

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**Degree Completion Program**  
**Springfield, Missouri**

**BIBD 637 CURRENT ISSUES IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION: DEALING  
WITH HERMENEUTICAL CHALLENGES  
(ASSESSING THE “NEW PERSPECTIVE” ON PAUL)**  
**August 31-September 28, 2006**  
**(3 Credits)**

David A. Thomas, Ph.D.  
[david.thomas@agmd.org](mailto:david.thomas@agmd.org)  
Office: (417) 268-1000  
Home: (417) 869-6846

**Fall 2006**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An in-depth discussion of current trends in the hermeneutical debate over Pauline theology. This course will focus on developments in the Academy over the last quarter-century, specifically addressing the so-called “New Perspective on Paul” from the vantage points of both its champions and its detractors. Efforts will be made to arrive at a working synthesis. Three hours.

**GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this course the student should:

- 1) Have a clearer understanding of the current discussion about Pauline theology in scholarly circles.
- 2) Be familiar with the significant scholars involved in this debate and understand the significance of their major works.
- 3) Perceive more readily the subtleties of theological argument and the necessity for careful reading and thoughtful review and comparison.
- 4) Understand the far-reaching ramifications associated with any given theological position, particularly those pertaining to fundamentals of the Faith.
- 5) Be thoroughly familiar with Pauline history and thought.
- 6) Discern the elements of this rather complicated debate and confidently synthesize their own position.

## **REQUIRED READING**

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Carson, D.A., Peter O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 2—The Paradoxes of Paul*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

Kim, Seyoon. *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Stuhlmacher, Peter. *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 2002.

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

### **ON RESERVE**

Avemarie, Friedrich. "Election and Reward: On the Optional Structure of Rabbinic Soteriology." Translated by David A. Thomas. Unpublished. Originally "Erwählung und Vergeltung. Zur optionalen Struktur rabbinischer Soteriologie." *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 108-126.

Carson, D. A. "Introduction" in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1—The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*. Edited by D. A. Carson, Peter O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001, pp. 1-5.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Summaries and Conclusions" in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1—The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*. Edited by D. A. Carson, Peter O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001, pp. 505-48.

Dunn, J. D. G. "The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith" *Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992), 1-22.

\_\_\_\_\_. "'A Light to the Gentiles' or 'The End of the Law'? The Significance of the Damascus Road Christophany" in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990, pp. 89-107.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The New Perspective on Paul" in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990, pp. 183-214.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Gal. 3:10-14)" in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990, pp. 215-41.

- Käsemann, Ernst. "Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans" in *Perspectives on Paul*, translated by Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1971), 60-78.
- Kim, Seyoon "Review of Wright, N.T. *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*." *Review of Biblical Literature*, June 2006. (7 pp.)
- Sanders, E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977. (**Read only**: Preface, Introduction—pp. xi-29; Conclusion to Palestinian Judaism 419-428; Introduction to Paul 431-442; Conclusion to Paul 543-556)
- Seifrid, "The Narrative of Scripture and Justification by Faith: A Still Fresher Reading of Paul" 2006 Symposium on Exegetical Theology, Concordia Seminary, January 17, 2006. (28 pp.)
- Sprinkle, Preston M. , "The Old Perspective on the New Perspective: A Review of Some 'Pre-Sanders' Thinkers," *Themelios* 30 (2005): 21-31.
- Stendahl, Krister. "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Consciousness of the West." *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963), 199-215.
- Thomas, David A. "Review of 'Erwählung und Vergeltung'." Unpublished.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Class Participation:** The atmosphere of the class is to be collegial. When appropriate, questions, comments, and discussion are both welcome and expected with the understanding that they are part of the learning process in a group setting. To a small extent, verbal participation in class sessions plays a part in tabulation of the final grade.

**Completion of Scheduled Readings:** The very nature of the Degree Completion Program requires that class sessions move through a significant amount of material rather quickly. The goal will therefore be maximum productivity in the short amount of time allotted, which will require keen preparation on the part of all involved. Correspondingly, lecture and class discussion will proceed under the assumption that all readings assigned for that date have been completed prior to class. *Of special note are the assignments for the first session, which require the student to do significant work before the class begins.* See below for individual session assignments, but note that it is much better to do readings and writings in advance if at all possible; things will accumulate very quickly for the student that takes things lightly at the beginning and tries to catch up later.

**Reading Response Papers:** A 5-6 page paper summarizing that day's assigned readings will be due each class session. Since some sessions will entail a broad spectrum of readings from various sources (particularly the first session), the student should be judicious in their writing. The point is to affirm that the readings have been done and the

student has engaged the scholars in question, has grasped their thought, and is able to interact coherently with them. Students should summarize the primary points of the readings and should comment critically upon them. See daily reading schedule (below) for session requirements.

See formal parameters for reading response papers below under *Research Assignment*.

**Research Assignment:** On the final day of class the student will turn in a 12-15 page research paper entitled “Justification by Faith in Two Perspectives.” The work should compare and contrast the “new” and “old” perspectives on the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. Emphasis should be placed on hermeneutical interaction with the pertinent Pauline texts and how the participants in this debate interpret them rather than merely the philosophical and sociological underpinnings of the respective positions. Sources should include items from the assigned readings, the bibliography, and from commentaries and other works on the Pauline letters, as well as other works typically used for exegesis.

***Formal Parameters:***

Generally speaking, students should employ the Turabian guidelines for formatting and style. The following points, however, should be sufficient for most questions and indicate this professor’s preferences on open matters. Failure to adhere to these norms may affect the final grade:

1. A cover sheet should be used which includes the paper’s title (all caps), the student’s name, the date, the course name and number, and the professor’s name. The cover sheet is not included in the final page count, and in terms of pagination should be considered “page 0.” *Do not use plastic slip covers, please*; a staple in the upper left corner is sufficient.
2. Paper used should be 8 ½” X 11” standard printer paper, either white or cream, but not colored.
3. Final copy should be double-spaced and printed in Times New Roman 12 point font.
4. Standard margins should be used (1 to 1.25” on sides, 1” on top and bottom). *Do not justify*. The first page of text should repeat the title (centered, all caps), with the text proper beginning 2” from the top.
5. The first page should be numbered, with the number “1” centered at the bottom of the page. All succeeding pages should be numbered in the upper right.
6. For bibliographic referencing, use footnotes, not endnotes. A bibliography is required.

## GRADING

Grading is done on the 4 point scale. The final grade will be determined by calculating the grade of each assignment then combining them according to the following breakdown:

|                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Class Participation        | 10%         |
| Reading Response Papers    | 50%         |
| <u>Research Assignment</u> | <u>40%</u>  |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>100%</b> |

## ASSIGNMENTS FOR CLASS SESSIONS & SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

### Assignments for Week One

#### **Reading:**

(Preferably in this order)

Sprinkle, Preston M. , “The Old Perspective on the New Perspective: A Review of Some ‘Pre-Sanders’ Thinkers,” *Themelios* 30 (2005): 21-31.

Stendahl, Krister. “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Consciousness of the West.” *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963), 199-215.

Käsemann, Ernst. “Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans” in *Perspectives on Paul*, translated by Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1971), 60-78.

Sanders, E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977. (**Preface, Introduction—pp. xi-29; Conclusion to Palestinian Judaism 419-428; Introduction to Paul 431-442; Conclusion to Paul 543-556**)

Avemarie, Friedrich. “Election and Reward: On the Optional Structure of Rabbinic Soteriology.” Translated by David A. Thomas. Unpublished. Originally “Erwählung und Vergeltung. Zur optionalen Struktur rabbinischer Soteriologie.” *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999): 108-126.

Thomas, David A. “Review of ‘Erwählung und Vergeltung’.” Unpublished.

Carson, D.A., Peter O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 1—The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001. (**D. A. Carson—Introduction, Summaries and Conclusions**)

**Writing:**

Five to six page reading summary and interaction. Please note that summaries and critiques should be concise and accurate given the short space allotted for so much reading from various sources.

**Specific Objectives:**

At the completion of this session, the student should be able to:

1. Name the first participants involved in the scholarly over Paul.
2. Identify the works and trends associated with these scholars.
3. Summarize the gist of the New Perspective in its earliest form.
4. Assess the relative weaknesses and strengths of the movement at this stage.

**Assignments for Week Two****Reading:**

Dunn, J. D. G. *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990. (“**Light to the Gentiles**”—pp. 89-107; “**The New Perspective**”—pp. 183-214; “**Works of the Law**”—pp. 215-41.)

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith”  
*Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992), 1-22.

Kim, Seyoon. *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul’s Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. (**Chapter 1—pp. 1-84, Conclusion—293-297**)

**Writing:**

Five to six page summary paper, as with Week One

**Specific Objectives:**

At the completion of this session, the student should be able to:

1. Describe developments in the New Perspective in the 1980s and 90s.
2. Summarize Dunn’s thinking as Sanders’ heir apparent.
3. Explain the reasons for the changes in the movement and their significance.
4. Interact critically with the New Perspective and its critics.

### **Assignments for Week Three**

#### ***Reading:***

Stuhlmacher, Peter. *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 2002. **(All, but especially. final chapter by Hagner)**

#### ***Writing:***

Five to six page summary paper, as with Week One

#### ***Specific Objectives:***

At the completion of this session, the student should be able to:

1. Identify more important scholars in the field.
2. Analyze the hermeneutical differences between the Old and New perspective.
3. Explain the significantly disparate hermeneutical approaches practiced by the two perspectives.
4. Express the conservative Academy's reserve concerning the new trend.

### **Assignments for Week Four**

#### ***Reading:***

Carson, D.A., Peter O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Volume 2—The Paradoxes of Paul*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004. **[S. Westerholm (1-38), M. Seifrid (105-46), S. Gathercole (147-184)].**

#### ***Writing:***

Five to six page summary paper, as with Week One

#### ***Specific Objectives:***

At the completion of this session, the student should be able to:

1. Summarize the spectrum of scholarship involved in the field.
2. Explain differences *within* the respective schools of thought.
3. Identify the main points of departure as expressed by the newer scholars involved in the debate.
4. Interact directly with Pauline texts according to the debate's parameters.

## **Assignments for Week Five**

### ***Reading:***

Wright, N.T. *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

Kim, Seyoon “Review of Wright, N.T. *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*.” *Review of Biblical Literature*, June 2006.

Seifrid, “The Narrative of Scripture and Justification by Faith: A Still Fresher Reading of Paul” 2006 Symposium on Exegetical Theology, Concordia Seminary, January 17, 2006.

### ***Writing:***

Five to six page summary paper, as with Week One

Twelve to fifteen page paper entitled “Justification by Faith in Two Perspectives.” See above for parameters and requirements.

### ***Specific Objectives:***

At the completion of this session, the student should be able to:

1. Speak to the most current trends in the debate.
2. Critically analyze the direction of the scholarly discussion.
3. Assess the ecclesiastical ramifications of the New Perspective movement in all its forms.
4. Fully describe the “symptoms” of “New Perspectivism” in secondary literature.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

In addition to the required reading, the following is provided for the student’s information. Please note that the following are not required reading, but suggested reference works for research and further independent study. Note also that dictionaries and introductions contain multiple articles /chapters of interest, providing a wealth of information and (in the case of some dictionaries) functioning as multiple sources for research projects, as each article will be independently written.

Barrett, Charles K. *Paul: An Introduction to His Thought*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994.

Bruce, F. F. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Exeter: Paternoster, 1984.

Carson, D. A. *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "New Testament Theology." In *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, edited by Ralph Martin and Peter Davids, 796-814. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997.
- Collins, J. J. *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Dunn, James D.G. *Romans 1-8*. Word Biblical Commentary 38A. Dallas: Word, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Romans 9-16*. Word Biblical Commentary 38B. Dallas: Word, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids,: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Fee, Gordon. "Paul's Conversion as Key to His Understanding of the Spirit." Pages 167-83 in *The Road from Damascus*. Edited by Richard N. Longenecker. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Hasel, Gerhard. *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- Hawthorne, Gerald, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Hays, R.B. "'Have We Found Abraham to Be Our Forefather according to the Flesh?' A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1." *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985): 76-98.
- Hengel, Martin. *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Judaism and Hellenism Revisited." In *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, ed. John J. Collins and Gregory Sterling, 1-37. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001.
- Hengel, Martin, and Anna Maria Schwemer. *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years*. Translated by John Bowden. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997.
- Käsemann, Ernst. *Commentary on Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Räsänen, Heikki. *Paul and the Law*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Paul's Conversion and the Development of His View of the Law." *New Testament Studies* 33 (1987): 404-19.

Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen*. 15th ed. Edited by Mark Wilson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001.

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

Schreiner, Thomas R. *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. Guides to New Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Paul: Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.

Schürer, E. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*. Edited by G. Vermes et al. 3 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973-87.

Silva, Moisés. "The Law and Christianity: Dunn's New Synthesis." *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (1991): 339-53.

Seifrid, Mark A. *Christ, Our Righteousness*. New Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000.

Thielman, Frank. *Paul and the Law*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994.

Wenham, David. *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995.

Westerholm, Stephen. *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics*. Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Paul's Use of the Jesus Tradition: Three Samples. Pages 7-37 in *The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels*. Vol. 5 of *Gospel Perspectives*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989.

Wright, N.T. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Romans and the Theology of Paul." In *Pauline Theology*, David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson, 3:30-67. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. *What Saint Paul Really Said*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.