

# Thinking Inside the Box: An Old Perspective on the New Perspective on Paul.

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*By Jerrold Lewis.*

## Introduction



Between 1712-1717 a struggle ensued in the Church of Scotland concerning a young man and his presbyterial exam for license. William Craig was asked by the presbytery of Auchterarder if he would subscribe to the following, "It is not sound and orthodox to teach, that we must forsake sin, in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God" (Boston 317). In the years that followed (1717-1722), a great debate emerged in that country between a small evangelical minority known as the Marrow Men, and the vast majority of the Church of Scotland known as "neonomians." The question surrounding the debate was one of eternal consequence; how is one eternally justified, and what is the relationship between the law and the gospel?

History has vindicated that small band of earnest contenders, and the Church universal has immeasurably benefited from their timely defense of forensic justification by imputed righteousness.

Two hundred and eighty years later it appears another small band of earnest contenders has emerged to take up the cause of the Marrow Controversy. Unfortunately this small but vociferous group has found itself on the opposite side of the debate, touting the torch of the neonomians contending that the question, "*What must I do to be saved*" (Acts 16:30), is the wrong question; the right question being, "*What does the Lord require*" (Micah 6:8) (Schlissel 5). At the 2002 Auburn Avenue Pastors Conference, Steve Schlissel, Doug Wilson, Steve Wilkins, and John Barach dropped the theological gauntlet with what appears to be a sideways attack on the Reformed doctrine of imputed righteousness and

forensic justification (among other doctrines). In the New Southern Presbyterian Review, Dr. Joe Morecraft asserts that the source of this assault stems from that group's "own readjustment of a movement that is over thirty years old called by its representatives 'The New Perspective on Paul'" (Morecraft 15). The New Perspective on Paul movement is a denial and revamping of forensic justification, and should be avoided because it subverts the biblical doctrine of imputed righteousness.

## A SUMMARY OF THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL

The New Perspective on Paul movement began with E.P. Sanders in 1977 when he wrote a book titled *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. In it, he taught that Paul essentially agreed with the Jew's 1<sup>st</sup> Century understanding of the law of God, and justification. According to the New Perspective, the Jews of Paul's day were not works righteousness based, but were simply mistaken as to who the Messiah was. A heavy emphasis is placed on an intertestamental Jewish idea which taught that Adam was a "type" of Israel, and that *covenant acceptance* would one day be found by an Adamic representative (Wright 18). According to the New Perspective architects, the "Last Adam" (Jesus) represented Israel as the *collective Adam*, standing in the place of unfaithful national Israel. N.T Wright insists, "Adamic theology, where it occurs in the Old Testament and intertestamental writings, fulfils a specific purpose" (Wright 21). The purpose being that *collective Adam* (Israel), "is, or is to become, God's true humanity" (21). Consequently, Christ as the *Last Adam* stands in place of the "whole eschatological people of God" (21) and

inaugurates a new and broader Israel, which includes converted Gentiles. Christ's propitiation then is first a national (covenantal) representation, and then an individual one (personal election). The subtlety here is almost unnoticeable, until we remind ourselves that Christ in his death was not primarily representing a nation that would maintain their status of covenant people, but rather the elect throughout all time who would become spiritual Israel. "*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel*" (Romans 9:6). Here then in the New Perspective, the idea of *Covenant* has superseded the doctrine of *election*.

Furthermore, the New Perspective teaches that both 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews and Christians understood that salvation is by grace through faith, and that good works are merely the outworking of loving obedience toward God. The difference between the two groups is found in their approach to Jesus Christ. The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jew rejected Jesus as the Messiah and claimed an exclusively Jewish covenant, furnished with the badges of circumcision, the Sabbath, and the moral/ceremonial law. The Christian, on the other hand, believed Jesus was the Messiah who (as the collective Adamic symbol) brings the promised vindication of God's people to fruition by establishing the one sacrifice, and rendering the old covenant requirements unnecessary. Justification therefore was not believed to be a forensic imputation, but rather a declaration pertaining to someone who has already *received mercy*, and who is already a member of the improved-covenant community. In other words, if you are in the covenant by baptism, salvation belongs to you as much as the saint in heaven. Subsequently, obedience to the law is then required to maintain that state of justification. Neither the New Testament Jew nor Gentile thought that the law brought about salvation, but *maintained the salvation already given graciously in the Covenant*. The only problem with the Jew then, in Paul's mind, is their rejection of Christ. The two views were very similar in that they both believed that justification was inherent in the covenant and mere maintenance was required to be finally justified.

This is a summary of the New Perspective doctrine.

## THE TROJAN

Since 1977 men such as, Daniel Fuller, and Norman Shepherd have picked up this new teaching. Shepherd, who held the chair of Systematic Theology at Westminster Seminary (East), was released from his professorship in 1982 for teaching doctrines that, in some minds in the Seminary community and constituency, taught a justification that, "contradict or contravene, either directly or impliedly, some element in that system of doctrine taught by the Standards" (Approved by the Executive Committee of the Board February 26, 1982). Shepherd left the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the CRC before the charges against him could be brought to Presbytery. Shepherd's full-bodied embrace of the New Perspective movement appears to have led to the wayward teachings of the Auburn Avenue men and their evident hypercovenantalism (Morecraft 16).

Essentially, the New Perspective on Paul theology believes that "...one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression" (Sanders 75). If you look closely at Sanders' words you can see that he is teaching that justification is not forensic, but covenantal. Norman Shepherd echoes Sanders when he says,

Because faith which is not obedient faith is dead faith, and because repentance is necessary for the pardon of sin included in justification, **and because abiding in Christ by keeping his commandments are all necessary for continuing in the state of justification**, good works, works done from true faith, according to the law of God are nevertheless **necessary for salvation from eternal condemnation and therefore for justification**. (Presented to the Presbytery of Philadelphia of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. November 18, 1978)

How contrary is Shepherd to our own subordinate standards which say,

Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their

righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God. (Westminster Confession of Faith 56-57)

Notice that our forefathers affirm that we are justified by imputed righteousness, not “good works, done from true faith” as Shepherd claims. Granted, Shepherd does say in his *Thirty-four Theses on Justification in Relation to Faith, Repentance, and Good Works*, that justification is forensic and imputed, but he fails to adequately define these ideas in terms of The New Perspective, and later contradicts himself by saying that the believer’s works are “necessary to his continuing in a state of justification” (Shepherd). Justifying faith and works are mutually exclusive when we speak of the legal nature of the act. Justification is not organic, but static. Sanctification is organic. Works done after justification are *reward-based* in that we store up for ourselves “treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:20), but they are never considered meritorious in getting to heaven. “*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*” (Romans 3:28). John Murray says regarding justification and reward based works,

In reference to these two doctrines it is important to observe the following: (i) This future reward is not justification and contributes nothing to that which constitutes justification. (ii) This future reward is not salvation. Salvation is by grace and it is not a reward for works that we are saved. (iii) The reward has reference to the station a person is to occupy in glory and does not have reference to the gift of glory itself. While the reward is of grace yet the standard or criterion of judgment by which the degree of reward is to be determined is good works. (iv) This reward is not administered because good works earn or merit reward, but because God is graciously pleased to reward them. That is to say it is a reward of grace. (Murray 221-222)

Shepherd however, wants a *forensic* justification in reference to Christ’s cross-work, and then he wants an *eschatological justification* (that is, a future justification) which progresses like sanctification. “The righteousness of Jesus Christ ever remains the exclusive ground of the believer’s justification, but the personal godliness of the believer is also necessary for **his justification in the judgment of the last day...**” (Emphasis mine) (Shepherd).

Others within the Reformed community have taken up the cause of Norman Shepherd, and have clarified its implications. To these men, justification is tied to your covenant baptism and not individual election.

But how do you know that God chose you? - The answer is that you’ve had the special experience. You’ve been baptized. All God’s salvation—from election to glorification—is found in Christ. And when you were baptized, God promised to unite you to Jesus Christ” (Barach).

This is not true. The Westminster Confession teaches that the covenant seal belongs “to such (whether of age or infants) **as that grace belongeth unto**, according to the counsel of God’s own will, in his appointed time (Emphasis mine) (115). We must not tie justification into our baptism, but rather the seal of our baptism to divine election.

Yet to others, because they believe justification is tied to baptism and the covenant, justification can be taken away depending on one’s obedience to the moral law. Witness Doug Wilson:

Membership in the covenant is objective. It can be photographed. - All this [John 15] means that a man **can be genuinely attached** to Christ and yet bear no fruit. **He is as attached as the fruit-bearing branch is.** They both partake of the root and fatness of the tree. Sap flows to both branches. The fruitless branch tastes the heavenly gift. He has been enlightened (Heb. 6:4). (Emphasis mine) (Wilson 16)

John Owen, in his commentary on this passage, does not agree with Wilson that the apostate professor “is as attached as the fruit-bearing branch is.” Wilson alludes to the words “enlightened” and “tasted” in Hebrews 6, as support for his argument that “man can be genuinely attached to Christ and yet bear no fruit.” Here, Wilson has misunderstood the relationship between *apparent union* and *actual union* in Christ. The difference between tasting and drinking, or what Owen refers to as the difference between *spiritual operations*, and *personal inhabitation*, of which, there is a great quality of difference. One is salvation; the other is not (Owen 80). But it is precisely this kind of new interpretation that has generated so much interest from the wider Reformed body. It appears that Wilson is quite willing to challenge the *status quo* and redefine several core doctrines.

During the Auburn Avenue Pastors Conference (2002), Doug Wilson pushed the envelope a bit further by stating,

The church today has adopted a number of assumptions that are **diametrically opposed to what the word of God teaches...** This means that in Christian circles, in evangelical circles and **particularly in reformed circles**, we have to stop confessing our sins and start confessing our virtues. The things that we thought were our strengths are the things that have been dogging us for a long, long time, for a number of centuries. **For 350 years in this country, we have been getting some of the fundamental issues with regard to the word of God, and the covenant, and the gospel, and what is a Christian, we have been getting them wrong**". (Emphasis Mine) (page 20, line 23-28. Doug Wilson: Visible and Invisible Church Revisited Tape 2)

Wilson, in this quote, sets the stage to challenge 350 years of Reformed teaching in the USA (from John Cotton onward) regarding some of the fundamental issues surrounding:

1. The Word of God.
2. The Covenant.
3. What is a Christian?

He sets the stage by claiming that there are a number of assumptions that the evangelical church holds to (particularly in reformed circles) that are not *merely slightly off*, or *partially incorrect*, but are nothing less than "diametrically opposed to what the word of God teaches" (Wilson 20). He goes on to say that for 350 years, the Reformed church has "been getting them wrong" (20). Wilson, in this lecture, is not asking for a readjustment of the Reformed doctrines mentioned (which include justification), but is insistent on a reconstruction of the doctrines.

This is only magnified by his opening remarks,

In order to understand this, we have to **work through all of the baggage that we have picked up**. And we have been **some centuries picking it up** and here I want to qualify some of what I am going to be saying and I will have to qualify a couple of times. I just want you to know, depending on your background, depending on where you are coming from, depending on what sorts of things you are trying to shake off, you might think at several times in this talk that I am out there on the skinny branches and getting farther out. And to reassure yourself, whenever that happens, just tell yourself at that time, he is holding back. (Emphasis Mine) (page 19, line 25-

31. Doug Wilson: Visible and Invisible Church Revisited Tape 2.)

Likewise Steve Schlissel, pastor of the independent Messiah's Congregation in Brooklyn New York, also uses strong language in attempt to reorient the Church's current understanding on justification. He says, "If we do not retool our churches to turn around from *What must I do to be saved?* to *What does the Lord require?* we are going to die" (Schlissel 5). He then goes on to attack the Reformed understanding of *sola fide* insisting that its current outworking is too introspective by repeatedly qualifying the characteristic of a person's faith. "Before you know it everybody thinks that he or she is not saved. 'How can I truly be saved?' To find out, come back next week and the preacher will make you feel guilty, but godly." (Schlissel 5)

The consequences of this branch of theology has serious methodological implications. A subtle form of *presumptive regeneration* tiptoes into the church rearranging the core question of the gospel. Schlissel concludes that it is wrong to start with reprobation and move to regeneration when dealing with the idea of the covenant. He believes that we must leapfrog over the fundamental question "*What must I do to be saved,*" and land squarely on "*What does the Lord require.*" This kind of unfortunate language appears to contravene the Scriptures which say, "*Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart*" (Psalms 26:2), "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" (Philippians 2:12), and "*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reborn?*" (2 Corinthians 13:5). To Schlissel then, if you are born into the covenant, you are *ipso facto* assumed to be justified. Now you are commanded to observe covenantal maintenance by law keeping, thus *preserving* your *inherent justification*.

This then is the crux of the debate: **Is justifying faith an obedient faith as Schlissel, Shepherd and company assert? Or is justifying faith an alien (Christ) imputed faith that is followed by a sanctifying work of the Spirit, which produces obedience?** This is not a trivial question. It is of eternal consequence. According to Luther, justification by faith is "the basic and chief article of faith with which the church stands

or falls, and on which its entire doctrine depends” (Althaus 224).

### THE BIBLICAL USE OF THE WORD “JUSTIFY”

In the Reformed Church it is universally believed that the word “justification” is the key to Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. The English verb “justify” comes directly from the Latin word *justifico*, which is a verb that belonged to the Roman law system. The noun *justificatio* from which we transliterated the English word “justification” means that an accused person is pronounced free of blame and retribution. It is an essential part of the catholic doctrine of the atonement, and justification by faith alone became the rallying cry of the Reformation. But was Luther right in his conclusion that justification was forensic?

We do not need to probe too deeply into the psychology of Paul to find the answer to this question. Besides, an overuse of one hermeneutical tool (History) can and does lead to doctrines of imbalance. While we do need to take into account the personality of the author of any inspired book, it should not be to the neglect of other equally important tools of discovery. Paul’s life and experience with the 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestinian Jew might come into play at times, but it hardly overrides the perspicuity of Scripture or the direct imposition of Divine inspiration. This is one of the great problems of the New Perspective theology - an over analysis of Paul (and what may or may not have been his understanding of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews) to the neglect of the other books of the Bible and to perspicuity itself. The Holy Spirit in the pages of Holy Writ is the key to understanding the doctrine of justification (comparing spiritual things with spiritual), not 1<sup>st</sup> Century Palestinian Jewish thought. So we must go to the Holy Canon to discover whether there is a biblical case for forensic justification and rest our doctrine on the findings.

Exodus 23:7. “Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.”

Here is the first instance of the word justify being used in the Word of God. It is hard to avoid the clear legal context of the verse. The overriding theme of this text is one of law and order. Dr.

White in his excellent book *The God Who Justifies* comments,

In the first phrase God’s law says that the innocent or the righteous are not to be killed. Obviously, this does not mean “those who are sinlessly perfect” but rather those who are innocent or righteous in the eyes of the law. This is a legal, not a moral description. (White 77)

Likewise in Deuteronomy 25:1 says, “If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.” Here we are informed (by context) of a legal situation. The words “controversy,” “come to judgment,” “judges may judge them;” “righteous,” and “condemnation” are only properly understood in the context of a legal situation. Similarly in Proverbs 17:15 the words “justifieth” and “condemneth” are placed in contrast to each other. “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.” Clearly we are dealing with terms surrounding legal activity. The basis of the ideal of a legal justification is immersing from the pages of Scripture, not by imposition of Greek thinking into the text. John Murray elaborates on this idea in his *Collective Writings*, Volume 2:

Justification means to declare to be righteous-it is a judgment based upon the recognition that a person stands in right relation to law and justice...How can God justify the ungodly? ... God’s justification of the ungodly presupposes or comprises within itself-that is to say the action of God denoted by justification of the ungodly-another action besides that which is expressed by our English word “declare righteous” ... This action is one in which he actually causes to be the relation which in justification is declared to be. He effects a right relation as well as declares that relation to be. In other words he constitutes the state which is declared to be. Hence the justifying act either includes or presupposes the constitutive act. (Murray 206)

Isaiah 53:11-12. “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

This great text holds out the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross and the use of the word justify in relation to Christ’s work on the cross. Here the word justify is used in reference to many, not just one. In every other instance we

have come across thus far, there is a one to one correlation between the innocent party and his justification. But here we have Jesus who is truly innocent, relinquishing His declared, intrinsic righteousness, and forwarding it to stand in the place of the guilty. White interjects,

This is the very basis of the Protestant doctrine of justification: Sinners are declared righteous before God solely because of the sin-bearing work of the Messiah in their place. The act of justifying them is seen to be consistent with what has come before; it is a declaration, based upon the work of another. (White 81)

The Old Testament clearly teaches a forensic justification.

### PAUL'S USE OF JUSTIFY AND JUSTIFIED IN ROMANS

Dr. White maintains that Paul's use of the word *justify* in the book of Romans would have been rooted in the Greek Septuagint simply because it was the standard translation of the Old Testament Scriptures at that time (81). The Septuagint's use of the verb "to justify" is also used in a legal, forensic context. This can be illustrated in a few ways.

First, Genesis 15:6 is quoted no less than four times in the New Testament, and each time it is used in proving that the justification was based on faith, and not works. It was not because of Abraham's works that God justified him but because of the faith forensically imputed to Abraham. Expounding this thought, Theodore Beza comments:

Abraham was not justified, and made the father of the faithful, by any of his own works, either preceding or following his faith in Christ, as promised to him; but merely by faith in Christ, or the merit of Christ by faith imputed to him for righteousness. Therefore all his children become his children and are justified, not by their works, either preceding or following their faith; but by faith alone in the same Christ. (qtd. in Plumer 244)

Romans 8:30-34, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he

not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

This passage clearly settles the issue of the meaning of justification. Without any hesitation the reader can see that the idea of legal/forensic justification as represented in the Old Testament passages (Exodus 23:7; Deuteronomy 25:1; Proverbs 17:15, Isaiah 53) is revisited here with boldness and bravado. Without a doubt the court of law setting found in this passage points to an imputed/forensic meaning to the word justify. "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect,*" is only understood as a law term, and must be recognized as such. Dr. White says regarding this passage,

... the term for "charge" has been widely documented in secular Greek texts regarding the bringing the accusations in legal proceedings. Any person sitting in the congregation in Rome, hearing this letter read would immediately think of the Roman legal system and formal charges in a court. (White 85)

This understanding of "to justify" has had a far-reaching effect, and it was on this idea of forensic justification by imputed righteousness that James Buchanan said,

If we seek to ascertain the reasons which rendered it (Christ's death) necessary ... we are taught by Scripture to ascribe it to the sins of men—and the justice of God—viewed in connection with His purpose of saving sinners, in a way consistent with the honour of His law, and the interests of His righteous government, through a Divine Redeemer. If this be the correct view of the reason of His death ... then we cannot fail to regard all the sufferings, which constituted so important a part of Christ's Mediatorial work, as strictly penal. They were the punishment, not of personal, but of imputed, guilt. They were inflicted on Him as the Substitute of sinners. He was "made a curse" for them, but only because He had been "made sin for them." In this view, His sufferings were penal, because they were judicially imposed on Him as the legal representative of those who had come under "the curse," according to the rule of that law which proclaimed that "the wages of sin is death," and that "the soul which sinneth it shall die." (Buchanan 305-306)

Norman Shepherd wants to teach that justification is a state, or a condition, "abiding in Christ by keeping his commandments are all necessary for continuing in the **state of justification**" (Emphasis mine). This is contrary

to the usage of the word “to justify.” Professor Murray says on this word, “Examination of its instances will show rather clearly that *dikaiow* never has a stative force in the active voice; it is a verb of action and does not denote a state (Murray 348). There appears to be a mixing of the doctrine of justification with the doctrine of sanctification—faith and works, or faith plus works on the part of the New Perspective proponents. The law is never an aid in our justification (unless we speak in terms of Christ’s active and passive obedience to the law in our stead), and therefore to make law keeping a condition of maintaining the state of justification as Shepherd asserts is simply false. Robert Traill comments,

But if men will teach that the law and obedience to it, whether perfect or sincere, is the righteousness we must be found and stand in, in our pleading for justification, they neither understand what they say nor whereof they affirm .... They become debtors to the law, and Christ profits them nothing. (Traill 61)

#### **THE PLACE OF WORKS: BELIEVE AND BEHAVE.**

While the Reformers believed that justification was by faith alone (*sola fide*) and without the works of the law, they were not renouncing works in general. The Reformers collectively insisted on the essential need for the works of sanctification. John states, “*By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments ... no one who is born of God practices sin, for His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God.*” (1 John. 2:3; 3:9). Notice the past tense of the phrase “come to know.” The established relationship between God and the child of God is firm, based on Jesus Christ and his imputed righteousness. Now, after we have come to know Him, we are to walk in a way that will evidence our union with Him. We walk in the way of the law. A righteous life is the evidence of the work of salvation, but not the grounds. There is a direct correlation between faith and works that is inseparable. You cannot separate faith from good works. But ontologically, that is relating to the essence or nature of its being, there is a succession of works following saving faith.

Thomas Cranmer, expresses it well:

There is one faith which in Scripture is called a dead faith, which bringeth forth no good works,

but is idle, barren, and unfruitful. And this faith by the holy apostle St. James is compared to the faith of devils, which believe God to be true and just, and tremble for fear, yet they do nothing well, but all evil. And such manner of faith have the wicked and naughty Christian people; “which confess God,” as St. Paul saith, “in their mouth, but deny him in their deeds, being abominable and without the right faith and in all good works reprobable ...” This dead faith therefore is not that sure and substantial faith which saveth sinners ... The true, lively, and unfeigned Christian faith ... is not in the mouth and outward profession only, but it liveth, and stirreth inwardly in the heart. And this faith is not without hope and trust in God, nor without the love of God and of our neighbours, nor without the fear of God, nor without the desire to hear God’s word, and to follow the same in eschewing evil and doing gladly all good works. (Cranmer 272-273)

John Murray furthers the thought,

While it makes void the gospel to introduce works in connection with justification, nevertheless works done in faith, from the motive of love to God, in obedience to the revealed will of God and to the end of his glory are intrinsically good and acceptable to God. As such they will be the criterion of reward in the life to come. This is apparent from such passages as Matthew 10:41; 1 Corinthians 3:8-9, 11-15; 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:7. We must maintain therefore, justification complete and irrevocable by grace through faith and apart from works, and at the same time, future reward according to works. (Murray 221)

It is only the believer that can proclaim with David, “*O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day*” (Psalms 119:97).

#### **LET’S NOT MINIMIZE**

We can rightly say about forensic justification what Dabney says about Christ’s substitutionary death, “Many other heads of doctrine which are cardinal in the bible system are vitiated or impugned when that doctrine is rejected” (Dabney 89). The importance of this doctrine must not be diminished. The temptation will be to open the door on this subject on the grounds of brotherly love, scholasticism, and even plain old polemics. But the New Perspective on Paul movement is not just another interpretation of justification, rather a complete revamping of the Reformed and Protestant view. Their view of Covenant has obstructed justification and redefined salvation. As Luther put it, this doctrine is *Articulus stantis, et cadentis Ecclesiae* (the article of a standing and a falling

church). We must react in truth and in thoughtful haste.

Last year, malicious forces that wanted to bring down the symbols of American and Western power attacked the World Trade Center. The world stood by and could only watch the two towers crumble. We have two towers that are standing before us in the Reformed church today which symbolize who *we* are—the towers of Justification and Sanctification. Let’s not stand by and watch them fall. *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 1:3).

Roman Catholicism	New Perspective on Paul Proponents
Baptism is the instrumental cause of justification.	“But how do you know that God chose you? - The answer is that you’ve had the special experience. You’ve been baptized.” <b>John Barach</b>
Faith is necessary for justification but not sufficient for it.	“The righteousness of Jesus Christ ever remains the exclusive ground of the believer’s justification, but the personal godliness of the believer <b>is also necessary</b> for his justification in the judgment of the last day.” <b>Norman Shepherd</b>
A person is justified by faith plus works.	“... good works, works done from true faith, according to the law of God are nevertheless necessary for salvation from eternal condemnation and therefore for justification.” <b>Norman Shepherd.</b>
<i>Sola fide</i> is rejected and anathematized as a false gospel.	“Do not trust in deceptive words and say, ‘The <i>solas</i> of the Reformation, The <i>solas</i> of the Reformation, The <i>solas</i> of the Reformation.’” <b>Steve Schlissel</b>

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