

**Righteousness in the Concept of Covenantal Nomism:
An Exegetical Study of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's Letters**

By

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I declare that this is my own account of the study and research that I have undertaken during my Masters by Research on Training (M. Theol) and contains no work which has been previously submitted for a degree at any other University

Irina S. Laloh

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of E. P. Sanders' concept of Covenantal Nomism as a description of the "pattern of religion" of Judaism. It has a particular focus on his argument that the religion of first-century Palestinian Judaism was not legalistic. This thesis seeks to show that his argument is evidently correct by taking the Psalms of Solomon as a case study to test whether its pattern of religion is rightly described as Covenantal Nomism. It offers a comparative analysis of the Psalms of Solomon and Pauline theology, focusing on the understanding of the 'getting in' and 'staying in' stages of their soteriologies. These are analysed using the concepts of 'monergism' and 'synergism.'

The thesis proceeds to examine their theology of *δικαιοσύνη* and *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in association with the concept of Covenantal Nomism. The results of this examination are three main findings, which are as follows. Firstly, the 'getting in' stage of the Psalms of Solomon is monergistic because God's gracious election alone is involved, while the 'getting in' stage of Paul's soteriology is synergistic because faith in Christ Jesus is needed as a response to God's justifying activity. Secondly, in the 'staying in' stage, the soteriologies of both the Psalms of Solomon and Paul are synergistic, since obedience to the Law or 'obedience of faith' is required to maintain the covenant relationship with God. Thirdly, both the Psalms of Solomon and Paul's letters show a similar view, which is that God's discipline is fundamental to helping the righteous grow in their dependence on Him and rescuing those who sin from destruction. Both agree that God on the Day of Judgment will reward the righteous who obey, and punish the sinners and the righteous who disobey and choose not to repent.

The author concludes, from the findings, that contemporary Christians must take care to continue in the obedience of faith and the renewal of their minds through the empowering of the Spirit in order to ensure their continual growth into Christ's likeness and to avoid punishment on the Day of Judgment.

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