

If You Call Yourself a Jew: Reappraising Paul's Letter to the Romans

Rafael Rodriguez

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If You Call Yourself a Jew reads Romans as a dialogue between Paul and a Gentile proselyte to Judaism. This fresh reading brings Romans into focus as Paul's exposition of the revelation of God's righteousnesshis faithfulness to his covenant promises to Abraham, which climaxed in the announcement that "in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed" (Gen 12:3). Paul insists that the righteousness of God is revealed, "for the Jew first as well as for the Greek" not through Torah but through the faith(fullness) of Jesus. Torah and the prophets provide corroborating witness for God's righteousness, but Gentiles who bend their necks to Torah's yoke miss the actual mechanism for finding peace with God. Paul found in the story of Jesus the image of complete faith in/faithfulness to God; in Jesus' resurrection he found the image of God's complete faithfulness, "for the Jew first as well as for the Greek" Whereas Torah resulted in curse and death, it also anticipated the unconditional faithfulness of God for both Jew and Gentile. For Paul, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the account of the outworking of God's faithfulness: the end of Torah's curses and the fulfillment of its blessings.



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