

The New Perspective on Paul

Toward the end of the twentieth century a revolution in Pauline studies brought to the fore an understanding of Paul's theology called the "new perspective." Basically, this view maintains that when Paul talks about justification "by faith apart from works prescribed by the law" (Rom. 3:28), his main point is not that people are put right with God through faith rather than through their own effort or obedience; his main point is that people can be put right with God without abiding by the legal codes that marked Israel as God's chosen people. Thus he is not so much contending against "works righteousness" as he is rejecting "ethnic privilege."