

BOOK REVIEW

Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley, eds. *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture* (Symposium Series, 50; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2008). xii + 376 pp. Pbk. US\$44.95.

Anyone who wonders how there can possibly be so much scholarly disagreement over Paul's use of Scripture will have their answer in the 376 pages of *As It Is Written*. The complexities of this area of biblical scholarship involve such diverse issues as how to determine when Paul uses Scripture, for what purpose(s) Paul uses Scripture, how Paul views Scripture, and if Paul's audiences could be expected to recognize when he uses Scripture or to know the surrounding context of the Scripture he uses, to name just a few. The reader will not close the final page of this book with a clear-cut methodology for how to study Paul's use of Scripture, but will have a greater appreciation for the implications of our assumptions about Paul's use of Scripture, an awareness of the types of questions that need to be answered when considering Paul's use of Scripture in a particular passage, and a good understanding of current biblical scholarship in this important area of research.

The first of the five parts in *As It Is Written* (Introduction) is one essay, the shortest in the collection: 'Paul and Scripture: Charting the Course', by Christopher Stanley. Stanley briefly outlines the problem that led to the current book: 'the growing diversity of the field [i.e. the study of Paul's use of Scripture] has...made it harder for scholars to engage in productive dialogue concerning the role of Scripture in Paul's theology and writings' (p. 7). To help remedy this problem, 2005 saw the inauguration of the Paul and Scripture Seminar of the Society of Biblical Literature. The essays contained in the remaining four parts present the results of the first three years of this seminar, which (a) reveal that great diversity still remains among those who work in this field of scholarship, but also (b) give direction to where further research may enhance productive scholarly dialogue.

The second part of the book (Paul's Engagement with Scripture) contains four essays on the various ways in which Paul refers to and interacts with Scripture. Steve Moyise provides the first essay, 'Quotations', where he demonstrates that quotations are not always easy to identify (since not all quotations are clearly marked), nor is the source of the quotation always clear. He discusses the purpose and hermeneutic of Paul's quotations in light of both classical rhetorical handbooks and Jewish parallels in the Dead Sea Scrolls. He considers Paul's concern for context (or lack of it) in his use of quotations, and raises a number of issues related to the interplay between authorial intention and reader perception for determining the meaning of Paul's quotations. Throughout the essay, Moyise presents differing scholarly opinions that result in differing analyses of these issues. He concludes that a variety of approaches is needed to gain a better understanding of quotations in Paul's letters.

Stanley Porter addresses indirect quotation in the next essay, 'Allusions and Echoes'. Relying heavily on literary studies, Porter defines allusion as, 'involving the indirect invoking of a person, place, or literary work...that is concerned with bringing the external person, place, or literary work into the contemporary material' (p. 33). He adds that in the use of allusion: (1) intentionality is necessary, (2) it 'draws upon a common pool of shared knowledge', though the reader's recognition is not necessary, and (3) the purpose is to address 'a particular literary problem' (pp. 35-36). Porter then interacts with Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, for his critique of those who treat allusion and echo as synonyms. He argues that 'echo does not have the specificity of allusion but is reserved for language that is thematically related to a more general notion or concept' (p. 40). He provides examples of both allusion and echo in his essay.

Roy Ciampa's 'Scriptural Language and Ideas' moves beyond direct and indirect quotation to an exploration of broader intertextual relations in the Pauline letters, primarily with the Scriptures, although briefly suggesting connections with the Roman Empire. After discussing the reality of intertextuality within literature, as well as the challenge in recognizing biblical influence in the Pauline writings, Ciampa suggests four criteria (in the hopes that others will improve his list) for determining when Paul has been influenced by the Scriptures as opposed to 'some other primary background' (p. 48). He goes on to suggest some concepts and ideas Paul was likely to have considered

biblical. He also considers how Jesus' life and Paul's experiences may have influenced Paul's understanding of certain biblical concepts and ideas, and ponders the rhetorical impact of these biblical references.

The final essay in Part Two is 'Biblical Narratives' by Steven DiMattei. He challenges the widely-held view that Paul interprets Scripture typologically. He convincingly argues that τύπος was not used 'as a term for the prefiguring of the future in prior history' (p. 63; quoting Goppelt, *Typos*) by the earliest Christian sources that used the word in reference to biblical narratives. DiMattei rather finds closer parallels to Paul's use of biblical narratives in first-century Jewish hermeneutical principles, especially as seen in the Qumran pesharim. He concludes that Paul sees the Scriptures bearing witness to his own historical situation, thus expanding the context within which to understand the biblical narratives 'to include Paul's own story' (p. 92). Although I remain unconvinced by all of DiMattei's arguments, his is an important essay that effectively challenges the typological approach to Paul's use of biblical narratives.

There are three essays in Part Three (Paul and his Audiences), each of which relates to Paul's and his recipients' knowledge of and access to Scripture. Stanley Porter commences this section with 'Paul and his Bible: His Education and Access to the Scriptures of Israel'.¹ Porter discusses what is known about the educational system, the interplay of oral and book cultures, and literacy in the ancient world in which Paul lived. He concludes with some suggestions for how this material informs our understanding of Paul's use of Scripture. Paul is convincingly presented as a relatively well-educated man trained in both Greco-Roman and Torah-based educational systems, able to read (both aloud and silently), write and compose letters, and whose education equipped him to utilize full-book manuscripts, anthologies and his own memory in quoting from both Scripture and Greek authors.

1. A revised version of this paper has been published as Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, 'Paul's Bible, his Education and his Access to the Scriptures of Israel', *JGRChJ* 5 (2008), pp. 9-41. It contains numerous stylistic changes, different paragraph divisions, a handful of minor edits, and four significant changes: (1) a discussion of the meanings of τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ and ἀνατεθραμμένος in Acts 22.3; (2) an explanation of why Paul's literary education did not result in more quotations from secular authors in his letters; (3) an argument that Gal. 6.11 does not indicate Paul's illiteracy; and (4) a pared down citing of examples for how Paul likely used various sources in his Scriptural quotations.

In ‘Paul’s “Use” of Scripture: Why the Audience Matters’, Christopher Stanley refutes Hays’s argument (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*) that in Paul’s use of echo and allusion he intended his audiences ‘to recall the broader literary context from which the [Scripture] reference was selected and to rethink the meaning of the passage under the tutelage of Paul’s own Christian reading of the text’ (p. 132). Stanley argues that due to widespread illiteracy (general and biblical), as well as limited access to and difficulty finding specific passages in biblical scrolls, Hays expects too much of Paul’s audience. Rather, Paul’s letters largely contain sufficient information for his readers to understand the significance of his Scripture quotations. Stanley demonstrates this briefly with 2 Cor. 4.13 and Gal. 3.6-14. This well-reasoned essay could have been strengthened if Stanley had explained how the likelihood of Scripture anthologies (an issue raised by Porter in the previous essay) would impact his argument.

Part Three concludes with ‘Synagogue Influence and Scriptural Knowledge among the Christians of Rome’, in which Bruce Fisk examines Stanley’s claim (*Arguing with Scripture*) that few people in Paul’s audience had significant knowledge of the Scriptures. Fisk limits his study to Paul’s audience in Rome, considering two questions: ‘What can we know about the historical relationship between church and synagogue in mid-first century Rome? And how much has the synagogue shaped, schooled, and influenced Paul’s earliest Roman readers?’ (p. 160). Fisk argues for a strong possibility that Roman Christians, both Jewish and Gentile, were involved in synagogue life in the mid-first century. And since Torah reading was a vital component of the synagogue, Paul could expect the Roman Christians to be familiar with many of the Scripture passages he quotes in Romans. The greatest weakness of Fisk’s essay is his reliance upon possibilities rather than evidence for ongoing Roman Christian involvement in the Jewish synagogues.

The fourth part (Paul’s Intertextual Background[s]) includes two essays that discuss specific examples of intertextuality in the book of Romans, the first of which is ‘The Meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans: An Intertextual Suggestion’, by Douglas Campbell. Campbell briefly presents sound evidence that Paul is echoing Ps 98.2-3 (LXX 97.2-3) in Rom. 1.17 (apparently following Hays’s definition of ‘echo’, in *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* rather than Porter’s in the second part of *As It Is Written*). Then in his quest to determine the

meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Rom. 1.17, Campbell discusses the issue of kingship, which he correctly sees as an important element in both Psalm 98 and the book of Romans. This ultimately leads him to conclude that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is in Paul a saving act of God (a simplified definition of his on p. 211). Campbell's definition of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ failed to convince me because he did not address the (I think more likely) possibility that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is demonstrated by the saving acts of God, rather than actually being a saving act of God.

The next essay is “Blasphemed among the Nations”: Pursuing an Anti-imperial “Intertextuality” in Romans’ by Neil Elliott. He draws heavily on the work of others to note that (1) dominant and subordinate classes in an empire have both ‘public’ and ‘hidden’ perspectives about each other, (2) audiences in the Roman Empire had a ‘remarkable sensitivity’ to social commentary (including political) in theatrical performances, and (3) the book of Romans has echoes of Roman imperial ideology (which he argues Paul’s audience would be as sensitive to as to those in the theatre). He applies these insights to Romans 2–3, where he argues that Paul is combating incorrect views of God’s mercy and justice, views which were influenced by imperial boasts of clemency and negative societal attitudes toward Judeans (justice-avoiding troublemakers) whom Nero allowed to return from exile.

The final part of the book (‘Paul and Scripture’ through Other Eyes) contains three essays, the first of which is ‘Paul and Writing’, by Mark Given. This essay is an initial attempt to consider how Paul viewed writing in general, including Scripture. His starting point is Derrida’s term, logocentrism (in *Dissemination*), which includes a privileging of speech over writing and presence over absence. Given examines a number of Pauline passages to argue that Paul is thoroughly logocentric, valuing presence and oral communication over the written word. It is the Spirit (the presence of the living God) that gives life, and this presence will be fully realized when Christ returns, making Paul’s logocentrism apocalyptic in nature. There is much to commend in Given’s essay, but at times it appears that logocentrism is forced on Paul. For instance, it seems that Paul’s privileging of preaching over writing (p. 253) in Rom. 10.14-17 is at least as much a result of low literacy rates in the first century as it is of an apocalyptic logocentrism.

Next is Jeremy Punt’s essay, ‘Paul and Postcolonial Hermeneutics: Marginality and/in Early Biblical Interpretation’, in which he takes ‘a first step’ (p. 268) in considering Paul’s use of Scripture using a

postcolonial approach. He builds a strong case that Paul is engaged in a 'discourse of power' within the Roman Empire, utilizing the Scriptures within that discourse. In a largely illiterate world, Paul had a degree of power and was able to engage the powers of his day through his letters. Yet as a Christian, Paul was in a marginalized position in society. Punt examines Paul's defense of his ministry in 2 Corinthians 10–13 to show how Paul used Scripture both to challenge the claims of the powerful, and to support his own position of power. His examination of the Corinthian passage incorporates issues such as mimicry, ambivalence, weakness, hybridity and marginality, all of which help to situate Paul's defense within an imperial context.

The final contribution to *As It Is Written* is Kathy Ehrensperger's 'Paul and the Authority of Scripture: A Feminist Perception'. She contests the assumption that Scripture is authoritative in the sense of power-over (i.e. domination) and is thereby used by Paul to obtain submission to his views. Instead, she explores alternative views of power to suggest that Paul uses Scripture 'as an encouragement to empower people to life in Christ' (p. 319). She supports this argument with discussions of Jewish and non-Jewish perspectives of written texts and the issue of canon, concluding that texts become Scripture within a community that recognizes their importance. Furthermore, interpretation of those texts is fluid, ongoing and democratic; Paul is just one participant in this interpretation. Although it still remains to be shown that Paul *never* uses Scripture 'to issue a final word that cannot be challenged' (p. 319), Ehrensperger has formidably challenged the assumption that Paul *always* uses Scripture in this way.

I highly recommend *As It Is Written* as an important contribution to Pauline studies. The diverse assumptions, approaches and conclusions in this book will not please all readers, but they cannot be ignored by those desiring to understand how Paul uses Scripture. Diversity is not surprising in such a complicated field of study; one can hope that a future collection of essays stemming from the Paul and Scripture Seminar will evidence greater understanding of and unity in regards to the issues raised in this volume.

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