
Getting the Gospel Right: Assessing the Reformation and the New Perspective on Paul

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I. Introduction (1)

A. Expression "New Perspective" (NP) coined by James Dunn

1. New Perspective - Danger of "New Views"

"If the catholicity of the church means anything, it means that the church should cultivate a profound respect for its inheritances in the faith, and look with suspicion upon present-day theological fads."
[1]

B. An overview of the direction of the rest of the book

II. The Reformation Perspective on Paul (5)

- A. Before looking at the NP on Paul one must have a good understanding of the "Old Perspective" on Paul - namely the Reformation's understanding of justification
 - 1. Understanding the teaching of the Reformers tends to be a weakness for NP proponents
 - 2. Cannot misrepresent the biblical teaching by saying that we are justified by grace through faith in Christ (an expression that was agreed upon by the signers of ECT)
 - a. The key is the "sola" part of each statement
- B. Three questions that need to be answered:
 - 1. What did the reformers understand by the terminology of "justification?"
 - 2. Why did they insist that this justification is "by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ alone?"
 - 3. Why did they also insist that the gracious justification of believers becomes theirs "by faith alone?"
- C. Justification: A Judicial Declaration of Acceptance with God
 - 1. It is a forensic or judicial declaration (contrary to Rome's view that it is a moral process or transformation)
 - a. Rome blends the concepts of justification and sanctification together
 - 2. The reformers regarding the issue of justification as the central issue of paramount importance as eternal life or death hangs upon this doctrine
- D. "By Grace Alone:" The Basis for Free Justification
 - 1. The reformers basic complaint against the Roman Catholic Church was not that it confused justification and sanctification but Rome's basic error of having a wrong conception of the foundation of the verdict of justification

"In Roman Catholic teaching, God justifies believers in part on the basis of their own righteousness. Because justification includes a process of moral renewal, the righteousness that justifies believers is said to be an inherent righteousness (*iustitia inhaerens*). When God justifies believer, he does not do so solely upon the basis of the work and merits of Christ, which are granted and imputed to

believers by grace, but partly upon the basis of the work and merits of believers, which are the fruit of God's grace at work in them." [11-12]

a. The reformers insisted that justification is wholly a gift of God's grace

(1) Therefore the reformers sharply distinguished between law and Gospel in relation to justification

(2) The doctrine of imputation

(1) The reformers spoke of sinners being *simul iustus et peccator* which drew a sharp contrast to the RC teaching that sinners *are made righteous* whereas the reformers said they are *declared righteous*

E. "Through Faith Alone:" The Instrument of Justification

1. Calvin called this faith an 'empty vessel' in order to stress its character as a receptacle that brings nothing to God but receives all things from him

2. Luther used an analogy of a ring that clasps a jewel - faith has no value in itself but clasps the jewel that is Christ and His righteousness

3. Calvin further taught that faith is a 'passive thing' because it is the cessation of all working and striving to obtain favor with God

"What makes faith a suitable instrument for the reception of free justification is that it is marked by a humble acknowledgment that all honor in salvation belongs to God in Christ." [17-18]

4. But this idea of 'faith alone' apart from works doesn't mean that works will not follow from true faith

a. Note Calvin's statement:

"It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone; just as it is the heat alone of the sun which warms the earth, and yet in the sun it is not alone, because it is constantly conjoined with light."

F. Key Features of the Reformation Perspective

1. The Reformation Perspective views justification as a principle theme of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

2. The Reformation understanding of justification maintains that it is a primarily theological and soteriological theme
3. The Reformation Perspective on justification claims that the medieval Roman Catholic doctrine of justification compromised the Gospel by emphasizing obedience to the law as a partial, meritorious basis for justification

"Luther especially emphasized the essential similarity between the Roman Catholic teaching of salvation by meritorious good works and the Pharisaical or Judaizing teaching of salvation by obedience to the law of God." [21]

Calvin in his commentary on Philippians 3:8, spoke of the Roman Catholics of his time as "present day Pharisees' who uphold "their own merits against Christ." [Commentary on Philippians 3:8]

4. The Reformation Perspective insists that when Paul speaks of 'works' or 'works of the law,' he refers to any acts of obedience to the law, which are regarded as the basis of acceptance with God
5. The Reformers viewed the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as something that God freely grants and imputes to believers

III. A "New Perspective" on Paul (23)

A. Within academia two particular questions have arisen in evaluating the Reformation view:

1. First is the doctrine of justification as central a theme in Paul's understanding of the Gospel as the Reformation perspective suggests, or should a different theme be identified as the dominant feature of Paul's preaching?
2. Second was Paul's relationship with his ancestral religion, Judaism, as uniformly negative as traditional Protestant theology supposed?

B. The implications of these two questions:

1. If the center of Paul's theology is mystical union with Christ rather than the justification of sinners the Reformation reading of the Gospel may reflect an undue narrowing of the scope of Paul's teaching
2. If the Gospel Paul preached was a fulfillment rather than a repudiation of Judaism, the Reformation's emphasis upon Paul's dispute with the Judaizers who were teaching a form of salvation by works, may likewise be a misreading of Paul's teaching

C. Three claims that recur throughout a great deal of literature written by supporters of the NP:

1. The Reformation view of justification was built upon the foundation of a false picture of Judaism at the time of the writing of Paul's epistles
2. The Reformation view of justification improperly identified the problem to which Paul's doctrine of justification was addressed when it took his language about the 'works of the law' to refer to a kind of legalistic righteousness
3. The language of justification in Paul's epistles does not primarily refer to the way guilty sinners find acceptance with God but to the identification of who belongs to the covenant people of God

D. A New View of Second-Temple Judaism: E.P. Sanders

1. Sanders' publication of *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* in 1977 (this work continues to be foundational for NP adherents)
 - a. Sanders compared the pattern of religion evident in Paul's writings with that of Jewish literature during the time frame of 200 BC to 200 AD

- (1) By "pattern of religion" Sanders referred to how a person gets in and stays in the community of God
- (2) Sanders' maintains that Second Temple Judaism exhibits a pattern of religion best described as "covenantal nomism" which Sanders describes as:

"The 'pattern' or 'structure' of covenantal nomism is this: (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies both (3) God's promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved. An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement." [28, emphasis mine]

TAB: The part I underlined is complete and utter nonsense. (1) How can God's mercy be demonstrated in election if election isn't unconditional? (8) How can those who must maintain themselves in the covenant be saved apart from human achievement? This is double-talk akin to those who claim they believe in salvation totally of God's grace because God is gracious by allowing men to work for their salvation!

- (a) Sanders believes that Second Temple Judaism embraced a religion of grace rather than one of legalism (as it has been traditionally held)
 - i. Obedience to the law was only required as a means of maintaining or 'staying in' the covenant community

TAB: This sounds much like Romanism - once you are baptized as an infant (i.e. "born again" into the church) you must maintain your status by following the church and participating in the sacraments.

- b. One big question raised against Sanders is: "What explains Paul's opposition to Judaism?"

If Judaism was not a legalistic religion contrary to the Gospel why does Paul so vigorously argue against it and its system of works-righteousness? Sanders answers the question by suggesting that Paul's view of the human plight was a by-product of his view of salvation.

"Paul starts from the basic conviction that Christ is the only Savior of Jews and Gentiles. Upon the basis of this prior conviction, he then develops a doctrine of the law and human sinfulness that corresponds to it. According to Sanders, the great problem with Judaism, so far as the apostle Paul was concerned, was not that it was legalistic. Paul's principal objection to Judaism was that it rejected the new reality of God's saving work through Christ.

In words that have often been quoted, Sanders concludes: 'In short, *this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity.*' [30]

E. A New View of the "Works of the Law:" James D.G. Dunn

1. The NP claim that the Reformers misunderstood Paul's view of "the works of the law"

In addition to the claim that the Reformation perspective on Paul was mistakenly build upon a wrong view of Judaism, The NP also contends that the Reformational perspective erred in its misunderstanding of Paul's view of "the works of the law"

a. This claim has been championed by James D.G. Dunn, N.T. Professor at Durham, England

Dunn argues that Paul was addressing Jewish ecclesiological exclusivism and not soteriological legalism. The Jews were insisting on certain works of the law that served as 'boundary markers' for inclusion or exclusion from the number of God's people.

(1) In passages like Galatians 2:15-16 and 3:10-14:

"Paul was not opposing a legalistic insistence that obedience to the law of God in general is the basis for finding favor with God. Rather, Paul was opposing the idea that the 'works of the law,' observances that distinguish Jews from Gentiles, are necessary badges of covenant membership. Paul objects to the 'works of the law' that served as ritual markers of identity to separate Jews from Gentiles." [34]

F. A New View of "Justification:" N.T. Wright

1. In interpreting his understanding of justification according to Paul, Wright proceeds from the belief that Sanders and Dunn undermined two essential features of the older, Reformation view:

a. "First, whereas the Reformation perspective assumed that Paul articulated the doctrine of justification in opposition to Jewish legalism, Sanders' study of Second Temple Judaism has demonstrated compellingly that no such legalism was prevalent at the time of the writing of Paul's epistles" [36]

(1) Wright has written: ". . . The tradition of Pauline interpretation has manufactured a false Paul by manufacturing a false Judaism for him to oppose." [36]

Wright calls this, "the retrojection of the Protestant-Catholic debate into ancient history, with Judaism taking the role of Catholicism and Christianity the role of Lutheranism." [37]

- b. "Second, in addition to this agreement with Sanders' general description of Judaism as a non-legalistic religion, Wright also makes sympathetic use of Dunn's interpretation of Paul's dispute with the Judaizers and their understanding of the 'works of the law'" [37]

The problem with the Judaizers' appeal to the law wasn't in its legalism but in its perverted nationalism.

"The Pauline expression, 'the works of the law,' does not refer to a legalistic claim regarding how sinners can find favor with God by obeying the law, but to the nationalistic Jewish claim that God's covenant promise only extends to the Jews." [37]

So the problem Paul was addressing, according to Wright, was the Judaizers boasting in national privilege and their rejection of the Gentiles as equal heirs of the covenant promises.

Wright even insists that the real meaning of the Gospel isn't "how people can be saved from their sin?" but rather, "Who is Lord?" The major focus is on the Lordship of Christ.

TAB: So Wright makes the mistake of equating the Gospel with the person of Christ apart from His work and our responsibility to repent.

2. Several features of Wright's understanding of the doctrine of justification according to Paul

a. Wright's interpretation of the phrase "the righteousness of God"

- (1) Readers of the LXX would have recognized the phrase as referring to God's faithfulness to His promises in the covenant (cf. Isaiah 40-55) - it is His covenantal faithfulness in action and not His moral character that demands retributive justice

- (a) However Wright does admit that the phrase in the O.T. context makes use of a legal court-room metaphor

- (2) Wright denies the imputation of God's righteousness claiming that it makes no sense:

"If we use the language of the law court, it makes no sense whatever to say that he judge imputes, imparts, bequeaths, conveys or otherwise transfers his righteousness to either the plaintiff or the defendant. Righteousness is not an object, a substance or a gas which can be passed across the courtroom." [Wright, cited on page 45]

b. What is it to be justified according to Wright?

- (1) Justification is about knowing who belongs to God's covenant people (not soteriology but ecclesiology)

"Justification' in the first century was not about how someone might establish a relationship with God. It was about God's eschatological definition, both future and present, of who was, in fact, a member of his people. In Sanders' terms, it was not so much about 'getting in,' or indeed about 'staying in,' as about 'how you could tell who was in.' In standard Christian theological language, it wasn't so much about soteriology as about ecclesiology; not so much about salvation as about the church." [Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 119 (cited by Venema on page 47)]

". . . 'justification by works' has nothing to do with individual Jews attempting a kind of proto-Pelagian pulling themselves up by their moral bootstraps, and everything to do with definition of the true Israel in advance of the final eschatological showdown. Justification in this sense, then, is not a matter of *how someone enters the community of the true people of God*, but of *how you tell who belongs to that community*, not least in the period of time before the eschatological event itself, when the matter will become public knowledge." [Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 119 (cited by Venema on page 48)]

c. Faith, the badge of covenant membership according to Wright

- (1) The 'works of the law' were those things that distinguished Jews from Gentiles and kept the latter out of the covenant community; but now that Christ has come faith in Him is the only badge of membership in God's worldwide family
- (2) Wright sees this new view on Paul as something that ought to unite Protestants and Roman Catholics

"Many Christians, both in the Reformation and in the counter-Reformation traditions, have done themselves and the church a great disservice by treating the doctrine of 'justification' as central to their debates, and by supposing that it describes that system by which people attain salvation. They have turned the doctrine into its opposite. Justification declares that all who believe in Jesus Christ belong at the same table, no matter what their cultural or racial differences." [Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 158-59 (cited by Venema on page 50)]

d. Justification: Past, Present and Future

- (1) Wright sees three aspects to justification with an emphasis on the final eschatological emphasis
 - (a) When God justifies a person He does so with a view to the final vindication of that person on the day of judgement
- (2) Justification occurs in three stages (past, present, future)
 - (a) Past - God has already accomplished in the past what He will do at the end of history (Jesus was justified or vindicated as Messiah by His resurrection from the dead)

- (b) Present - all who believe in the past work of Christ's justification are presently justified - that is they are acknowledged by God to be members of the one family of faith composed of Jew and Gentile

TAB: This view terminally blurs the essential distinction between the concept of vindication (that those who are born again will demonstrate that by their deeds and be vindicated thereby) and justification as a consequence of regeneration. It seems that there is no room in Wright's system for a subjective / objective regeneration.

- (c) Future - The final justification will include a "justification by works"

- i. Wright on Romans 2:13 - "those who will be vindicated on the last day are those in whose hearts and lives God will have written his law, his Torah"

"The 'works of the law' that justification excludes are those badges of Jewish identity that served to exclude Gentiles. Justification does not exclude, however, those works of the law that are equivalent to the obedience of faith by the working of the Spirit." [53-54]

TAB: This is an unnecessary and quite subjective bifurcation of 'works'. The contention that justification includes "those works of the law that are equivalent to the obedience of faith by the working of the Spirit" is pure Romanism.

e. Justification and the Work of Christ

- (1) Wright's view on the work of Christ remains unclear

"One point that emerges clearly in his limited treatment of this subject is that he has little sympathy for the historic view that Christ's death involved His suffering the penalty and curse of the law on behalf of His sinful people, whether Jews or Gentiles." [54]

- (a) Galatians 3 according to Wright isn't about Christ's suffering the curse of the law for his people but about the curse of the exile that Israel was experiencing as a people
 - i. Wright's claim that Paul and Second Temple Judaism viewed Israel as being in exile at the time of Christ's ministry is pivotal to his interpretation

Wright's view on Christ's work has more in common with the 'classic' or 'victory over the powers' than the penal-satisfaction emphasis of the atonement. For Wright, Christ's death and resurrection are representative of Israel's exile and restoration and the means by which the promise of the covenant is now extended to the world.

IV. A Critical Assessment of the New Perspective (59)

A. An Exaggerated View of Sanders' Achievement

1. According to NP proponents Sanders' has established a new view of Second Temple Judaism which demands a new view on Paul
 - a. Sanders' refers to this as 'covenantal nomism' (see his description under point III.)

Sanders and those of the NP stripe argue that Second Temple Judaism was not Pelagian (the idea that God's people find favor with him on the basis of their own moral efforts).

2. But could what Sanders' refers to as 'covenantal nomism' take a form similar to 'semi-Pelagianism?'
 - a. This is the weakness is Sanders' case - he does not consider that his understanding of Second Temple Judaism religion could have been more akin to a grace plus works basis of being accepted by God

TAB: Full-blown Pelagianism is rare and we would not expect the Jews as a whole to have fallen into that any more than we see full-blown Pelagianism today among apostate or cultic groups that claim to be Christian. One the other hand, semi-Pelagianism is very common and the norm among such groups.

3. The reformers were not rejecting the RCC because it was Pelagian but because of its semi-Pelagianism
 - a. There parallel they drew to Paul and the Judaizers is that both groups wanted to make works a partial basis for justification in the present and the future

"The irony here is that Sanders' description of 'covenantal nomism' closely resembles a kind of text-book description of semi-Pelagian teaching and therefore may unwittingly lend credibility to the Reformation argument." [64]

". . . 'covenantal nomism' fits rather comfortably with the idea that the justification of believers, now and in the future, depends upon works of obedience to the law that follow upon and are supplementary to God's gracious initiative. If this is the case than what Sanders' calls 'covenantal nomism' bears remarkable formal similarities to the kind of semi-Pelagianism that marked the medieval Roman Catholic doctrine of justification." [64-65]

At the very least Sanders' and those supporting the NP have not demonstrated that his understanding of Second Temple Judaism demands a new interpretation of Paul's language of justification.

B. The "Works of the Law" in Paul's Epistles

1. The contention that Paul's use of "works of the law" to refer to some kind of boundary marker that distinguished Jewish and Gentile believers is not compelling
 - a. Paul's argument is that neither Jew nor Gentile can be justified by works of the law because no one is able to perform what the law requires (cf. Gal. 3:10-14; 5:2-4; 6:13; Rom. 2:6; 3:20,28; 4:2-4; 9:32)

"In the final analysis, the suggestion of the new perspective that the problem Paul opposed was a form of Jewish exclusivism, not Jewish legalism, cannot be sustained." [70]

2. The 'boasting' on the behalf of the Judaizers as to their keeping the law related to the fact that they believed their obedience would grant them privileged status before God
 - a. Footnote 62:

"Cf. Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is Boasting?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). Based upon his study of the motif of 'boasting' in Second Temple Judaism and the argument of Romans 1-5, Gathercole concludes that the boast was not only made in relation to others (Gentiles) but also *in relation* to God, before whom the faithful Jew expected to be vindicated or justified for his adherence to the law."

C. "The Righteousness of God" in Paul

1. Those of the NP insist that the use of "the righteousness of God" by Paul refers to God's faithfulness in fulfilling his covenant promises - But this understanding is far too general and imprecise

"Study of the use of this language in Paul's epistles will show that it calls attention to the *judicial* nature of God's action in securing the acquittal or vindication of his covenant people, and bringing judgment or condemnation upon his enemies."

- a. Venema recommends Seifrid and Carson's book series, *Justification and Variegated Nomism* and Carson's essay 'Atonement in Romans 3:21-26' in *The Glory of the Atonement*
- b. Romans is the only book where Paul uses the expression on several occasions (eight) and these passages indicate that righteousness is something that God grants to believers and that it restores them to favor with Him (cf. Rom. 1:17; 3:5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 10:3)

D. The Nature of "Justification"

1. Those of the NP insist that the language of "justification" is "covenant membership"

a. This view is inadequate in several respects

- (1) It is far too general and imprecise to capture the force of Paul's meaning
- (2) It fails to do justice to the biblical context for Paul's discussion of justification
 - (a) Consider the context of Romans 1-5: We discover that justification answers the problem of human sin and guilt before God
- (3) To reduce the language of justification to membership within the covenant community misses the real problem: No one (Jew or Gentile) can be a member of the covenant community of God on the basis of works as all have sinned and stand condemned
 - (a) God has demonstrated his righteousness by providing a Savior whose obedience and propitiatory death form the basis for the believing sinner's reconciliation - Justification is about God who "justifies the ungodly" (Rom. 4:5)

This is contrary to Wright's belief (*What Saint Paul Really Said*, 118) that the "first-century Jews were not particularly troubled by the prospect of the final judgment and the wrath of God, or whether they would 'get to heaven' in the future." [75]

Note Romans 2:13 - NP writers argue that this means that in the final judgment only those who do what the law requires will be justified or vindicated

E. "Substitution," "Imputation" and "Faith"

1. One of the troubling features of the NP is lack of clarity as it relates to the justification of believers and Christ's saving work (including the elements of substitutionary obedience and satisfaction for sin)

"The problem with this view (the New Perspective) is not merely that it does not do justice to the instrumental role of faith. It also fails to account adequately for the substitutionary nature of Christ's atoning work and the way believers benefit from that work through faith." [81, clarification in parenthesis mine]

F. A "Final Justification" on the Basis of Works?"

1. According to Wright the final judgement is on the basis of works and represents a final chapter in the believer's justification (the third tense of justification, future)
 - a. The Reformation perspective is that justification is apart from works even though there will be a final judgement "according to works" but not "on the basis" of them

2. The NP concept suggests that the present membership of believers in the "covenant community" is in fact suspended in reality as it awaits a yet-future final justification

- a. Footnote 68:

"Some new-perspective authors appeal to Romans 2:13 in support of the idea of a yet-future justification ('For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.') The Reformation reading of this text takes it as a kind of 'hypothesis contrary to fact.' Since no one is, strictly speaking, a 'doer of the law,' no one is justified by the law. Or it is taken as a statement of fact, namely, that all whom God justifies he also sanctifies; in this sense, no one is justified without obeying the law by the working of the Spirit of sanctification. However, among writers of the new perspective, this text is interpreted differently. In their view, Paul is positively affirming that, in the final judgement, only those who do what the law requires will be justified or vindicated. Cf. Wright, *Romans*, p. 440: 'Justification, at the last, will be on the basis of performance, not possession [of the law].'"

TAB: This contention does not fit the general clear teaching of the N.T. For example, see Galatians 3:10 and James 2:10 which speak of the requirement of keeping the entire law in totality! Logically, then:

- * *If the final judgment is "on the basis" of keeping the law,*
- * *and to truly keep it is to keep it perfectly,*
- * *and no one can keep the law perfectly,*

it follows that it is impossible for any sinner to be justified, now or in the future (cf. Galatians 2:16; 5:1).

3. What of a final justification according to works according to Paul?

- a. It is undeniable that the final prospect for believers and unbelievers is that they will be judged according to their works

- (1) Some passages speak of this judgment in the most comprehensive terms

- (a) Romans 2:5-8

5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

- (2) Other passages speak of this judgment with respect to those who obey or disobey the Gospel

(a) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

- (3) For believers - those that have continued the course and kept the faith - the final judgement promises the fulness of salvation

(a) 2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- b. Whatever the case it is clear that the final judgment will be 'according to works'

"However, Paul's teaching on the subject of justification militates against the view that this final judgment represents a kind of concluding chapter in the believer's justification. Paul's teaching that works are absolutely excluded as a basis for the justification of believes is simply incompatible with the idea that the final justification of the believer will ultimately be based upon works." [85-86]

- c. If a Christian's present justification could be undone in a final judgment the gospel promise of free acceptance with God would be compromised - the statement that there is no condemnation for those in Christ would be nullified (Romans 8:1)

TAB: And there would be no assurance. This would bring us to a Arminian theory of assurance with a semi-Pelagian foundation—the worst of both worlds! We would not have any real confidence that we will be ultimately saved. This would be true especially for those who have a consciousness of their sin (which I would like to say is every true Christian). The doctrine of grace would be compromised and the doctrine of unconditional election would have to be reinterpreted to some sort of conditional choice based on foreseen faith or obedience. All of this spells despair for the sinner!

"Rather than treating the final judgment as a kind of further justification, therefore, we should interpret Paul's emphasis upon the role of works in this judgment in terms of his understanding of all that salvation in union with Christ means for believers. Because all believers, joined to Christ by faith and indwelt of his Spirit, are being renewed in obedience, their acquittal in the context of the final judgment will be a public confirmation of the genuineness of their faith." [87]

- d. This is true because where there is justification there is also sanctification

No one will be saved apart from the fruit of a new life in Christ because if there is no fruit there has been no new-birth.

V. Conclusion (89)

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Getting the Gospel Right book. Read 10 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. Every generation of Christian believers faces the challenge... Right from the start, Cornelis Venema carefully distinguishes among New "Perspectives," noting that proponents like E.P. Sanders, James Dunn, and N.T. Wright each make a distinctive contribution to a supposedly fresh view of Paul's doctrine of justification. Venema's approach moves by briefly stating the Reformation view, presenting the arguments of the scholars listed above, and concluding with a thoughtful engage This is a fine introduction to and mini critique of the New Perspectives on Paul. The "New Perspective on Paul" represents a significant shift in the field of biblical studies since the 1970s in the understanding of the writings of the Apostle Paul, due to E. P. Sanders' pioneering 1977 work Paul and Palestinian Judaism. Paul advocates justification through faith in Jesus Christ over justification through works of the Law. Under influence of the Lutheran and Reformed perspective, known as sola fide, this was traditionally understood as Paul arguing that Christians' good works would Getting the Gospel Right: The Tie That Binds Evangelicals Together. By R. C. Sproul. Ratings Getting the Gospel Right, a companion to Sproul's popular Faith Alone, contains the complete text of that statement along with thorough, point-by-point discussion and exposition, to make a strong declaration of the abiding unity of evangelicals regarding the gospel and justification by faith alone. Read More. Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The Proprietor is represented by the literary agency of Wolgemuth & Associates, Inc. Perspective on Paul™ this paper critiques it, and the scholarship that it is built upon, from an evangelical and Reformed perspective. A paper of this size and scope can do little more. Since the Reformation, I think no school of thought, not even the Bultmanian school, has exerted a greater influence upon Pauline scholarship than the school of the New Perspective. With its radical reinterpretation of Paul's gospel, especially his doctrine of justification, on the basis of Ed P. Sanders's definition of Second Temple Judaism as covenantal nomism, the New Perspective is in many respects overturning the Reformation interpretation of Paul's gospel. The potential significance of the school for the whole Christian faith can hardly be exaggerated. Find many great new & used options and get the best deals for Getting the Gospel Right : Assessing the Reformation and New Perspectives on Paul by Cornelis P. Venema (2006, Perfect) at the best online prices at eBay! Free shipping for many products! Since the new perspectives challenge some of the basic features of the traditional Protestant understanding of justification, they require careful study and thoughtful evaluation. Nothing less than the shape of the evangelical church's proclamation of the gospel today is at stake. Product Identifiers.