



Where is Boasting?: Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5

Simon J. Gathercole

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This important work challenges the validity of the "New Perspective" on Paul and Judaism. Working with new data from Jewish literature and a fresh reading of Romans 1–5, Simon Gathercole produces a far-reaching criticism of the current approach to Paul and points a new way forward.

Building on a detailed examination of the past generation of scholarship on Paul and early Judaism, Gathercole's work follows two paths. First, he shows that while early Judaism was not truly oriented around legalistic works-righteousness, it did consider obedience to the Law to be an important criterion at the final judgment. On the basis of this reconstruction of Jewish thought and a rereading of Romans 1–5, Gathercole advances his main argument — that Paul did indeed combat a Jewish perspective that saw obedience to the Law both as possible and as a criterion for vindication at the final judgment. Paul's reply is that obedience to the Law is not a criterion for the final judgment because human nature makes obedience to the Law impossible. His doctrine of justification can therefore be properly viewed in its Jewish context, yet anthropological issues also take center stage.

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