

Paul and Judaism
The Jewish Matrix of Early Christianity:
Issues in the Current Debate

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0. Fifteen years ago, E. P. Sanders published his book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) and began what might well be called a Copernican revolution in Pauline studies.¹ One of the leading advocates of the newer knowledge has dubbed it "The New Perspective on Paul."² The revolution, however, is not yet complete. Some of us, moreover, continue to believe that the evidence still points to a geocentric universe—at least so far as Paul's theology is concerned. In this brief paper I can hardly do justice to the subject, but I nevertheless propose to analyze the recent discussion of Paul and Judaism and also at the same time to offer some critique.

1. The fundamental point of the new perspective on Paul has to do not with Paul himself, but with the nature of first century Judaism: contrary to the widespread view held even in leading reference works, *Judaism was not and is not a religion where acceptance with God is earned through the merit of righteousness based on works*. In the same way that Copernicus had his predecessors, this main insight of the new perspective on Paul was adumbrated long before Sanders' book

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1. This was followed by a second important book, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

2. This was the title of J. D. G. Dunn's Manson Memorial Lecture given at the University of Manchester in November of 1982, published originally in *BJRL* 65 (1983) 95-122, and reprinted together with an "Additional Note" in Dunn's collected essays, *Jesus, Paul and the Law. Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990) 183-214. See now too his chapter "Paul and 'Covenantal Nomism'," *The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity Press International, 1991) 117-39; and his Henton Davies Lecture, given at Regents Park College, Oxford, "The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith," *JTS* 43 (1992) 1-22.

(as Sanders himself readily admits). Moises Silva, in a recent article, expresses his surprise—and I share that surprise—at the flurry caused by Sanders' book, since its primary thrust "had been demonstrated in not a few books and was readily accessible in standard works of reference."³ Silva mentions George Foot Moore's three volume *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (1927-30).⁴ To that we may add Moore's earlier and well-known article entitled "Christian Writers on Judaism," where like Sanders he criticizes the work of Ferdinand Weber, as well as Schürer and Bousset, lamenting that legalism "for the last fifty years has become the very definition and the all-sufficient condemnation of Judaism."⁵ Further to be mentioned is the work of such scholars as Solomon Schechter,⁶ R. Travers Herford,⁷ A. Marmorstein,⁸ and especially that of C. G. Montefiore.⁹

To my mind what explains the impact of Sanders' book is that it was the first lengthy and strongly articulated statement of the case in the post-holocaust era. Thanks to the work of many Jewish writers—and non-Jewish too—people have become sensitized concerning the role of anti-Judaism in nourishing the evil of anti-Semitism. It was a point whose time had come.

2. A second and nearly as important point in the new perspective on Paul is again one that had been made much earlier: contrary to the Reformation understanding of Paul, *justification by faith is not the center of Paul's theology but instead represents a pragmatic tactic to facilitate the Gentile mission*. It will be easily seen how well this works together with the preceding point. If Judaism is not a religion of works-righteousness, then it hardly needs to hear the message of justification by faith, whereas that message makes perfect sense if directed solely to the Gentiles.

3. "The Law and Christianity: Dunn's New Synthesis," *WTJ* 53 (1991) 339-53, here 348.

4. The book bears the subtitle "The Age of the Tannaim" and was published in Cambridge, MA, by Harvard University Press. Silva calls attention to the following passages: 1:110-21, 520-45.

5. *HTR* 14 (1921) 197-254, here 252.

6. *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (Macmillan, 1909; reprinted New York: Schocken, 1961).

7. See especially *Judaism in the New Testament Period* (London: Lindsey, 1928); "The Fundamentals of Religion as Interpreted by Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism," *HJ* 21 (1922-23) 314-26.

8. *The Doctrine of Merits in Old Rabbinical Literature* (1920; reprint New York: KTAV, 1968).

9. See, e.g., "On Some Misconceptions of Judaism and Christianity by Each Other," *JQR* 8 (1896) 193-216; "Jewish Scholarship and Christian Silence," *HJ* 1 (1902-3) 335-46; *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teaching* (1930; reprint New York: KTAV, 1970).

Although this point is not very important in Sanders' book, he does review the arguments of Albert Schweitzer concerning the relatively small importance of justification by faith in Paul's theology, concluding that "they have never been effectively countered."¹⁰ Schweitzer put his conclusion in a typically vivid metaphor: "The doctrine of righteousness by faith is therefore a subsidiary crater, which has formed within the rim of the main crater—the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ."¹¹ The conclusion concerning the subordinate importance of the doctrine was not even original with Schweitzer, having already been argued at least as early as 1853 by Lipsius, and also Sabatier, Lüdemann, Weizsacker and Wrede.¹² The new perspective on Paul has given new life to this argument.¹³

3. These two main foundations of the new perspective on Paul thus raise again two fundamental questions: What was the nature of first century Judaism? and What is at the heart of Paul's Christianity? Or, to put it differently, What was the difference between Saul the Pharisee and Paul the Christian? The answers to these inter-related questions have produced a number of corollary conclusions, and to these we now turn.

3.1 The new perspective on Paul maintains that *Paul's theology has been misunderstood because it has been read through the lens of Luther and the Reformation*. Luther's rediscovery of the gospel was preceded by an agonizing personal struggle with the problem of sin and of attempted self-justification. Such was not the case with Paul, as Phil 3:6, referring to Paul's background as a Pharisee, indicates: "As to righteousness under the law," he writes, "I was blameless." Since Judaism was not a religion of works-righteousness, Paul did not have to move from legalism to grace, as in the typical protestant schema.

Proponents of the new perspective on Paul have made much of K. Stendahl's 1963 article, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West."¹⁴ It was indeed a pathbreaking article in some ways, anticipating much of the new perspective, yet even its main point had been articulated much earlier. T. W. Manson

10. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 440.

11. *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (trans. W. Montgomery from 1930 original; New York: Seabury, 1931) 225.

12. See the informative article by R. Y.-K. Fung, "The Status of Justification by Faith in Paul's Thought: a Brief Survey of a Modern Debate," *Themelios* 6 (1981) 4-11. See too the Appendix in Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* by M. Brauch, "Perspectives on 'God's Righteousness' in Recent German Discussion," 523-42.

13. Cf. K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 1-2.

14. First published in *HTR* 56 (1963) 199-215; now available in Stendahl's collected essays, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 78-96.

had already in 1938 written that "The Faith and Works controversy has obtained an undue emphasis through our reading of Paul in the light of the soul-strivings of Luther."¹⁵ I cannot resist, in this quincentenary year, quoting Stendahl where he likens Luther to "a Christopher Columbus in the world of faith, who finds new and good land on the other side of what was thought to be the abyss."¹⁶ Now, however, like Columbus, Luther has come into disfavor—at least so far as being a guide to the interpretation of Paul is concerned.¹⁷

3.2 A further, related corollary in the new perspective argues that *Paul experienced not conversion to a new faith, not a change of religion, but a call and commission to bring the gospel to the Gentiles*. Paul remained a fully faithful Jew throughout his life.¹⁸ This again is not a particularly new claim. Jewish scholars have for some time been engaged in reclaiming Paul for Judaism, arguing not only his enduring Jewishness but also that his task was in effect that of bringing Judaism to the Gentiles.¹⁹

3.3. Closely related to the preceding is the conclusion that *Paul's main concern was the Jewish/Gentile problem, specifically the conversion of the Gentiles, rather than any universal human problem*. That is, Paul's theological thinking is dominated by the need to defend the right of the Gentiles to become full members of the people of God, without the need first to become Jews. Stendahl again puts it very clearly when he writes that the "doctrine of justification by faith was hammered out by Paul for the very specific and limited purpose of defending the rights of Gentile converts to be full and genuine heirs to the promises of God to Israel."²⁰ This is of course also closely related to the claim made in §2 above, since it further relativizes the doctrine of justification by faith.

15. "Jesus, Paul and the Law," *Judaism and Christianity*, Volume III, *Law and Religion* (ed. E. I. J. Rosenthal, 1938; reprint, New York: KTAV, 1969) 125-41, here 132.

16. *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 82.

17. See the especially strong attack on Luther and the "protestant" understanding of the question in Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach* (SNTSMS 56; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 1-22.

18. See especially Stendahl's "Call Rather than Conversion," *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 7-23. Cf. Dunn, "'A Light to the Gentiles', or 'The End of the Law'? The Significance of the Damascus Road Christophany for Paul," *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird* (eds. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 251-66; available now with an "Additional Note" in *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 89-107; see too Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways*, 122, and P. J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Assen/Maastricht/Minneapolis: Van Gorcum /Fortress, 1990).

19. See further my "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F. F. Bruce on his 70th Birthday* (eds. D. A. Hagner and M. J. Harris; Exeter/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1980) 143-65.

20. *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 2.

3.4 A conclusion that is drawn from a number of the preceding points is that *Paul had no quarrel with the law (and hence Judaism) per se*. This has become one of the central tenets of the new perspective on Paul. If Judaism was a "covenantal nomism," to use Sanders' nomenclature—i.e., a law-centeredness in the context of prior grace—then Paul could hardly have been unhappy with it, even as a Christian. His apparently negative statements concerning the law are dictated solely by the exigencies of the Gentile mission. Paul's "new understanding of the law" is the result of his call to evangelize the Gentiles.²¹ Sanders explains Paul's rejection with these words: "In short, *this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity*."²²

3.5 Since he had no quarrel with the law, according to the new perspective, *Paul's arguments against "works of the law" do not concern the issue of righteousness by obedience to the law, but simply Jewish badges of identity that separated Jews from the Gentiles*. Dunn in particular has stressed that "works of the law" refers to "national righteousness," a phrase (and insight?) borrowed from Tom Wright's 1980 Oxford dissertation, "The Messiah and the People of God: a Study in Pauline Theology with Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans." So far as I can see, Dunn nowhere refers to Wright's 1978 Tyndale NT Lecture entitled "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," which already articulates key aspects of the new perspective on Paul.²³ According to Dunn, the "boasting" of the Jews which Paul repeatedly criticizes refers not to self-confidence, but to "Jewish" confidence.²⁴

Dunn has labored hard to defend the interpretation of "works of the law" as the marks of Jewish privilege,²⁵ tackling first Gal 2:16 in his new perspective article, then turning to Gal 3:10-14,²⁶ and of course the Romans passages in his commentary. Recent monographs on Galatians by John Barclay and Walter Hansen join in the conclusion that the issue in Galatians is not Jewish legalism but national righteousness or the law in terms of badges of Jewish identity.²⁷

21. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 9.

22. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 552.

23. The lecture was published in *TB* 29 (1978) 61-88. C. Bryan, in a recent article without a single reference to Dunn, concludes that the issue in Rom 9:30-10:4 is "that concern with personal and corporate holiness which had characterized the Judaism in which he [Paul] grew up" ("Law and Grace in Paul: Thoughts on E. P. Sanders," *SLJT* 34 [1991] 33-52, here 50).

24. "The Justice of God," 11.

25. For the similar view of Sanders, see *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, 160.

26. "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Gal 3:10-14)," *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 215-41.

27. John Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988) 235-42; Walter Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians: Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTSS 29; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) 161-62.

Francis Watson and Don Garlington (who did his research under Dunn) examine Romans from this perspective and come to similar conclusions.²⁸

3.6 It is not far from these conclusions to a final deduction which is not, however, drawn by all advocates of the new understanding of Paul. If Judaism is a religion of grace, and there is nothing wrong with its nomism in Paul's view, and if Paul's message therefore concerns the Gentiles rather than the Jews, a natural conclusion is that *the covenantal nomism of the OT is God's way of salvation for Israel, while the law free gospel is God's way of salvation for the Gentiles*. The pressure to accept the so-called two covenant theory of salvation continues to be a constant factor in Jewish-Christian dialogue today. Four advocates of the new view of Paul who have also accepted the two covenant approach are Stendahl,²⁹ Markus Barth,³⁰ J. G. Gager,³¹ and Lloyd Gaston.³² Others, such as Sanders and Dunn³³ have resisted this conclusion. It is not difficult to see how the various elements of the new perspective on Paul can lead to this appealing, but in my view unbiblical, conclusion.

4. Naturally in this brief review we have not done justice to the strength of the arguments that have been put forward. Our purpose has merely been to note the major assertions in the discussion of Paul and Judaism that blend together to produce the new perspective on Paul. It will of course be impossible to respond adequately to these arguments in this context. But I do want to note something about each of them, firing somewhat in the disconcerting fashion of a loose cannon.

There have been a number of responses to various aspects of the new perspective, as we shall see. Very few, however, have attempted to respond to the new perspective as a whole. Deserving of

28. Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 88-176; D. B. Garlington, "The Obedience of Faith": A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context (WUNT 2/38; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991). Similar in many ways are N. Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans. Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism* (JSNTSS 45; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990); and C. T. Rhyne, *Faith Establishes the Law* (SBLDS 55; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

29. For Stendahl, Paul's gospel was only for the Gentiles. See *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 2.

30. See Barth's collection of essays entitled *The People of God* (Sheffield JSOT, 1983), where a two-covenant theory is at least implied.

31. *The Origins of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

32. See Gaston's collected essays in *Paul and the Torah* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987).

33. Explicitly in *The Partings of the Ways*, 250: "Jewish/Christian dialogue in this area has tended to pose the issue in terms of one covenant or two; and clearly I lean to the 'one covenant' side." Yet his position is very nuanced and it is not always clear how his conclusions are compatible with a one covenant position. Perhaps this is why he uses the word "lean."

special mention in this regard is Stephen Westerholm's excellent book *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*,³⁴ and I would also like to mention with appreciation the brief but insightful excursus on Rom 3:20 ("No One Will be Justified by Works of the Law") in volume one of Doug Moo's commentary on Romans.³⁵

We turn first then to the two main points considered in §§1 and 2.

4.1 Few if any will want to deny that what is found in the OT, namely the religion of Israel, is indeed a religion of grace rather than works-righteousness. To say this, however, is not enough. In the post-exilic period, beginning with the proto-typical scribe Ezra, there was understandably a turning to the law with a new intensity of commitment. In this new development, which constitutes the beginning of Judaism, it is hardly surprising that the law assumed central importance. Judaism is of course in continuity with the OT and grace was not necessarily occluded by the heightened emphasis on the law. But that it was overshadowed by the emphasis on the law seems probable to me.

It is a good question to what extent the rabbis or proto-rabbis of the first century assumed and articulated the grace that is foundational to the religion of their OT forebears. Apart from the notorious problem of what in the rabbinic literature can be taken as going back to or reflecting the situation of the first century, one must note not only the lack of systematic thinking but the presence of (and delight in!) contradictory opinions. It is furthermore the case that there are plenty of legalistic-sounding statements in the rabbinic literature. Klyne Snodgrass gently points this out when he writes, "There is an emphasis on weighing good deeds against bad in some writings and on the keeping of ledger books in others, and this cannot be dismissed as easily as Sanders would like."³⁶ Such statements collected for example in Billerbeck and Kittel do exist; the criticism is that only these texts are cited and not others that point in another direction.

34. Subtitled "Paul and His Recent Interpreters" (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

35. *Romans 1-8* (Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary; Chicago: Moody Press, 1991) 212-18. Much of Moo's helpful and insightful review article, "Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years" (*SJT* 40 [1987] 287-307) is also relevant to the subject of the present article.

36. "Justification by Grace—to the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul," *NTS* 32 (1986) 72-93, here 78. Cf. R. H. Gundry: "If we weigh their emphases—quite a different impression may be gained, an impression of Palestinian Judaism as centered on works-righteousness and Paul's theology as centered on grace" ("Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Bib* 66 [1985] 1-38, here 6). Although Jacob Neusner agrees with Sanders' portrayal of Judaism, a comment he makes in his review of Sanders' book points in the same direction: "An apology for Rabbinic

Earlier Jewish scholars were ready to allow the very strong emphasis on works among the rabbis. Schechter cites the famous paradox attributed to R. Akiba (*Aboth* 3.20): "The world is judged by grace, and yet all is according to the amount of work."³⁷ Israel Abrahams refers to the Jewish doctrine as "something like the synergism of Erasmus, which as his opponents saw was radically opposed to the Pauline theory of grace." After citing the same logion of Akiba, he adds that "the antinomy [of grace and works] is the ultimate doctrine of Pharisaism."³⁸ Even if we allow that the emphasis on works has to do with "staying in" rather than "getting in," as Sanders maintains, we may still be confronted with a decided preoccupation with works, a preoccupation which by its very nature makes for human insecurity and thus prepares a promising ground for the nurture of legalistic tendencies.

Räisänen, it should be noted, has adamantly continued to argue against Sanders and Dunn that Paul does portray Judaism as legalistic. Then, however, he asserts that Judaism could not have been legalistic (an a priori conclusion dependent on Sanders) and that therefore Paul is responsible for a distortion of first century Judaism, being concerned only to defend and promote the Gentile mission.³⁹

Since the rabbis can also speak of grace, however, and since a religion should always be judged by its best representatives, is it not fair to admit that Judaism is a religion of grace and not one where God's favor is earned through righteous works? My answer to this is "Yes, at least at the theoretical level." In its best theology, Judaism *is* a religion of grace. Often, however, its gracious foundations are

Judaism bypassing the whole of the *halakhic* corpus which constitutes its earliest stratum is cosmically irrelevant to the interpretation of Rabbinic Judaism, therefore to the comparison of that system to others in its own culture" ("Comparing Judaisms," *History of Religions* 18 [1978-79]) 177-91, here 187, n. 14). This article is taken up in slightly altered form within "The Use of the Later Rabbinic Evidence for the Study of Paul," *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, Vol. II (ed. W. S. Green; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980) 43-63, where the above quotation has been moved from the footnote to the text. Sanders responds to Neusner and to the similar criticisms of A. J. Saldarini (in his review of Sanders' book [*JBL* 98 (1979) 299-303]) in an article that follows Neusner's "Puzzling Out Rabbinic Judaism," *ibid.*, 65-79.

37. *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, 15. Schechter calls attention to the variant reading, "and not according to the amount of work," and the interesting fact that the difference was of no real concern to the commentators.

38. *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (First Series, 1917; republished, New York: KTAV, 1967) 146. For a fascinating and illuminating discussion of the subject from a Jewish point of view, see C. G. Montefiore's long comment on Matt 7:24-27 in *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings* (1930; reprinted, New York: KTAV, 1970) 154-201.

39. *Paul and the Law*, xxvi—xxix.

tacitly assumed⁴⁰ and often the law takes a place of overwhelming priority. It is not surprising if a religion whose heart lies in praxis rather than theory (theology), a religion dominated by nomism, where the covenant is more presupposed than articulated, inadvertently produces followers who fall into a legalistic mode of existence. This may explain the "exception" of 4 Ezra with its clear legalism, which Sanders does not deny.⁴¹ Thus, I do not find it hard to believe that during the time of Jesus and Paul there were many who—against the best understanding of their faith—had fallen into legalism, against which both Jesus and Paul had therefore to contend.⁴² A covenantal nomism will only remain "covenantal" where very deliberate and explicit measures are taken to guard it as such; there will otherwise be a natural human tendency toward legalism. There have been many instances where the experience of Christian congregations substantiates this.

It is therefore not at all clear, in my opinion, that there were no Jews around in the time of Paul who corresponded to the legalists attacked by him in the traditional understanding of works-righteousness.

4.2 It is of course debatable whether justification by faith is the "center" of Paul's theology. What is more important for our purposes is whether justification by faith is *important* for Paul, indeed, to the extent that it is more than a ploy merely to advance the Gentile mission, but a doctrine indispensable even for the salvation of the Jews. I am persuaded by those who have argued that what is the most fundamentally important element in Paul's theology is that the work of Christ inaugurates an eschatological turning point

40. T. F. Best has called attention to this problem in the following words: "His [Sanders'] insistence that the covenant-concept is central in the rabbinic literature, though virtually unmentioned, depends on the ability to demonstrate that it was in fact in the background of the documents as the inescapable presupposition of their discussion on matters of ritual purification, means of atonement, and the definition of 'work.' But in other areas he uses the argument from silence to cut the other way: Since a treasury of merits is not mentioned in the literature, such a concept was not a part of Judaism in this period." See "The Apostle Paul and E. P. Sanders: The Significance of Paul and Palestinian Judaism," *RestQ* 25 (1982) 65-74, here 72-73.

41. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 421-22.

42. So too, Silva, "The Law and Christianity," 349: "Sanders is insensitive to the fact that both in [Christian theologians of] medieval times and in Judaism many lay people may indeed have perceived salvation along those [legalistic] lines." Among other scholars who argue that first-century Judaism was legalistic, cf. H. Hübner, "Pauli Theologiae Proprium," *NTS* 26 (1979-80) 445-73; and T. R. Schreiner, "'Works of Law' in Paul," *NovT* 33 (1991) 217-44. Schreiner continues to hold to the so-called Reformation understanding of Paul: "What he [Paul] opposes is the delusion of those who think they can earn merit before God by their obedience to the law, even though they fail to obey it" (244).

in history.⁴³ Within that overarching *Heilsgeschichte* framework (which to my mind provides continuity between Jesus and Paul), justification assumes an especially important place.⁴⁴ This is seen especially, of course, in the closely argued soteriological sections of Galatians and Romans, but it is also found in the Corinthian letters,⁴⁵ as well as in Philippians and, were we allowed to appeal to it, Ephesians too.⁴⁶

J. G. Machen's response to Wrede on this very point is worth quoting in full:

The real reason why Paul was devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith was not that it made possible the Gentile mission, but rather that it was true. Paul was not devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith because of the Gentile mission; he was devoted to the Gentile mission because of the doctrine of justification by faith.⁴⁷

Without question, the doctrine of justification by faith in and through the finished work of Christ made the Gentile mission a pos-

43. To my mind Neusner is entirely correct when he points to this as constituting the real difference between Paul and the perspective of the Pharisees: the Christian view presupposes "an ontology quite distinct from that of the cult, an ontology which centers, as I just said, on a profoundly disruptive historical event, one which has shattered all that has been regular and orderly. So far as history stands at the center of being, so that the messiah and the conclusion of history form the focus of interest, the ontological conception of Christianity scarcely intersects with that of Pharisaism" ("The Use of the Later Rabbinic Evidence for the Study of First-Century Pharisaism," *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice* [ed. W. S. Green; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978] 215-28, here 225).

44. See E. Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans," *Perspectives on Paul* (trans. M. Kohl; London: SCM, 1971) 60-78. In Käsemann's view, "It has rightly been repeatedly noticed that the apostle's message of justification is a fighting doctrine, directed against Judaism" (70). Cf. R. Bultmann. "still more would he [a Jew] contradict the proposition that justification by works of the Law and justification by divine grace appropriated in man's faith exclude each other. But that is the decisive thesis of Paul: 'for Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified' (Rom. 10:4); i.e. 'Christ means the end of the Law; he leads to righteousness everyone who has faith'" (*Theology of the New Testament* [trans. K. Grobel; London: SCM, 1952] 1.263).

45. See R. Y.-K. Fung, "Justification by Faith in 1 & 2 Corinthians," *Pauline Studies*, 246-61.

46. For an excellent discussion of the subject, see John Reumann, "Righteousness in the New Testament: 'Justification' in the United States Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, with responses by J. A. Fitzmyer and J. D. Quinn (Philadelphia/New York/Ramsey: Fortress/Paulist, 1982). Reumann notes his continuing conviction concerning "the soundness of the Reformation choice in this perspective" and that "while righteousness/justification is by no means the only way to express Paul's message, the case for regarding it as the central one remains a persuasive one" (108).

47. *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921) 278-79. I owe this quotation to R. Y.-K. Fung, "The Status of Justification by Faith in Paul's Thought," 8.

sibility. But from Paul's perspective it also made possible the salvation of the Jews. Justification by faith is addressed to both Jew and Gentile because it addresses a universal human need.⁴⁸

5. We press on now to respond briefly to the corollaries mentioned above in §3.

5.1 Although justification by faith is often criticized for being concerned only with the salvation of the individual, as in the crisis of an individual over the problem of sin—on the model of Luther—properly understood it has corporate and cosmic aspects too.⁴⁹ Leaving that point aside, however, and coming to the personal level, I want to make the following observations. In my opinion we read too much into Paul's statement in Phil 3:6, "as to righteousness under the law [I was] blameless (*amemptos*)," when we conclude from it that Paul was happy as a lark with both the law and his performance of it. He indicates here only that by the standards of practicing Pharisees he had an exceptionally good performance record (cf. Gal 1:13f.).⁵⁰ It is certainly not anything in the end that he as a Jew felt he could rely upon. Quite the contrary, all his credentials and efforts amounted to worthless rubbish, as he goes on to say, putting him in complete dependence upon Christ, "not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ" (Phil 3:8-9).

In a dissertation published last year entitled *Paulus und das Judentum*, which I hope will receive the attention it deserves, the young Finnish scholar Timo Laato shows how Paul is critical of Jewish soteriology on anthropological grounds.⁵¹ Laato points to how, unlike the more optimistic Jewish view, Paul views human

48. For an excellent discussion of this whole question, see K. T. Cooper, "Paul and Rabbinic Soteriology: A Review Article," *WTJ* 44 (1982) 123-39, esp. 136ff. As Cooper says, "Paul's soteriology forms a much more specific and pointed contrast to covenantal nomism than Sanders has observed" (136).

49. Cf. Reumann, *Righteousness in the New Testament*, 73-74: "Righteousness/justification in Paul has a cosmic side, relating God's faithfulness and saving righteousness to all creation, within a new covenant setting. This emphasis is utterly necessary alongside the individual emphasis." See esp. E. Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans," *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 32-59; and P. Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 68-93.

50. For some thought-provoking reasons to reconsider Stendahl's conclusions, see J. M. Espy, "Paul's 'Robust Conscience' Re-Examined," *NTS* 31 (1985) 161-88.

51. Subtitled "Anthropologische Erwägungen," the dissertation was written for the Åbo Akademi and published by the Åbo Academy Press, Åbo, Finland, in 1991. Laato takes his point of departure from a suggestion of Hugh Odeberg, who was Professor of NT at Lund in the middle of this century. See his *Pharisaism and Christianity*, (trans. J. M. Moe of 1943 original; St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), which in a number of ways anticipated much of the recent discussion.

nature as dominated by sin and the flesh. Laato indicates how Robert Gundry had already come to a similar conclusion about the importance of human weakness for Paul's understanding of salvation.⁵² The result is that Paul abandoned the synergism of Jewish soteriology for the monergism of total dependence upon the grace of God in Christ. Laato concludes, rightly in my opinion, that Paul thus repudiates the Jewish understanding of righteousness and the Jewish soteriology. We may compare these conclusions to those of Stephen Westerholm, who also argues that in Paul's view "human sin has rendered the righteousness of the law inoperable as a means to life," and who also points out Paul's pessimism, compared to Judaism, in holding the impossibility of human beings ever satisfying divine requirements.⁵³

The question remains concerning when Paul came to this more negative assessment of the human condition.⁵⁴ In my view there is some truth in Sanders' argument that Paul moved from solution to problem. I am not convinced that Paul was problem-free before the Damascus Road experience, but I am confident that as Paul began to make sense of the reality of the crucified Messiah as the single *hilasterion* for the forgiveness of sin that his sense of the enormity of the human problem increased dramatically. Although I cannot prove it, I suspect that his experience as a Pharisee had already shown him something of the problem. The law after all can be experienced as both a blessing and a burden at the same time (as I take Acts 15:10 to indicate). And it is impossible to believe that Saul the Pharisee did not know from his own experience what it was like to struggle against the *Yetzer HaRa*, which is described by Montefiore as "a sore burden and a heavy trial."⁵⁵

It may well be then that Paul is not so far from Luther as some have recently argued. Luther may indeed have been a good exegete of Paul and his theology truly Pauline. One of the more humorous lines I have read in works on Pauline theology—and not a whit less true for it—is Westerholm's comment at the end of his chapter on justification: "Students who want to understand Paul but feel they

52. "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Bib* 66 (1985) 1-38. Laato quotes these words of Gundry: "It appears that the twin pillars of human weakness and salvation-history, not just salvation-history, uphold justification by faith alone" (27).

53. *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, 142.

54. In Gundry's view, this question is of no significance since it does not affect the position Paul takes in his writings; "Grace, Works," 21.

55. *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings*, 180. It is quite probable that Romans 7, if it is autobiographical, reflects something of this agonizing struggle under the law.

have nothing to learn from a Martin Luther should consider a career in metallurgy."⁵⁶

5.2 In my opinion, conversion is the right word to use for Paul's rejection of Judaism and turning to the faith of the Christian community he had been persecuting. But I do *not* think that it is correct to say that he converted to a new religion, or that Paul himself would ever have thought so. Christianity, for Paul, is nothing other than the faith of his ancestors come to an eschatological phase of fulfillment before the final consummation. The Christian community is the true Israel, if not the new Israel. The church has for the time being taken the place of Israel, but not altogether, since Paul foresees a future for physical Israel in Romans 11. That future, I hasten to add, involves Israel's response of faith to Jesus Christ. Paul, in my opinion, knows of no salvation—not even for Israel—apart from the cross of Jesus. The church and believing Israel compose one entity, the people of God, who together experience the eschatological goal towards which God's work from Abraham onwards was aimed.

Along with his conversion, Paul of course received a call and commission to evangelize the Gentiles. But again, Paul did not think of a second religion for these Gentiles. He was calling them to his fulfilled Judaism, nothing other than the faith of Israel beginning with Abraham. For Paul becoming a Christian did not mean becoming a Gentile; it would be truer to say that the Gentiles became fulfilled Jews, the children of Abraham by faith, grafted onto the olive tree of Israel.

5.3 Paul's gospel addresses not merely the plight of the Gentiles, strangers to the covenants, but that too of the Jews. He addresses a human condition. This I think can be shown by a careful exegetical analysis of Rom 1:18-3:20. The very way Paul has constructed the argument indicates that he means to indict all humanity, both Gentiles and Jews (and the latter despite all their advantages), under the curse of sin (see especially 3:9; 19-20; and further in Romans, 5:18-19). We cannot stop here to look at these and other relevant passages that could be mentioned.

Paul was of course concerned especially with the problem of the salvation of the Gentiles for whom he had been given special responsibility. At the same time, however, he believed his gospel to be universally relevant. In a poignant passage he reveals his concern for the evangelization of the Jews as well as the Gentiles: "For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to

56. *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, 173.

win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law" (1 Cor 9:19-20).

5.4 The subject of Paul and the law has received much attention lately. It would be impossible to review the discussion here.⁵⁷ What we can do is to respond briefly to the claim that Paul has no quarrel with the law. Some preliminary comments will lead us quickly to the question of "works of the law," which will require a little more detailed treatment.

The recent discussion of the subject shows how difficult and complex it is. My conviction is that on this subject, as on not a few others too, we must learn to tolerate the paradoxical both/and. That is, Paul both does away with and upholds the law—in different senses, of course, unless we are to accept Räisänen's desperate conclusion that Paul was simply very confused.⁵⁸ But is Paul's dialectic on this subject really so hard to understand? The assertion that the law has come to an end (e.g., Rom 7:4-6; Gal 3:23-25; 4:4-5) is fundamentally important for Paul's soteriology (note the first person pronoun in Gal 2:4; cf. 2:15f.), this in the first instance in response to what de facto legalism may have existed, but also in response even to authentic covenantal nomism. Paradoxically, however, those free from the law who follow the teaching of their Lord fulfill the righ-

57. At least the main monographs may be listed: H. Hübner, *Law in Paul's Thought* (trans. J. C. Greig from 1978 original; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984); H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983; 2d ed., 1987); E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); P. J. Thomson *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Assen /Maastricht/Minneapolis: Van Gorcum/Fortress, 1990); and J. D. G. Dunn's collected essays, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990). All except Hübner and Räisänen represent the new perspective on Paul. For useful and contrasting reviews of scholarship in this area, see D. Moo, "Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years," *SJT* 40 (1987) 287-307; A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Paul and the Law," *SJT* 38 (1985) 613-22; J. M. G. Barclay, "Paul and the Law: Observations on Some Recent Debates," *Themelios* 12 (1986) 5-15; F. F. Bruce, "Paul and the Law in Recent Research," *Law and Religion: Essays on the Place of the Law in Israel and Early Christianity* (ed. B. Lindars; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1988) 115-25; and A. J. Bandstra, "Paul and the Law: Some Recent Developments and an Extraordinary Book," *CTJ* 25 (1990) 249-61. Also worth mentioning is the "Postscript to the Second Edition," in S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1984), where Räisänen and, to a lesser extent, Sanders are sharply criticized (345-58).

58. *Paul and the Law*, e.g., p. 264: "He [Paul] is torn into [sic] two directions, and he is incapable of resolving the tension in terms of theological thought." There have been many responses to Räisänen's book. He responds to these (up to 1987) in the preface to the second edition of his book. See further now G. Klein, "Ein Sturmzentrum der Paulusforschung," *Verkündigung und Forschung* 33 (1988) 40-56; and C. E. B. Cranfield, "Giving a Dog a Bad Name: A Note on H. Räisänen's *Paul and the Law*," *JSNT* 38 (1990) 77-85.

teousness of the law apart from the law—that is, the moral law, especially as summarized in the love commandment (Rom 13:9-10; cf. Matt 22:37-40). Thus it can be said that the gospel does not overthrow the law in the sense that righteousness is abandoned; rather, the gospel upholds the law (Rom 3:31).⁵⁹ As I see it, the *telos* of Rom 10:4 may itself thus bear both the nuance of "end" and "goal." Both are surely true from the Pauline perspective.

If Paul in this sense still upholds the law, may it not be said that his Christianity amounts simply to a different form of "covenantal nomism"? Is it not a following of the law in the context of experienced grace? While there is indeed some overt similarity, the very basis of Paul's soteriology is different. We can do no better than quote Morna Hooker here:

Clearly we cannot speak of "covenantal nomism" in Paul's case, since that would run counter to Paul's basic quarrel with the Law. But the point is that for Paul, the Law has been replaced by Christ—or rather, since the Law was an interim measure, it has been shown in its true character as a stand-in, now that the reality has arrived. The questions, "Who belongs to the covenant?", and "How does one respond to the covenant?", are answered by Paul in terms of Christ, by Judaism in terms of the Law.⁶⁰

In short, while Judaism is nomocentric, Paul is christocentric. And as serious as Paul is about righteous conduct, he cannot be fairly characterized as a nomist (cf. Gal 3:1-5). He has in a fundamental way broken with the law,⁶¹ and hence Judaism.⁶²

5.5 That brings us finally to the vexed question of the meaning of "works of the law" in Paul. The attempt to avoid a negation of the law on Paul's part makes necessary a reunderstanding of this phrase

59. For a somewhat similar perspective, see P. Stuhlmacher, "Paul's Understanding of the Law in the Letter to the Romans," *SEÅ* 50 (1985) 87-104; and also his *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness*, 134-54.

60. "Paul and 'Covenantal Nomism'," *Paul and Paulinism* (Festschrift C. K. Barrett, eds. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982) 47-56, here 52. Hooker has more than once been quoted as though she equated Paul's Christianity with a covenantal nomism.

61. So rightly Räisänen, who notes that "The real difference between Dunn and me (and Sanders) is not the assessment of the social function of the law but the question of whether or not Paul criticized the *law as such and as a whole* or just the law as viewed from a limited perspective" (*Paul and the Law*, xxx). For a particularly strong statement concerning Paul's rejection of the law, see R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred Violence and 'Works of Law': 'Is Christ Then an Agent of Sin?' (Galatians 2:17)," *CBQ* 52 (1990) 55-75. See now too, his *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

62. See especially Räisänen, "Galatians 2.16 and Paul's Break with Judaism," *NTS* 31 (1985) 543-53.

as referring to something other than the performance of the law itself. Already in 1975 Daniel P. Fuller, in pursuit of the unity of the testaments, argued that "works of the law" referred to a legalistic distortion of the law on the part of the Judaizers.⁶³ The recent attempts of a number of scholars to understand the phrase as referring to "boundary markers" or the specific indicators of Jewish distinctiveness has essentially the same motivation. This is indeed a key element in the new perspective on Paul as defended particularly by Dunn. This understanding of "works of the law" has not been without its share of critics. In the informative "Additional Notes" to the relevant chapters (8 and 9), Dunn responds in turn to the criticisms of Räisänen, Hübner, Stuhlmacher, Sanders, Bruce, Schreiner, Fung, and Westerholm.⁶⁴ More recently, in a separate article, he responds to the criticisms of C. E. B. Cranfield.⁶⁵ It is impossible here to review these discussions in any detail, and we shall content ourselves with noting a couple of common motifs in the objections and a few additional observations.

It is a frequent, and to my mind justifiable, objection among these writers that in Paul's soteriological arguments works of the law and gospel are antithetical and that one aspect of the good news of the gospel is that it involves a break with the law, and hence that Paul's Christianity includes a break with Judaism. This of course amounts to a denial of the new perspective at its very center. A further point is that Paul's argument is not simply against the so-called boundary markers, but refers to the entirety of the law (a point admitted by Dunn). Dunn consistently faults his critics for failing to appreciate the social function of the law, by which he appears to mean failing to explain "works of the law" solely in terms of social boundary markers.

Now it can hardly be denied that Dunn's fundamental point is true. The law does play a socially determinative role in its boundary markers separating Jew from Gentile, and Paul would have used all resources at his disposal to argue against wrong soteriological inferences from this. But the fact that there was such a social aspect involving such boundary markers does not warrant reducing the entirety of Paul's polemic against the law to this one single point. Precisely because the law was what distinguished the Jew from the Gentile, the boasting which Paul attacks can be explained as boasting in national privileges. That, however, is not a necessary explana-

63. "Paul and 'The Works of the Law,'" *WTJ* 38 (1975-76) 28-42.

64. See *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 206-14; 237-41.

65. Cranfield, "'The Works of the Law' in the Epistle to the Romans," *JSNT* 43 (1991) 89-101; Dunn, "Yet Once More—'The Works of the Law': A Response," *JSNT* 46 (1992) 99-117.

tion; it is possible that Paul attacks a legalistic boasting. Gundry's conclusion is correct: "The use of the law to establish one's own righteousness is what Paul finds wrong in Palestinian Judaism, including his past life."⁶⁶ For all its undeniable truth, one may wonder whether the view of works of the law as badges of national identity really provides the best explanation of all the data.⁶⁷

66. "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved," 16. At the end of his article, Gundry states that it was "because of a conviction that works-righteousness lay at the heart of Judaism and Judaistic Christianity" that Paul rejected them (37-38.).

67. Among the ever-burgeoning literature on the subject the following may be noted: E. P. Sanders, "On the Question of Fulfilling the Law in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism," *Donum Gentilicium* (Festschrift D. Daube, eds. E. Bammel, C. K. Barrett, and W. D. Davies; Oxford: Clarendon, 1978) 103-26; (R. Smend) and U. Luz, *Gesetz* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1981) 45-144; the following three articles in the same volume: W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Law: Reflections on Pitfalls in Interpretation" (4-16); U. Wilckens, "Statements on the Development of Paul's View of the Law" (17-26); and F. F. Bruce, "The Curse of the Law" (27-36), *Paul and Paulinism* (Festschrift C. K. Barrett, eds. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982); D. Moo, "'Law,' 'Works of the Law,' and Legalism in Paul," *WTJ* 45 (1983) 73-100; N. M. Watson, "Justified by Faith, Judged by Works—An Antinomy?" *NTS* 29 (1983) 209-21; T. R. Schreiner, "Is Perfect Obedience to the Law Possible? A Re-Examination of Galatians 3:10," *JETS* 27 (1984) 151-60; idem, "Paul and Perfect Obedience to the Law: An Evaluation of the View of E. P. Sanders," *WTJ* 47 (1985) 245-78; B. Reicke, "Paulus über das Gesetz," *ThZ* 41 (1985) 237-57; P. Stuhlmacher, "Paul's Understanding of the Law in the Letter to the Romans," *SEA* 50 (1985) 87-104; H. Hübner, "Was heist bei Paulus 'Werke des Gesetzes?'" *Glaube und Eschatologie* (Festschrift W. G. Kümmel, eds. E. Grager and O. Merk; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1985) 123-33; H. Räisänen, *The Torah and Christ: Essays in German and English on the Problem of the Law in Early Christianity* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1986); T. L. Donaldson, "The 'Curse of the Law' and the Inclusion of the Gentiles: Galatians 3.13-14," *NTS* 32 (1986) 94-112; J. Lambrecht, "Gesetzesverständnis bei Paulus," *Das Gesetz im Neuen Testament* (ed. K. Kertelge; Freiburg: Herder, 1986) 88-127; K. R. Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace—to the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul," *NTS* 32 (1986) 72-93; C. H. Cosgrove, "Justification in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Reflection," *JBL* 106 (1987) 653-70; T. D. Gordon, "The Problem at Galatia," *Int* 41 (1987) 32-43; K. R. Snodgrass, "Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law," *JSNT* 32 (1988) 93-113; B. L. Martin, *Christ and the Law in Paul* (NovTSup 62; Leiden: Brill, 1989); F. Thielman, *From Plight to Solution: A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans* (NovTSup 61; Leiden: Brill, 1989); T. L. Donaldson, "Zealot and Convert: The Origin of Paul's Christ-Torah Antithesis," *CBQ* 51 (1989) 655-82; T. R. Schreiner, "The Abolition and Fulfillment of the Law in Paul," *JSNT* 35 (1989) 47-74; R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sacred Violence and 'Works of Law.' 'Is Christ Then an Agent of Sin?' (Galatians 2:17)," *CBQ* 52 (1990) 55-75; C. D. Stanley, "'Under a Curse': A Fresh Reading of Galatians 3.10-14," *NTS* 36 (1990) 481-511; J. A. D. Weima, "The Function of the Law in Relation to Sin: An Evaluation of the View of H. Räisänen," *NovT* 32 (1990) 219-35; P. Richardson, S. Westerholm et al., *Law in Religious Communities in the Roman Period: The Debate Over Torah and Nomos in Post-Biblical Judaism and Early Christianity* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 4; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991); D. B. Garlington, *"The Obedience of Faith": A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context* (WUNT 2/38; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991);

5.6 This is not the place to argue against the two-covenant theory concerning the salvation of the Jews and the Gentiles. As we have noted earlier, not all advocates of the newer approach to Paul hold to this view. Here I want only to refer to a significant article by Sanders in which, critiquing the views of Stendahl, he argues that according to Paul Torah obedience is not "the necessary or sufficient condition of salvation" for Israel, and that when Paul envisages the salvation of Israel, he has no other way in mind than "the requirement of faith in Christ."⁶⁸ Sanders himself dissents from this viewpoint, but he is fair enough to indicate what Paul's view was. For Paul, Christ was not merely one event in a series of salvation-historical events.⁶⁹ Those who agree with Paul here, I hasten to add, may—indeed *must*—oppose anti-Semitism with all the strength available to them.

6. The real test of the new perspective on Paul is how well it can explain all the pertinent texts. Proponents of the new perspective, like those of the old perspective (if we may call it that), must not only occupy themselves with texts that seem to support their views, but also explain those that seem to go against them.⁷⁰ Those who are unconvinced by the new perspective, must be able to handle such texts as Rom 2:6-10, 13-16; 3:31; and 8:3-4. Supporters of the new perspective have to explain such texts as Rom 3:20, 28; 4:4-6; 5 20;

idem, "The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans," *WTJ* 52 (1990) 201-24; 53 (1991) 47-52; J. P. Braswell, "'The Blessing of Abraham' Versus 'The Curse of the Law': Another Look at Gal 3:10-13," *WTJ* 53 (1991) 73-91; T. R. Schreiner, "'Works of Law' in Paul," *NovT* 33 (1991) 217-44; R. B. Sloan, "Paul and the Law: Why the Law Cannot Save," *NovT* 33 (1991) 35-60; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant. Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); M. Winger, *By What Law? The Meaning of Nomos in the Letters of Paul*, (SBLDS 128; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); H. Boers, "'We Who Are by Inheritance Jews; Not From the Gentiles, Sinners,'" *JBL* 111 (1992) 273-81.

68. "Paul's Attitude Toward the Jewish People," *USQR* 33 (1978) 175-87, here 184. The article is followed by "A Response" from Krister Stendahl, 189-91. See especially the excellent articles of R. Hvalvik, "A 'Sonderweg' for Israel. A Critical Examination of a Current Interpretation of Romans 11, 25-27," *JSNT* 38 (1990) 87-107; and Scott Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11:25-32. A Response to Krister Stendahl," *Ex Auditu* 4 (1988) 38-58.

69. Cf. D. C. Allison, Jr.: "The NT nowhere holds that salvation is to be found apart from Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God. Although this may ride roughshod over our modern sensibilities, it remains no less true. The NT does not know two ways of salvation—one in Jesus, one apart from him" ("Jesus and the Covenant: A Response to E. P. Sanders," *JSNT* 29 [1987] 57-78, here 74). See too Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, xxiv.

70. Silva calls for a closer examination of a number of texts by Dunn, adding that "no explanation of Paul's theology can prove ultimately persuasive if it does not arise from the very heart of Paul's explicit affirmations and denials" ("The Law and Christianity," 353).

11:6; and Gal 2:16; 3:10-14, and convince us that "works of the law" in every case refers only to boundary markers and the social function of the law. Dunn has of course addressed these texts in his various articles, his Romans commentary, and in the recent exchange with Cranfield referred to above.⁷¹ It will naturally be a matter of opinion as to which view in the end does the best justice to the texts. The discussion seems destined to go on for yet some time.

7. The new perspective on Paul has been effectively argued by its most able proponent, J. D. G. Dunn. Taking the groundwork laid by Sanders and giving full due to the social situation of the early church, Dunn has been able to provide a remarkably cohesive explanation of the texts in which Paul addresses the issue of the law. It cannot reasonably be in question that Paul disapproved of viewing the law as a boundary marker of Jewish righteousness over against the Gentiles. Paul *does* do away with Jewish privileges and the Jewish/Gentile distinction so far as salvation is concerned. This was clearly of supreme importance to the success of the Gentile mission to which he had been called. It is precisely because this *is* in the Pauline texts that Dunn's case can be as strong as it is. Many of us continue to wonder, however, whether this is all Paul fights against in his polemic against the law and whether the improper "boasting" he opposes does not involve something else equally serious, if not more so. In some of us there lingers the feeling that in a number of instances Paul seems to have picked a strange way of arguing—a way that must be regarded as indirect and misleading—if he is concerned *solely* about the national distinctives and privileges of Israel, and nothing more.

To be fair to Dunn, he does state unequivocally that his main contention concerning boundary markers does not cancel out the importance of the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith.⁷² My

71. Dunn summarizes his differences with Cranfield as centering on two key issues: (1) "Did Paul accuse his fellow Jews of seeking to earn salvation by works of the law, or of seeking to preserve their covenantal privileges as God's righteous ones (over against Gentile sinners) by works of the law?" and (2) "Did Paul think the law could not be obeyed and that Israel's fault was in assuming that it could? Or did he think that Israel was going about obeying the law in the wrong way, by treating the realm of righteousness as exclusively Jewish territory (marked out by works of the law), and thereby failing to recognize the seriousness of their sin and that they (as much as any Gentile) fell under the law's curse?" In both instances, Cranfield opts for the first alternative, Dunn for the second (cf. "Yet Once More—'The Works of the Law'," 116).

72. See, e.g., "The Justice of God," 2, 21. I do not understand Dunn's praise of the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith as "a restatement of central biblical insights of incalculable influence and priceless value" (2), when his approach explains the pertinent passages in a quite different way. I also find it difficult to understand J. Ziesler's claim that justification by faith can be preserved in the new perspective as

impression, however, is that the emphasis on boundary markers or national righteousness in fact pushes justification by faith very much to the periphery, making it pertinent only to the Gentiles. The problem is a bigger one than simply holding the two emphases in balance. Despite Dunn's claim, I do not see how his approach can do anything but take all vitality out of the doctrine.

That some valid insights have emerged in the new perspective on Paul I do not wish to deny. I find myself doubtful, however, that the new perspective itself constitutes a breakthrough to a truer estimate of Paul and Judaism. This time Copernicus and his followers are taking us down the wrong path.

an analogy. See "Justification by Faith in the Light of the 'New Perspective' on Paul," *Theology* 94 (1991) 188-94.