

PAUL UNBOUND

SBL Press

EMORY STUDIES IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Vernon K. Robbins, General Editor
Roy R. Jeal, General Editor
Robert H. von Thaden Jr., Associate Editor
David B. Gowler, Associate Editor
Meghan Henning
Juan Hernández Jr.
Susan E. Hylan
Mikeal C. Parsons
Russell B. Sisson
Shively T. J. Smith

Number 25

SBL Press



PAUL UNBOUND

Other Perspectives on the Apostle

Second Edition

Edited by

Mark D. Given

SBL Press



SBL PRESS

Atlanta

Copyright © 2022 by SBL Press

Publication of this volume was made possible by the generous support of the Pierce Program in Religion of Oxford College of Emory University.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by means of any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed in writing to the Rights and Permissions Office, SBL Press, 825 Houston Mill Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 USA.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022940025

Cover design is an adaptation by Bernard Madden of Rick A. Robbins, *Mixed Media* (19" x 24" pen and ink on paper, 1981). Cover design used by permission of Deo Publishing.

SBL Press

CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Abbreviations	ix
Introduction	
<i>Mark D. Given</i>	1
1. Paul and the Roman Empire: Recent Perspectives	
<i>Warren Carter</i>	9
2. Paul and Economics: The Jerusalem Collection as an Alternative to Patronage	
<i>Steven J. Friesen</i>	41
3. Paul and His Opponents: The Search	
<i>Jerry L. Sumney</i>	79
4. Paul and Ethnicity: A Selective History of Interpretation	
<i>Charles H. Cosgrove</i>	99
5. Paul and the Law: Pressure Points in the Debate	
<i>A. Andrew Das</i>	133
6. Paul and Judaism: Why Not <i>Paul's Judaism</i> ?	
<i>Mark D. Nanos</i>	157
7. Paul and Women: Telling Women to Shut Up Is More Complicated Than You Might Think	
<i>Deborah Krause</i>	217
8. Paul and Rhetoric: A <i>Sophos</i> in the Kingdom of God	
<i>Mark D. Given</i>	237

Contributors	275
Ancient Sources Index	277
Modern Authors Index	285

SBL Press

PREFACE

Plans for a second edition of *Paul Unbound* came about in November of 2017, when Vernon Robbins went to the bookstore to order the first edition for his Paul class and was informed it was out of print. The book was originally published by Hendrickson Publishers in 2010 and marketed very well by them, but in 2013 it was sold to Baker Academic along with many other titles and quickly allowed to go out of print. So I was delighted when Vernon contacted me about the possibility of reprinting the book in the Emory Studies in Early Christianity series. I suggested the possibility of bringing the book up to date if the original contributors were willing to participate and, fortunately, they all were. The updating took the form of an addendum added to each essay that brings discussion of each topic up to date. The bibliographies are updated as well, and the Introduction is revised to take account of the added content.

Above all, I wish to thank the contributors to this volume. Without their dedication and cooperation the first edition would not have been possible. In spite of circumstances ranging from excessive teaching and administrative duties to health issues, they all came through with outstanding essays. And I am doubly grateful for their willingness to do the work necessary to produce this updated edition. I also want to thank Riley Brown, my graduate assistant, who helped with proofreading and indexing. Finally, I want to express my gratitude to Vernon Robbins and David Gowler for their invitation to republish the volume, and to Bob Buller, the director of SBL Press, and his staff for all their assistance in making it happen. Acquiring the rights and a copy of the first edition of the book in a suitable file format turned out to be a little more complicated than anyone anticipated. Hopefully, the finished product will have made the effort worthwhile.

SBL Press

ABBREVIATIONS

Primary Sources

1QS	Rule of the Community
<i>Abr.</i>	Philo, <i>De Abrahamo</i>
<i>A.J.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
Avod. Zar.	Avodah Zarah
b.	Babylonian Talmud
<i>B.J.</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum judaicum</i>
B. Metz.	Bava Metzi'a
<i>De or.</i>	Cicero, <i>De oratore</i>
<i>Doctr. chr.</i>	Augustine, <i>De doctrina christiana</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	Philo, <i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	Philo, <i>De vita Mosis</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	Philo, <i>De migratione Abrahami</i>
<i>QE</i>	Philo, <i>Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum</i>
Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Shabb.	Shabbat
<i>Spec.</i>	Philo, <i>De specialibus legibus</i>
t.	Tosefta
<i>Virt.</i>	Philo, <i>De virtutibus</i>
Yevam.	Yevamot

Secondary Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken (Spät)judentums und des Urchristentums
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum louvaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie

<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
COQG	Christian Origins and the Question of God
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CSHJ	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
ET	English translation
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Etudes Théologiques et Religieuses</i>
HB	Hebrew Bible
HBS	History of Biblical Studies
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
<i>HR</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>IDB</i>	Buttrick, George A., ed. <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . 4 vols. New York: Abingdon, 1962.
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>

JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
LTV	<i>Lexington Theological Quarterly</i>
NASB	New American Standard Bible
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDB	Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob, ed. <i>New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–2009.
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NPNF	Schaff, Philip, and Henry Wace, eds. <i>A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church</i> . 28 vols. in 2 series. 1886–1889. Repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTL	New Testament Library
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
ST	<i>Studia theologica</i>
ThSt	Theologische Studien
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum

<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WGRWSup	Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

SBL Press

INTRODUCTION

MARK D. GIVEN

This collection of essays provides the advanced undergraduate, graduate student, or interested layperson with an outstanding introduction to a wide range of fascinating approaches to Paul that are relevant to, yet go beyond, traditional theological and historical concerns. All of the contributors have previously published important work on their assigned topic. The collection grew out of a panel presentation on the topic of “Newer Perspectives on Paul” at the 2004 Central States Society of Biblical Literature Meeting in St. Louis. As chair of the New Testament section, I did not plan the panel with the intention of producing a book, but the range of subjects covered and the quality of the presentations made it immediately apparent to the participants that we should do so. Several of us teach introductory Paul courses, and we could see how desirable it would be to have such a collection of essays available to supplement any standard textbook. It took until 2010 to bring the volume to fruition, but all of the essays were expanded and updated to include scholarship produced since 2004. For this second edition, each contributor added an addendum to his or her essay to take account of scholarship produced over the past decade. Each essay includes an up-to-date bibliography that will be useful to students for further reading and research.

Mark Nanos suggested the title, *Paul Unbound*. It calls to mind the myth of Prometheus, who was bound on orders from Zeus for stealing fire and giving it, along with other gifts of knowledge, to the human race. Certainly Paul was not bound by God—at least not in this sense—but one might playfully suggest that he has often been bound by tradition and theology, and these essays reflect some of the ways in which the study of Paul has been liberated from a variety of traditional or conventional perspectives in recent years. While contemplating Mark’s suggested title, I came upon Dirck van Baburen’s seventeenth-century painting, *Prometheus Being*

Chained by Vulcan. This painting reminded me of Caravaggio's celebrated *Conversion of Saint Paul*, and, in fact, Baburen was strongly influenced by the style of Caravaggio. Baburen's painting suggested the following allegory to me. Hermes on the right is the messenger of Zeus and thus represents theological hermeneutics. Hephaestus on the left represents the traditional historical-critical method, which has often served theology against its will. Thus, theological interpretation and traditional historical criticism have joined to constrain Paul, to keep him bound. The contributors to this volume are like an unseen Greek chorus, which, as in Aeschylus's fifth-century BCE play, *Prometheus Bound*, ultimately advocates for the liberation of Prometheus (hence Paul).¹

The subtitle, *Other Perspectives on the Apostle*, was my idea. It recalls such well-worn phrases in Paul scholarship as "new perspectives," which often meant new theological interpretations, and *the New Perspective*, which is important in several of these essays but is not the main focus of any. This is not to say that theological issues play no role in any of these essays—they do—but it is to say that they do not command the stage.

It is thus fitting that the first essay begins with the observation that "For a growing number of scholars, Paul's primary engagement was not with other Jesus-followers nor with first-century Judaism but with the Roman Empire." Warren Carter's "Paul and the Roman Empire: Recent Perspectives" surveys and evaluates the work of the Society of Biblical Literature's Paul and Politics Group. Echoing Richard Horsley, Carter locates its origin initially in wider academic and cultural contexts, namely, the rediscovery of imperialism in other disciplines, postcolonial criticism, the influence of non-European-American scholars, and some historical Jesus work that has given attention to the Roman imperial world. The group has investigated four interrelated areas: Paul and the politics of the churches; Paul and the politics of Israel; Paul and the politics of the Roman Empire; and Paul and the politics of interpretation. Carter surveys three volumes of essays that pursue these topics: *Paul and Empire* (1997), *Paul and Politics* (2000), and *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (2004). He then goes on to consider other important works, especially those of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Neil Elliot, John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan Reed, Peter Oakes, and Davina Lopez. Carter concluded his original essay with several incisive suggestions for further work. His addendum begins by calling attention to significant discussions of Paul's writings in relation to the Roman imperial order since 2010 before turning to four matters: some areas of focus; methodological approaches (especially the use of images and postcolo-



Dirck van Baburen, *Prometheus Being Chained by Vulcan*. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Gift of J. von Loehr, Cairo.

nial theory); evaluations; and attention to the post-Pauline (or disputed authorship) writings.

Steven Friesen's "Paul and Economics: The Jerusalem Collection as an Alternative to Patronage" is an apt extension of the topics covered in Carter's essay. Friesen argues that we need to construct a different picture of Paul the activist. Rather than describing him simply as a theologian and rhetorician, we need to examine his economic practices, for his gospel not only challenged fundamental economic *ideas* such as patronage; it also promoted alternative economic *practices* of community sharing among the

poor, based not on contemporary ideas of patronage but rather on Paul's understanding of the example of Christ. Friesen is able to report in his addendum that attention to the economic dimensions of Paul's letters and communities has increased significantly in recent years, although scholarship is still dominated by discussions of his biography and theology. He discusses modifications and improvements to the methods utilized in his original essays and concludes with several suggestions for further research.

The next essay is Jerry Sumney's "Paul and His Opponents: The Search." Sumney reviews the major outlines of the ways Paul's opponents have been understood from F. C. Baur's *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ* in 1845 down through the twentieth century. Methodological issues are the dominant concern of the essay. These include distinguishing between those whom Paul opposes and those who opposed Paul; evaluating types of texts within a letter to determine their usefulness for acquiring data to identify opponents; recognizing the implications of the diverse nature of early Christianity; and the use of reconstructions of other groups within the first-century environment to supply information about Paul's opponents. Sumney concluded his original essay with an examination of two recent studies of Colossians as examples of the ways careful attention to methodology is important and still neglected. His addendum begins by noting that there has been little discussion of how to approach the search for the identity of opponents in recent years. However, he goes on to discuss the weaknesses of recent strictly literary and canonical approaches to the topic of Paul's opponents before calling attention to the greater potential for advancing the topic found in scholarship on women and slaves.

In "Paul and Ethnicity: A Selective History of Interpretation," Charles Cosgrove provides the first broad survey of interpretation of Paul and ethnicity, treating not only Pauline scholarship on this topic but also more popular efforts to grasp Paul's attitude toward ethnic identity. His survey of Pauline scholarship covers the subjects of "The Universal (Nonethnic) Human Being in Paul," "Paul and Anti-Semitism," "Separate but Equal' in Paul?," "Divine Impartiality in Paul," "Interpretations of Galatians 3:28," and "Paul contra Ethnocentrism." He goes on to survey other fascinating interpretations of Paul and ethnicity, such those of African American thinkers from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; the radical nationalist translation commentary on Romans for the Zulu people by nineteenth-century missionary Bishop Colenzo; Holmes Rolston's effort in 1942 to interpret Paul in an antiracist way in and for a Southern Christian audience in America; and Daniel Boyarin's interpretation of Paul and ethnicity from a

Jewish perspective. The essay also provides a discussion of post-Holocaust, dispensationalist, and recent non-Christian philosophical interpretations of Paul as they bear on the question of ethnicity. The addendum brings things up to date by concentrating on the scholarship of Caroline Johnson Hodge, Cavan W. Concannon, Simon Buttica, and Karin B. Neutel.

Andrew Das's "Paul and the Law: Pressure Points in the Debate" is the first of two essays that engage, in differing ways, the bewildering scholarly territory of Paul and the law. Das helpfully offers the beginning student a roadmap for identifying key landmarks. He presents an introduction to the New Perspective on Paul as well as ongoing criticisms of it. Along the way, he introduces his own perspective on Paul and the law that is not simply a middle way between the New Perspective and the traditional "Lutheran" one, but what he argues is a *Newer* Perspective that takes seriously the strengths and weaknesses of both. His addendum adds another pressure point to the debate that has received much attention recently: the matter of how one views God's righteousness and justification in the Pauline letters. Much of the debate revolves around the relationship of righteousness and covenant in the Hebrew Bible, as well as the issue of whether Paul has a covenantal theology at all.

Mark Nanos's essay is the longest in this collection and one of the most challenging for students. Its title is "Paul *and* Judaism: Why Not *Paul's* Judaism?" He published a somewhat revised and updated version of it in 2015, and that is the version included here. Nanos observes that the investigation of Paul *and* Judaism has traditionally proceeded as if what was written was Paul *or* Judaism, with the understanding that these referents represent two different religious systems. They proceed as if the two are different and something must be wrong with one or the other. Nanos believes this essentializing of difference and concomitant requirement to find fault will continue to the degree that the ethnic division that Paul's letters draw along a Jew/gentile and Israel/other nations line within a Christ-believing Judaism continues to be approached by his interpreters as if drawn along a Judaism/Christianity line instead. Nanos challenges prevailing interpretations of 1 Cor 9:19–23 that construe it as a "chameleon principle" that renders Paul's law observance a sham, and, while appreciative of the New Perspective's improved understanding of Judaism, he finds it still inadequate in its understanding of Paul. It is still too indebted to traditional constructions of Paul and Paulinism. Nanos, however, insists that what Paul would find wrong with Paulinism is that it is not a Judaism. In his addendum, Nanos demonstrates that his position on Paul is not as for-

eign to the field on New Testament studies as it was when he wrote this essay. While still a controversial minority view, several publications have argued for forms of it, and numerous SBL and international conferences have included sections or sessions on it.

The next essay is Deborah Krause's "Paul and Women: Telling Women to Shut Up Is More Complicated Than You Might Think," which surveys recent historical-critical scholarship regarding women and the churches of Paul. The survey shows that feminist research has challenged Pauline scholars to incorporate the study of the everyday lives of women in Hellenistic Judaism and Greco-Roman culture into the study of the Pauline Epistles. Such studies have moved from examining Paul's rhetoric as unique to placing it within its larger contexts of religion, economics, politics, and culture of his day. As such, women are no longer a separate subject area within Pauline studies but rather a part of the world within which Paul is understood to operate. In this sense, texts such as 1 Cor 11:1–16 or 1 Cor 14:34–36, which have traditionally been studied as evidence of Paul's attitudes toward women, are examined within their larger rhetorical contexts for what they might say about women and their activities within the church and world in general. Krause examines several Pauline texts in light of these newer approaches. In particular, the issue of women's speech provides a focus for the study of how Paul's rhetoric is engaged within a larger discourse of power. Moreover, texts from the Pastoral Epistles (extensions of the Pauline legacy) are examined for the way in which they engage women's speech and activity within the church (e.g., 1 Tim 2:8–15; 5:11–13; 2 Tim 3:6–7). In sum, these texts are interpreted not as evidence for Paul's attitudes toward women but rather for how they reveal struggles of identity and power within the churches of Paul and how these struggles connect with expectations of women and their speech within the larger culture. Krause's addendum begins with the provocative statement that newer scholarship on Paul and women is both less about Paul and less about women. Clearly the scholarly terrain has much expanded, as witnessed by the increase in critical discourse regarding gender, postcolonial, space, and queer theories. Her survey of recent scholarship shows that such approaches are even beginning to appear in journals traditionally focused on historical-critical exegetical concerns.

The final essay is my own "Paul and Rhetoric: A *Sophos* in the Kingdom of God." After providing a brief overview of the history of the subject of Paul and rhetoric, I discuss how classical or new rhetorical criticism is applied to 1 Corinthians. Lastly, I use aspects of interpretation of 1 Cor 1–4

to contrast a classical with a more postmodern rhetorical approach. This final section broadens the subject of rhetoric and power to discuss some of the seductions of Paul's rhetoric. Why would someone want to enter the kingdom of God? Why would someone want to choose it over the empire of Rome? Intriguingly, the values and rewards of the kingdom of God turn out to have some striking similarities to those of this age. Paul's rhetorical questions, "Where is the *sophos*? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age?" actually imply another question: Where is the *sophos*, the scribe, and the debater of the new age, the new creation? I argue that the answer is where Paul is, together with all those who will imitate him. The wisdom and knowledge he offers does not seduce with the promise of glory in the kingdom of Rome like that of the *sophos* of this age, but it does seduce with the promise a surpassing eternal weight of glory in a kingdom that is about to appear. In my addendum, I initially draw attention to several volumes published around the time of my essay and afterwards that show that New Testament rhetorical criticism was in a period of reflection and self-assessment at that time. I go on to discuss continuing controversies regarding Paul and rhetoric and the sometimes better and sometimes worse ways rhetorical criticism is appropriated in New Testament scholarship, especially with regard to Paul.

Not every possible other perspective on Paul is represented here. Still, whatever its shortcomings, I hope this volume will prove useful and worthwhile for students and interested lay readers. If so, perhaps a future edition can include yet more perspectives. Indeed, as long as there are readers of Paul, there will be always be other perspectives.

Note

1. Aeschylus also wrote a lost play titled *Prometheus Unbound* in which Prometheus was reconciled with Zeus. Interestingly, however, in 1820 Percy Shelley published his own *Prometheus Unbound* in which Zeus was overthrown and the effects of Prometheus's actions led to a transformed humanity that was "Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man / Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless" (3.4.194–195). While Shelley would have had no sympathy with the traditional Paul, the allegorical possibilities for comparing his Prometheus to the "other" Pauls of this collection abound.