

David Lincicum, **Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy**, Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

*Review Part One*  
Chapters One – Five

Lincicum's volume is a revision of his Oxford dissertation and is comprised of nine chapters. In part one of this review, I'll look at chapters one through five. Part two, which will appear in due course, will be comprised of chapters six through nine.

Chapter one introduces his thesis, which is essentially that Paul is one among many Jewish interpreters of Deuteronomy. L.'s interest lies in Jewish texts which were composed between the third century BCE to the third century CE, and how these texts may shed light on Paul.

L. is an excellent and vivid writer, as already evidenced in the introduction to his work. Delightful lines intersperse technical descriptions such as, when describing the present study's approach he wryly notes that his approach isn't the only valid approach and that he does not see his predecessors as '... thieves and robbers, or, to change the metaphor, as mired in the darkness of ignorance only now to be dispelled by the light of my own conclusions' (p. 8). Scholarly humor and humility! A rare combination these days.

As to the aim of his work, '... the present study could be described as a meta-commentarial endeavor – a study of the study of Deuteronomy' (p. 12). Will he achieve it? He does magisterially in the first five chapters. But he has another aim as well, and one which, to me, is even more important: '... it may not be enough simply to ask what Judaism can tell us about Paul; rather, we should also ask what Paul may tell us about Judaism. This investigation also, then, serves as a small contribution to the reintegration of New Testament study with the study of Second Temple Judaism...' (p. 16).

Chapter two commences the meat of the matter, with a look at the ways in which Deuteronomy was utilized in liturgical texts during the Second Temple period (in tefillin, mezuzoth and excerpted texts). Here we encounter our first typo- on page 32, where we read 'nam' instead of 'name' on the second line after the quote. And our second typo on p. 45 where we read 'inquestion' instead of 'in question' on the 11<sup>th</sup> line from the top. More importantly, we also learn that 'Paul probably encountered a Septuagintal form of Deuteronomy in a Greek speaking synagogue during his days of study in Jerusalem, and may have committed it to memory there. While his reading of Deuteronomy as a whole involves factors beyond the liturgical, the liturgical importance of certain sections of the book is reflected in his letters as well' (p. 49).

L. has lots to say about the Qumran materials and Deuteronomy (chapter three). Of the DSS he assumes the '... Groningen hypothesis of Qumran origins, which suggests that the manuscripts found near Qumran reflect a sect that is an off-shoot of a broader Essene movement' (p. 64-65). His description is extraordinarily thorough and quite useful. But the chapter also contains an odd error (on page 83)- where  $\tau$  is replaced by its final form at the beginning of דבר (in the middle of the page).

The fourth chapter draws our attention to the uses to which Deuteronomy was put in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Here, L. examines Jubilees, 2 Maccabees, Pseudo-Philo, Tobit, Baruch, and the Testament of Moses. 'These apocrypha and pseudepigrapha look to Deuteronomy for an undeniably similar reason: to make sense of the present difficulty and to gain hope for a better future' (p. 98).

Finally, so far as the first part of this two part review is concerned, L. takes us by the hand and guides us through the labyrinth known as Philo (and his use of Deuteronomy). Philo, he asserts, is fascinating because of the 'multiform and surprising ways in which the biblical text is made to serve his interpretive ends' (p. 100). Personally, that is exactly why I find Philo so deathly boring. He doesn't exegete, he eisegetes. But he seems to be important in setting Paul in his context, so I suppose he has to be endured. 'For Philo, Deuteronomy is above all a useful book of exhortation, of law, of theological reflection, and he employs it accordingly to all these ends' (p. 116).

All of that to set the stage for seeing how Paul used Deuteronomy. Is his understanding of the book along the lines already laid out; or does he do something different, something unique with it? That is the central question, isn't it? The foundation has been laid. What will L. build upon it?