The New Perspective on Paul: A Bibliographical Essay

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About this Bibliography
Introductions to the NPP
Antecedents to Sanders
Works by E.P. Sanders
Articles
Monographs
Justification
Law and "Works of the Law"
Studies on Judaism in Light of the NPP
Commentaries that Engage the NPP
Online Resources

ABOUT THIS BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is my collection, annotation and contribution to the growing mass of literature on the New Perspective on Paul (NPP). It is by no means an exhaustive collection, although I hope it is far more extensive than the average bibliography you'll find at the end of lecture notes or even at the back of a textbook. There are works that could appear under three or four different headings (esp. when they deal with Luther, Law, Justification and Judaism rolled into one!). I have tried to stratify the various monographs and articles in a thematic way, but some works could easily overlap under different headings. I have also cited only a handful of materials available on the internet and I limited my selection to works which I deem to be significant to the on-going debate. A fuller referencing of electronic materials is conveniently catalogued on the ‘Paul Page’. My thanks to Mark Mattison for posting this bibliography on his webpage and I hope it benefits students and scholars alike.

INTRODUCTIONS TO THE NPP
ANTECEDENTS TO SANDERS

C. G. Montefiore, Judaism and St. Paul: Two Essays (New York: Dutton, 1915). The Judaism that Paul knew was a cold form of Diaspora Judaism and not Rabbinic Judaism.

G. F. Moore, “Christian Writers on Judaism,” HTR 14 (1921): 197-254. Moore supposed that Christian writers are influenced by an apologetic desire to see in Judaism the antithesis to grace.


WORKS BY E.P. SANDERS


E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison in Patterns of Religion (London: SCM, 1977). The ground-breaking book by Sanders where he proposes his view of Palestinian Judaism as covenantal nomism: “Covenantal nomism is the view 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” (p. 75); “The ‘pattern’ or ‘structure’ of covenantal nomism is this: (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies (3) God’s promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6)
The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved. An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be God's mercy rather than human achievement" (p. 422).


E. P. Sanders, Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People (Fortress: Philadelphia, 1983).


ARTICLES


Michael F. Bird, “When the Dust Finally Settles: Reaching a Post New Perspective Perspective,” Criswell Theological Review (forthcoming 2005). Bird argues that Judaism was variegated and some strands emphasized grace and others obedience. Merit theology (of some kind) does provide the backdrop for Paul’s formulation of law and justification. However, Paul’s primary problem was not confronting legalism but trying to get Gentiles accepted as Gentiles by Jews into fellowship.

Michael F. Bird, “Justification as Forensic Declaration and Covenant Membership: A Via Media between Reformed and Revisionist Readings of Paul,” (forthcoming in Tyndale Bulletin). This article contends that justification includes God’s declaration of righteousness for believers and the inclusion of Gentiles into the people of God. Paul confronts an “ethnocentric nomism” and espouses a view of justification whereby God “creates a new people with a new status in a new covenant as a foretaste of the new age”.

Brendan Byrne, “Interpreting Romans Theologically in a Post-'New Perspective' Perspective,” HTR 94 (2001): 227-41. Byrne considers himself within the NPP but still thinks that the NPP is theologically impoverished since it fails to adequately reckon with the intense exploration of human sin and alienation from God in the early part of Romans.


W. S. Campbell, “The New Perspective on Paul: Review Article.” ExpT 114.11 (2003): 383-86. Review of Seyoon Kim, Paul and the New Perspective, Michael B. Thompson, The New Perspective on Paul, and Simon J. Gathercole, Where is the Boasting?. Campbell thinks that these works are significant but fail to abolish or refute the primary contentions of the NPP.


Simon Gathercole, “After the New Perspective: Works, Justification and Boasting in Early


http://www.thepaulpage.com/Bibliography.html


N. T. Wright, “The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith,” TynBul 29 (1978): 61-88 Synopsis: The debate between E Käsemann and K Stendahl about justification and salvation history may be resolved with the help of a new overall view of Pauline theology. For Paul, the messiah represents his people, so that a crucified messiah means a crucified Israel. This provides Paul with his critique of Israel, aimed not at "works-righteousness" but at "national righteousness". Paul has been distorted by various schools of NT criticism: this view combines their strong points while avoiding their weaknesses.


**MONOGRAPHS**

Michael Bachmann and Johannes Woyke, Lutherische und Neue Paulusperspektive: Beitrag zu einem Schlüsselproblem der gegenwärtigen exegetischen Diskussion (WUNT 2.182: Tubingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2005).

John Barclay, Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul’s Ethics in Galatians (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988).


D. A. Carson, Peter O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 2 – The Paradoxes of Paul (WUNT 2.181: Tubingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2004; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004). Essays include: Stephen Westerholm (The "New Perspective" at Twenty-Five); Mark A. Seifrid (Paul's Use of Righteousness Language Against Its Hellenistic Background); Martin Hengel (The Stance of the Apostle Paul Toward the Law in the Unknown Years Between...


Timo Eskola, *Theodicy and Predestination in Pauline Soteriology* (WUNT 2.100; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1998). See “Excursus: The Theory of Covenantal Nomism” pp. 52-60. He raises three main points: (1) If legalism means that keeping the law affects eschatological salvation, then covenantal nomism is legalistic nomism by definition. (2) Covenantal nomism is a synergistic nomism. (3) Sanders reduces soteriology to the categories of sociology.


Simon J. Gathercole, *Where is the Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002). Gathercole argues that Jewish boasting concerned both election and obedience to the law.


Martin Hengel (with R. Deines), *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM, 1991). “Although people nowadays are fond of asserting otherwise, no one understood the real essence of Pauline theology, the salvation given *sola gratia*, by faith alone, better than Augustine and Martin Luther. Despite this rigorous reversal of all previous values and ideals (Phil 3.7-11), Pauline theology – and therefore also Christian theology – remains very closely bound up with Jewish theology. Its individual elements and thought-structure derive almost exclusively from Judaism. This revolutionary change becomes visible precisely in the fact that its previous theological views remain present even in their critical reversal as a negative foil, and help to determine the location of the new position.” (p. 86).


http://www.thepaulpage.com/Bibliography.html


N.T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005).


**JUSTIFICATION**

Michael F. Bird, “Incorporated Righteousness: A Response to Recent Evangelical Discussion Concerning the Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness in Justification,” *JETS* 47.2 (2004): 243-75. This article contends that “union with Christ” rather than “imputation” provides the proper exegetical context for understanding justification in Paul.


Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, eds., *Justification: What’s at Stake in the Current Debates*


John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002). A robust defense of the traditional Reformed view of imputed righteousness. The section on the pastoral significance of the doctrine of justification (pp. 27-39) is superb. Also available electronically at the *Desiring God* website.


**LAW AND WORKS OF THE LAW**


Chris Alex Vlachos, "Law, Sin, and Death: An Edenic Triad? An Examination with Reference to 1 Cor 15:56." *JETS* 48 (2004): 277-98. Vlachos argues that the theological soil from which Paul derived his law problematic was the Genesis Fall narrative, where the serpent expropriated the prohibition to provoke the first transgression. Rather than being polemically motivated, or being precipitated in response to either legalistic or nationalistic tendencies, Paul's concern with the law was thus driven by primeval considerations.


N. T. Wright, "Paul and Qumran: When Paul shuns the 'works of the law,' is he referring to the very works commended by the Dead Sea Scroll known as MMT?" *Bible Review* 14 (1998): 18, 54.

**STUDIES ON JUDAISM IN LIGHT OF THE NPP**


D. A. Carson, Peter O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1 – The Complexities of Second-Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001). Chapters include: "Psalms and Prayers (Daniel Falk); "Scripture-Based Stories" (Craig A. Evans); "Expansions of Scripture" (Peter Enns); "Didactic Stories" (Philip R. Davies); "Apocalypse" (Richard Bauckham); "Testaments" (Robert A. Kugler); "Wisdom" (Donald E. Gowan); "Tannaitic Literature" (Philip S. Alexander); Targumic Themes (Martin McNamara); "Qumran" (Markus Bockmuehl); "Josephus" (Paul Spilsbury); "Philo" (David M. Hay);
“Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures” (Mark A. Seifrid); and “Pharisees” (Roland Deines).


Timo Laato, Paulus und das Judentem (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1991). Laato recognizes Sanders’ contribution of undoing the caricature of Judaism as “legalism” but criticizes Sanders on various points: (1) Sanders fails to adequately appropriate the late nature of rabbinic materials; (2) Sanders does not recognize the difference between Paul and Judaism as being Paul’s pessimistic outlook on the human condition; and (3) Sanders is effectively arguing for a concept of “normative Judaism” which did not exist in the first-century (see esp. 65-82).


Jacob Neusner, “E.P. Sanders Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People,” in Ancient Judaism: Debates and Disputes (Brown Judaic Studies 64; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1994).

Jacob Neusner, Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: A Systematic Reply to Professor E.P. Sanders (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993).


George W. E. Nickelsburg, Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003). See chapter 2 “Torah and the Righteousness of Life” and chapter 3 “God’s Activity on Behalf of Humans” which compares and contrasts the soteriology of Christianity and Judaism. Nickelsburg does not think Judaism can be characterized as “works-righteousness” and the main Christian differences between the two were Christological.


Mikael Winninge, Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters (ConBNT 26; Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995).


**COMMENTS THAT ENGAGE THE NPP**

Brendan Byrne, Romans (Sacra Pagina; Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1996).


James D. G. Dunn, Romans 1-8 (WBC; Dallas, TX: Word, 1988).

James D. G. Dunn, Romans 9-16 (WBC; Dallas, TX: Word, 1988).


Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians (WBC; Dallas, TX: Word, 1990). Longenecker is sympathetic to works by Sanders but maintains that Paul’s opponents were still "nomistic" and "legalistic", see esp. pp. xcix, 86.


Scot McKnight, Galatians (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).


Thomas R. Schreiner, Romans (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998). The draw back of this commentary is that in a subsequent work (Paul Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ) Schreiner has changed his mind from a transformative understanding of justification to a strictly forensic view.

Charles H. Talbert, Romans (Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 2002).

Ben Witherington, Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004). Witherington approaches Romans through the grid of socio-rhetorical criticism and also attempting to offer a non-Reformed reading of the epistle. The excursus on "A Closer Look: Righteousness in the LXX, Early Judaism and Paul” (pp. 52-54) and “A Closer Look: ‘Justified' and Concepts of Covenantal Nomism” (pp. 102-7) are useful and represent a middle ground in regard to faith and obedience.


ON-LINE RESOURCES

Mark M. Mattison (Webmaster). “The Paul Page: Dedicated to the New Perspective on Paul.” www.thepaulpage.com/. This site has a range of articles, reviews and debates about the NPP. Authors hyperlinked in the site range in stature from established scholars to amateurs. This is probably the best website for the NPP to date and is becoming frequently cited in books and articles.

