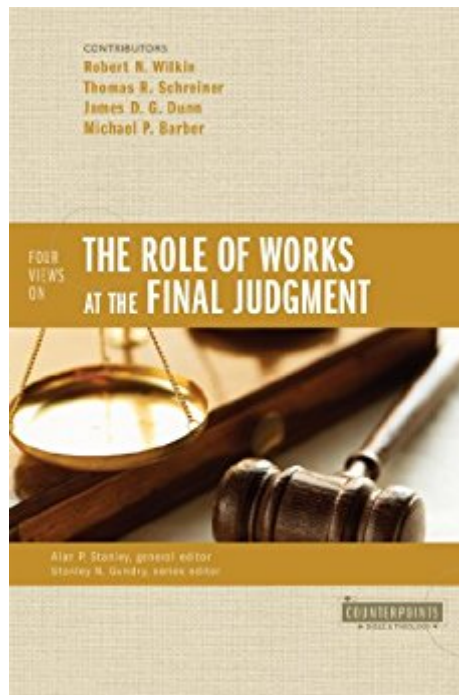


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# Four Views On The Role Of Works At The Final Judgment (Counterpoints: Bible And Theology)



## Synopsis

Through a discussion of Biblical texts, this book presents four perspectives on the role of works at the final judgment including:

**Robert N. Wilkin:** Works will determine rewards but not salvation: At the Judgment Seat of Christ each believer will be judged by Christ to determine his eternal rewards, but he remains eternally secure even if the judgment reveals he failed to persevere in good works (or in faith).

**Thomas R. Schreiner:** Works will provide evidence that one actually has been saved: At the final judgment works provide the necessary condition, though not the ground for final salvation, in that they provide evidence as to whether one has actually trusted in Jesus Christ.

**James D. G. Dunn:** Works will provide the criterion by which Christ will determine eternal destiny of his people: Since Paul, Jesus, and the New Testament writers hold together "justification by faith and not by works" with "judgment according to works", we should not fall into the trap of playing one off against the other or blend them in a way that diminishes the force of each.

**Michael P. Barber:** Works will merit eternal life: At the final judgment, good works will be rewarded with eternal salvation. However, these good works will be meritorious not apart from Christ but precisely because of the union of the believer with him.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It should be no secret by now that I am fond of multi-view books. Whether they are published by Zondervan, IVP Academic, or even Baker Academic, I'm always on the lookout for a good multi-view book that will explore some interesting and relevant topic. My most recent find and soon after review request is *Four Views on The Role of Works at The Final Judgment*. Edited by Alan P. Stanley, this roundtable of views features: Robert Wilkin (Free Grace position, works determine rewards but not salvation) Thomas Schreiner (Reformed Baptist, works will provide evidence that one is actually saved) James Dunn (New Perspective on Paul, works will provide the criterion by which Christ will determine eternal destiny of people) Michael Barber (Catholic position, works will merit eternal life) In terms of contributor selection, I thought this was an excellent roundup. Here we have a true full spectrum all the way from works have no role at the final judgment (Wilkin) to them having a fully determinative role (Barber). I won't go blow by blow, but a few comments are in order. First, alongside IVP's *Five Views on Justification*, this volume gives readers a good view what is at stake in the debates about how to read Paul. Schreiner and Dunn do not disagree with each other much (at least not to the extent Dunn tears into Wilkin) but there is a sharp contrast between them, and both have authored commentaries on Romans and theologies on Paul. Especially since Dunn was the contributor for the New Perspective on Paul position in IVP's books, you can get a good cliff notes of his overall position by reading his essays in these two books.

The debate has raged for many years concerning the role of works in the life of the believer. Some take the position that works are a necessary part of the equation with varying positions on just how necessary they are with others negating the whole idea of works instead embracing a heavy dose of grace with works being something we can do but rejecting the overall necessity of such actions. Zondervan through their excellent Counterpoints series has provided yet another salvo of discussion on this topic in their book *Four Views on the Role of Works at the Final Judgment*. Scholars Robert Wilkin, Thomas Schreiner, James Dunn, and Michael Barber provide their views and positions on this perennially thorny theological issue with a great deal of skill and fervor. Wilkin provides what could be classified as the free grace approach, Schreiner and Dunn support a mixture of works and grace while Catholic scholar Michael Barber endorses the necessity of works

to include the sacraments. As is the typical format of the Counterpoints series, each scholar provides their perspective with a follow on engagement of their respective position by the other contributors. The discussion at times can be very direct with the authors noting varying levels of disagreement and at times agreement with their colleague's opinions and positions. While disagreement is very pointed, any element of challenge to another contributor's thoughts on a matter is done with a spirit of respect and in the spirit of irenic debate. With that said, no punches are pulled and the back and forth debate can be quite intense which only serves to provide the reader with the intended variety of thought on a particular issue, in this case the role of works at the final judgment.

What will be the basis of my entrance into heaven when I stand before Jesus on judgment day? What role will my works play? Do I have to stay faithful to the end? How assured of my salvation can I be if I don't know if I'll persevere to the end? This book is a must read for anyone who wants to be abreast of the present debate over works, faith, and assurance of salvation. It reflects the developments over the past twenty years of the Lordship/Free Grace Salvation debate which began between Charles Hodge and Lewis Sperry Chafer in the 1920s and continued between John MacArthur and Zane Hodges (now deceased) in recent years. Michael Barber's essay is especially helpful for Protestants who want to understand the Catholic view on the relationship between faith and works as they relate to justification and eternal life. Wilkin (Free Grace view) represents the view that no works will determine one's destiny in eternity, but rather one's rewards. Schreiner (Reformed Calvinist) argues that works are a necessary fruit of faith, which if absent, proves faith was not present, and so will determine one's eternal destiny at the final judgment. Dunn (Arminian) considers works necessary for final justification, seeing Paul through the lens of first century Judaism's covenant nomism (the new perspective on Paul as promoted by N. T. Wright). Barber explains the Catholic view that salvation is by faith in Christ who empowers the believer to do works that merit salvation. The book was especially helpful for understanding the issues in the debate and the challenge before evangelicalism with regard to the gospel of salvation.

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