

EMMANUEL NATHAN, *Re-membering the New Covenant at Corinth: A Different Perspective on 2 Corinthians 3* (WUNT II 514; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020). Pp. xiv + 207. Paperback. €79.00.

Emmanuel Nathan's excellent KU Leuven doctoral thesis explores the insufficiently pursued but crucial question whether the "new covenant" (*kainē diathēkē*) replaces the "old covenant" in 2 Corinthians 3:6–18. Traditionally, this antithesis conveyed a negative assessment of Judaism in the self-understanding of early Christianity. Nathan contends that "2 Cor 3:6–18 should not be characterised as a negative assessment of Judaism or the Law, but rather a reflection on Paul's own life prior to, during, and after conversion," mirroring "an already undertaken separation process from out of the synagogue to house-Church" (184). Donaldson's paradigm of conversion, which reconfigures the continuous and discontinuous around a new centre (19–20), provides the conceptual starting point for Nathan's study. However, Nathan concludes that it was only as a *later* hermeneutical move that our pericope "was understood as representing a separation process from 'Judaism'" (164). The monograph steers a middle path in New Perspective studies between Sanders's discontinuous and Dunn's continuous approaches to Jewish covenantal categories (12–17, 21–26). Conversely, Nathan highlights what was "new" for the apostle over against the "radical new perspective" (16–17; i.e., Gaston, Stowers, Nanos), which affirms Paul's all-defining Jewishness. Boccaccini's portrait of an Enochian Paul who taught three pathways of salvation (*Paul's Three Paths to Salvation* [Eerdmans, 2020]) demonstrates the continuing traction of this viewpoint. Nathan postulates that there were definite limits to Paul's accommodation to his ancestral faith, noting that we have to take seriously the "new wine" in the new Pauline wineskins.

Regarding 2 Corinthians 3, Nathan argues, over against the New Perspective "covenant renewal" of Dunn and Christiansen (24–33), that "covenant" was central to Paul's thought despite his rare usage of *diathēkē*, a conclusion reinforced by Porter's argument that covenantal semantic domains appear throughout Paul's epistles (33–37). Consequently, Nathan engages with Hafemann's discussion of *kainē diathēkē* in 2 Cor 3:6. Hafemann posited that there were two covenants, not just one covenant renewed. In Hafemann's view, *kainē diathēkē* did not constitute "a Pauline critique of the Law, or even of legalism" (42). Rather Paul's phrase (a) promoted a positive view of the law (46–48), (b) did not align with the New Perspective's sociological evaluation of the Law or traditional Lutheran critiques of the Law (42, 50–57), and (c) was inextricably tied to Christ's death (1 Cor 11:25) and Old Testament covenantal prophecies (44–45; Jer 31; Ezek 36). In sum, Nathan's masterly coverage of the modern scholarship (5–61) is incisive, insightful in its assessments, and strategic for his fine exegetical analysis of the discontinuous terms *katargeō* (2 Cor 3:7, 11, 13) and *telos* (2 Cor 3:13), including the difficult issue of their referents. What follows is an authoritative unpacking of the complex exegetical issues involved, spotlighting the

ambiguity of the referents (62–75) and leaving us (frustratingly!) in a position of uncertainty regarding Paul’s meaning. The hermeneutical solution to this conundrum, Nathan argues in the rest of his monograph, is the application of sounder heuristic models if the tensions between continuous and discontinuous covenantal contrasts are to be resolved (75). It is the strength of Nathan’s use of methodological models that enables us to move from uncertainty about the apostle’s meaning to a greater clarity in our post-Lutheran and post-New Perspective era.

First, Nathan delineates several sociological approaches to identity formation and transformation in Paul (76–91), instancing Engberg-Pedersen (identity transference), Adams (world-construction), Watson (ideological group legitimization), Horrell (corporate Christology) and Campbell (universal-particular dialectic). Second, Nathan investigates a series of scriptural arguments relating to identity formation in 2 Cor 3:6–18 (92–109): Paul’s use of scriptural reasoning (Exod 34:29–35), his purported use of charismatic exegesis predicated on prior mystical experience (2 Cor 3:18), eschatological exegesis reminiscent of the DSS, and apocalyptic discourse. Third, the link between identity and memory is analysed for its impact upon group formation from several perspectives (Lieu, Byrskog, Esler), especially in relation to the “mnemonic tradition” regarding the glory of Moses, as believers transitioned out of the synagogue and into the house-Church (110–25). Fourth, the imprint of this social memory is captured in Paul’s surprising opposition of the *palaia diathêkê* (“old covenant”) to the *kainê diathêkê*, avoiding the extremes of total continuity and discontinuity (147). Fifth, Le Donne’s model of mnemonic refraction (133–36) provides sympathetic insight into Paul’s reconfiguration of pre-existing scriptural traditions and the mnemonic cycles of *kainê diathêkê* (1 Cor 11:23–26; 2 Cor 3:6b) in the Corinthian correspondence (137–55). Sixth, Paul’s remembering of traditions leads him to recast himself as a “second Moses” (156–64), although the type symbolises his former life in Judaism, the apostle having been transformed upon conversion and, presently, being continuously transformed in Christ in the new creation (166–72, 181; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4, 6; 5:17). This rich and rewarding book leaves one question unanswered: when did the “parting of the ways” occur? The *Christianoî* were identified as a separate group at Antioch (Acts 11:26) and by 64 CE Nero was in no doubt whom to persecute. Was Judge correct in speculating that the arrival of the epistle to the Romans at Rome precipitated the parting?

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