becoming antisemitic himself.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, P. M. Sprinkle concludes the ongoing debate quite well as follows:

In other words, Judaism believed that people were capable of contributing something to their salvation, while Paul believed that people could contribute nothing to their salvation. Covenantal nomism itself, the critics say, assumes a rather positive view of the human condition, while Paul clearly had a pessimistic view. While some scholars pointed this out early on, a full-scale treatment of the anthropology was lacking until Timo Laato published his dissertation, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: An Anthropological Approach*. Laato argued that Paul's pessimistic view of the human condition calls for a more radical emphasis on divine agency in salvation. [...] Many opponents of Sanders and the New Perspective have taken Laato's conclusion at face value. They have assumed that Laato's study ended the discussion, hammering the proverbial nail in the coffin.<sup>18</sup>

All the previous surveys adequately show the present state of the research. Hence, it is necessary to take the anthropological analysis into account when

16 J. R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT 2/172 (Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 101 n. 18.

17 L. Aejmelaeus, review of *Paulus und das Judentum: Anthropologische Erwägungen*, by Timo Laato, *SJS* 13 (1992): 170: "Laatos Dissertation ist eine klargeschriebene und scharfe Apologie für den Heidenapostel, der in den letzten Jahrzehnten wegen seiner Polemik der jüdischen 'Werkgerechtigkeit' gegenüber einen schlechten Ruf bekommen hat. In diesem Buch wird ein Modell konstruiert, womit man die paulinische Logik und Argumentation in seiner Auseinandersetzung mit dem Judentum verständlich machen kann, ohne daneben gleichzeitig selbst antijudaistisch werden [...]".

18 P. M. Sprinkle, *Paul and Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation* (InterVarsity Press, 2013), 126. He himself deals with anthropological presuppositions especially in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the end, his conclusions do not differ much from the *opinio communis* in New Testament scholarship. See below 4.1.1.

contemplating and drawing the outlines of a New Perspective on Pauline theology. A mere Christological argument is not enough. One can rightly ask—with reference to the present academic debate—whether the Christological argument is understood in-depth or even correctly without anthropological analysis. Hence, we need to heed again the arguments in *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach*. It represents a significant contribution to the ongoing academic debate.

**PAUL AND JUDAISM**  
**AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL**  
**APPROACH**



# 1. INTRODUCTION

---

IT SEEMS THAT Christian churches must again and again analyze and appraise their relationship to Judaism as the “parent religion” of Christianity. Because today Christian churches consist mostly of “Gentiles,”<sup>1</sup> a dialogue between both parties requires a better understanding of the criticism Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, brings forward against Judaism. New Testament scholars must therefore search for a satisfactory answer to the question *why* Paul (or the later Christian Church) never succeeded in preventing or settling the conflict with Judaism. Only then can the Christian-Jewish dialogue move on and start to think in terms of removing the theological controversies between church and synagogue.

Until the 1970s, exegetes and other theologians almost without exception considered the whole question closed. They took for granted that the Jews (at least those in New Testament times) depended on their good works and tried to earn their own salvation. Only after his conversion could Paul protest and break the prevailing conception. He concluded that no one gains salvation on account of his own merits, but that each one receives it as a gift by faith in Christ. From then on, the matter was straightened out. The controversy between Paul and Judaism over the different prerequisites for salvation (human works versus divine grace) resulted in the parting of the ways.<sup>2</sup>

The publication of E. P. Sanders’s work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* in 1977 paved the way for a radical turning point in the history of research.<sup>3</sup> He argued that salvation in Palestinian Judaism was not based on human merits or good works. The pertinent writings from about 200 BC to AD 200 show that salvation takes place by divine grace within the covenant. The observance of the Law explicitly serves as a means of staying in the covenant. An exception proves the rule. In 4 Ezra, salvation depends on perfect sinlessness. All sinners are condemned. Their falling back on the covenant is indeed to no avail.<sup>4</sup> Just as in Judaism in general, Paul teaches the salvation of humankind out of divine grace,

---

1 The concept of “Gentile” naturally refers here to “non-Jew.”

2 See below 2.1.

3 See below 2.3.

4 Sanders 1977, 419–23.

namely, through faith in Christ. Notwithstanding, he still considers the fulfilling of the Law as necessary for staying “in Christ.”<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, he renounced the Jewish soteriology since they had refused Christ, but not because they allegedly rejected divine grace.<sup>6</sup>

In succeeding years, Sanders’s monograph has been widely received and accepted with approval, particularly in the English-speaking world. To say the least, he has without exaggeration completely and perfectly overturned the views of Old and New Testament scholars about Judaism. At the same time, he has once again brought to the fore the old question about the rupture of Paul with Judaism.<sup>7</sup> The old answers are no longer necessarily compelling; the academic discussion strives forward and seeks new answers.

The main task of this study is to compare Pauline and Jewish religion, proceeding from the research position of Sanders already mentioned. It is obviously impossible to carry out a comparison of a plethora of details within the framework of a single volume. My interest applies above all to the relationship between divine grace and human works. As the present-day state of research at least in the English-speaking world has directly developed from the breakthrough of Sanders’s theses, a critical examination of his overview of research history and an analytical discussion of the methodological basis of his outcomes provide a fundamental point of departure. As a result, the reader obtains a more comprehensive and complete understanding of the problems still to be resolved. Far and away the most stirring and thrilling cause of dispute arises from Sanders’s thought-provoking proposal that Paul and the Jews did not, strictly speaking, disagree on the relationship between divine grace and human works.<sup>8</sup> But what then was their bone of contention exactly? Why did they ultimately have their fervent confrontation? Sanders seems unable to answer such questions in a satisfactory manner. This is fundamentally because of deficiencies in his methodological procedure as he fails to take sufficiently into account the anthropological approach to each religion.<sup>9</sup> So his method has to be modified and amplified in order to attain a more persuasive clarification of the break between Paul and Judaism. The present work will serve that urgent purpose.

In consideration of my task, it would be important to know precisely which sort of Judaism Paul criticizes in each case. Unfortunately, he does not always tell his readers more about his adversaries. The question often remains quite obscure. Indeed, Paul criticizes Judaism in a more general way (cf. in particular Romans 2–3, 9–11) without specifying what kind of Judaism it is all about

---

5 Op. cit., 543–49.

6 Op. cit., 549–52.

7 See below 2.3.

8 Sanders 1977, 549–52.

9 See below 3.3.

on every occasion.<sup>10</sup> Albeit he obviously turns against Wisdom of Solomon in Romans 2<sup>11</sup> and mentions his own Pharisaic past as a warning example in Phil. 3:4–9,<sup>12</sup> his reproach finally applies to Judaism as a whole. Consequently, the complexity of the exegetical analysis expands and increases. The following two main alternatives open up: either Paul has been unable to make any explicit difference between heterogenous groups in Judaism, or he has been able to take the manifold Judaism as a sufficiently homogenous phenomenon to the exclusion of any further differentiation. In the former case, the issue concerns from which Judaism Paul precisely broke off in various contexts. In the latter case, the issue concerns why Paul broke off from the whole body of Judaism in a variety of limited contexts.

In the progress of the survey, I avail myself, as it were, of a zoom technique. History of research (chapter 2) gives an overview of the problem area. From the wide picture, it will become apparent how several different scholars rate in each case the relationship between divine grace and human works in Judaism. Also, it will appear whether they ultimately regard Paul's break with Judaism as a deliberate resolution or a precipitate solution. The focus here lies on the problems so far presented. The outlook of Paul still remains in the background since the very general nature of the overview permits no identification of noteworthy distinctions in the details of perceptions among diverse scholars. They all agree (or sufficiently so) that divine grace as opposed to human works displays a central issue for him.

A section enlargement follows the general overview. Now attention lies on the methodology of Sanders ("a comparison of patterns of religion"), since at present his results stand in the limelight of exegetical research. The critical analysis of his definition and application of method (chapter 3) shows some very serious cracks in the foundation of his conclusions. It will turn out here that he ignores the question of human ability, although he does suppose a specific response to it. This deficiency has led to distinct distortions in the big picture. To all appearances, Sanders's juxtaposition of Palestinian Judaism and Paulinism truly falls short. His portrayal of them needs more "exposure" or clarification.

Hence, a further section enlargement engages interest. This time the focus moves to the anthropological presuppositions of the Jewish and Pauline patterns of religion (chapter 4) since they are mainly missing in Sanders's angle of view. He has not zoomed in to reveal them. The completion of his fuzzy and blurry presentation adjusts lenses especially on Paul because some focal details in Pauline anthropology have been partly or totally overlooked in New Testament

---

10 See below 6.7.

11 See below 4.2.1.3.

12 See below 6.6.

scholarship. In regards to Jewish anthropology, mainly a summary of research results will catch the eye.

On close reflection, mere details remain patchy unless integrated within a big picture. Consequently, the many implications and the overall significance of anthropology for the Jewish and Pauline patterns of religion zoom into focus (chapter 5). This kind of clarification ensures the right exposure and facilitates the true comparison.

The comparison between the Jewish and Pauline patterns of religion places the break of Paul with Judaism in a new light. Next, his vehement disputes over the requirements for salvation come into view (chapter 6). Some sharp snapshots should be mediated from the heat of combat.

In the end, the decision must be made in which order all the images are presented. Sanders suggests that Paul thinks “backward,” in other words, from solution (Christ is the Savior) to plight (the whole humanity is in need of Christ on account of their corruption) and not vice versa. Hence, he maintains that the first photos are shown last, and the last photos are shown first. It remains to be seen if he does justice to the object of the picture folder, namely, if soteriology comes before anthropology or anthropology before soteriology in Pauline theology (chapter 7). In the final chapter, I join the sketched images together and hope that the collection is representative (chapter 8).

As if all this were not enough, in this second edition I offer as an epilogue a new photo session that provides an optimal viewing angle. There, the images are adjusted to correspond to the vivid portrait of the apostle Paul, providing a detailed cross-sectional view of the vibrant features of his person. In my high-resolution wallpaper, he is seen as never before, though remaining the same faithful apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ.