

**I. FOR MANY PROFESSING CHRISTIANS, DOUG WILSON OUGHT TO BE CELEBRATED AS A HERO.**

- Prolific Christian author, blogger, and YouTuber.
- Pioneer of classical Christian Education.
- Founder of a school, college, seminary, church, publisher, and denomination.
- Exceptional communicator on matters where Christian leaders are often silent.
- Opponent of atheism, sec. humanism, feminism, wokism, abstractionism, & other toxic *-isms*.
- Fearless Christian apologist & defender vs. cancel culture, virtue signaling, etc.
- Father figure to a rising generation of fatherless Reformed “men”.
- Massively popular Christian influencer who professes agreement with the Westminster Standards.
- Least heretical of all the Federal Vision advocates.

**II. IN THE MINDS OF MANY OTHERS, HOWEVER, DOUG WILSON IS NOTHING SHORT OF A HERETIC.**

A. **ECCLESIASTICAL LONE RANGER** — *Self-Ordained, Church Coup, Started His Own Denomination (CREC), Authored His Own Confession*<sup>1</sup>

B. **BAD FRUIT** — *Sex Scandals, Lewdness toward Women, Plagiarism, Pride, Impenitence, Anti-Piety, Anti-Revival*<sup>2</sup>

C. **SERIOUS ERRORS** — (1) Presumptive Regeneration Lect. 12 (2) Paedocommunion Lect. 13-16 (3) Mono-Covenantalism (C.O.W.) Lect. 17-18

D. **AMBIGUITY & DOUBLE-TALK ON FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINAL ISSUES**

A. Justification: Orthodoxy<sup>3</sup> & Heterodoxy<sup>4</sup>

C. Baptism: Orthodoxy<sup>7</sup> & Heterodoxy<sup>8</sup>

B. Imputation: Orthodoxy<sup>5</sup> & Heterodoxy<sup>6</sup>

E. **VOUCHING FOR THE ORTHODOXY OF NUMEROUS FEDERAL VISION HERESIES & HERETICS**

A. **Wilson on Rich Lusk’s Heretical Denial of Imputed Righteousness (Lect. 6-7)**<sup>9</sup> — “[I]n our view, all the positions represented in the current discussion, as well as some others not currently engaged, are part of the historic Reformed world and are orthodox and

<sup>1</sup> Jer. 23:32; Acts 20:30; Rm. 10:15; Heb. 5:4; 6:2; 1 Tim. 4:14.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. 7:15-20; Jm. 3:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Pet. 2:18; Jd. 16.

<sup>3</sup> “We are justified for Christ’s sake only. God does not justify us for anything done by us, and far more important, for anything done in us (even by Him). Nor does God justify us because of our faith. Rather He justifies us because of Christ’s obedience and work, and this is appropriated by us by faith. Understanding these propositions (in the gut) is a matter of life and death, heaven and hell. This is what justification means.” (RINE, 47) “...individual justification is the sine qua non of being a genuine saint of God. In all this we are reaffirming the traditional Protestant doctrine of the righteousness of Christ imputed to those individuals who are elect. This, plus nothing, constitutes the ground of their final acceptance before God.” (RINE, 50) “[Our] good works are not in themselves the ground of salvation, but they are the ground of assurance of salvation. They are the fruit of the tree, not the cause of the tree. They are the evidence of a true and lively faith.” (RINE, 176)

<sup>4</sup> “We simply want to say that for those faithful to the covenant, initial faith and initial obedience are used interchangeably in Scripture... The gospel is to be *obeyed*. Another way of saying this is that the gospel is to be *believed*.” (AAT, 8) “Regeneration is a change of heart, from an unrighteousness heart that hates God to a righteous (but still imperfect) heart that loves Him, repents of sin, and believes in Him... At the end of the day, this means... infused righteousness as the instrument of imputed righteousness.” (Mablog 7/31/23 ~ AAC, 60-61) “Because justification by faith alone is true, it is possible for someone who is screwed up on justification (in his theology) to be actually saved. And because justification by faith alone is true, it is possible for someone with an orthodox theology on the subject to be actually looking at his correct theology instead of to Christ alone, and so he is lost.” (Mablog 8/2/23 ~ AAC, 65)

<sup>5</sup> Joint FV Statement (2007): “We affirm Christ is all in all for us, and that His perfect sinless life, His suffering on the cross, and His glorious resurrection are all credited to us...Christ is our full obedience.”

<sup>6</sup> Joint FV Statement (2007): “We deny that faithfulness to the gospel message requires any particular doctrinal formulation of the ‘imputation of the active obedience of Christ.’ What matters is that we confess that our salvation is all of Christ, and not from us.”

<sup>7</sup> “To be explicit, all teaching that grace is somehow imparted to an infant *ex opere operato* (automatically, by some kind of ecclesiastical magic) is rejected here as sub-Christian (indeed, as will be seen, it is sub-Jewish), and detrimental to a faithful preaching of the gospel. Water baptism does not regenerate, it does not save, and it does not cleanse.” (TATG, 12) “...we need to get to the point where no one would dream of accusing an evangelical paedobaptist of holding to the false and destructive doctrine of baptismal regeneration.” (TATG, 9) “We reject the Roman Catholic notion that saving grace goes in when the water goes on.” (RINE, 101)

<sup>8</sup> “[The devotional pietist] says we must never say that baptism saves or washes away sin because blockhead believers will always get the wrong idea and think they can go to heaven by taking a bath.” (RINE, 104-105) “Raise your hand if you knew that the Westminster Confession taught baptismal regeneration.” (RINE, 105) [Cf. Lecture 12]

<sup>9</sup> LUSK: “...the law did not require perfect obedience.” (AAT, 128) “God’s righteousness is his own righteousness, not something imputed or infused. God’s righteousness is simply his covenantal trustworthiness; specifically, it is his saving activity on behalf of Israel, ‘setting the world to rights’ in accord with the prophetic promises (cf. Isa. 51)... Paul is not identifying the gospel with the doctrine of imputed righteousness.” (AAV, 141) “This justification requires no transfer or imputation of anything. It does not force us to [redefine] ‘righteousness’ into something that can be shuffled around in heavenly accounting books... My in-Christ-ness makes imputation redundant. I do not need the moral content of his life of righteousness transferred to me.” (AAV, 142)

Christian... [We] understand ourselves to be in the middle of the mainstream of historic Reformed orthodoxy... For the particulars, we would refer the reader to the various papers.” (AAT, 2, 6)

- B. **Wilson on Schlissel’s View of Covenant Children**<sup>10</sup> — See Quotation Above (AAT, 2, 6)
- C. **Wilson on Schlissel’s Repudiation of Sola Fide (Lect. 1-2)**<sup>11</sup> — “So whenever I get together with Steve Schlissel or with Rich [Lusk] or with Steve Wilkins, all the different characters, we talk about it and we come to agreement in about five or ten minutes. But when we’re turned loose, we emphasize different things according to our situations, our backgrounds, the ministry in front of us, and so on.” (FVDL, 2005)
- D. **Wilson on James Jordan’s Denial of Spiritual Regeneration**<sup>12</sup> (Lect. 8-9) — “Jim [Jordan]’s a friend of mine. No problem with his orthodoxy. He’s a good guy. [His] paper [on regeneration] is a good example of what I mean by the emphasis of Federal Vision Dark, like an Oatmeal Stout dark beer... I’m not trying to indicate disagreement with Federal Vision oatmeal stout, but it’s a difference of emphasis.” (FVLD, 2005)
- E. **Wilson on Peter Leithart’s End of Protestantism Project** — “To take one example, Peter Leithart’s ‘end of Protestantism’ project is going someplace where I am simply uninterested in going... I am not talking about Peter’s personal destination, which is the resurrection of the body, and complete glory, a destination we gladly share... We don’t need to hurl anathemas at one another over any of this.” (Mablog, 1/17/17)
- F. **Wilson on Ralph Smith’s Redefinition of the Trinity (Lect. 19-21)** — *Smith’s books on the Trinity were published by Canon Press!*
- G. **Wilson on the Federal Vision as a Whole (Lect. 1-21)** — “But in distinguishing myself from the federal vision, I am accusing no one of heresy. I am simply saying that certain views are not the same kind of thing as what I am seeking to teach.”

### III. PERHAPS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, DOUG WILSON IS A CRAFTY THEOLOGICAL HUCKSTER.

- A. **His Deceptive Marketing Strategy**<sup>13</sup>
- B. **His Chameleon-like Media Persona**<sup>14</sup>
- C. **His Serpentine Denials of Gospel Exclusivity** — “You will not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) Rm. 10:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:13-14; Gal. 1:6ff; 3:10; 5:4; Mt. 18:6-7
- D. **The Scriptural Epitaph of His Ministry** — Isa. 5:20-21, 24; Rm. 16:17-18, 20; 2 Pet. 2:1-3

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<sup>10</sup> SCHLISSSEL: “[Citing his opponent:] ‘Baptized children... must... be evangelized and must come to a personal faith in order to receive the salvation offered by God’s covenant’ (lines 140-143) This statement is repulsive to God’s testimony that the children of His people truly and fully belong to Him... All baptized Christians are addressed in the same way: they have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of His beloved Son.” [AAT, 128]

<sup>11</sup> SCHLISSSEL: “Have Reformed folks gotten it wrong? Yes, to the extent that they’ve followed Luther in an imaginary Law/Gospel antithesis.... The law as God gave it is the gospel.... And the gospel as announced by Paul is the law.... [i]t was Christ’s teaching that obedience to the law was something very do-able and that such obedience, which includes repentance and faith, does save....” (C.R. Interview, 2003 — Along with Wilson) “The Bible says that God chose Abraham because He knew he would obey Him and keep His commandments and would teach his children to do the same. Now we’re told that obedience is optional, or only necessary for evidential value, of some sort of justification that came by faith. (Debate w/ Rev. John Otis, 2006)

<sup>12</sup> JORDAN: “The thesis of this paper is that all who are in Christ are in exactly the same position as regards the grace (favor) and gifts of God, with no distinction save that some continue in that position while others depart from it. Those passages that traditionally are held to teach that apostates never really were in Christ all along have been misinterpreted, and there are in fact no such passages in the Bible. Or to put it more bluntly, my thesis is that there is no such thing as ‘regeneration’ in the sense in which Reformed theology since Dort has spoken of it. The Bible says nothing about a permanent change in the hearts of those elected to heaven.” [TSGR, 6] “Some in the Church endeavor to be faithful and to live by faith in God and God’s promises; others do not. God has given His promises to all. He has claimed them all. He has elected and called them all into fellowship with His Son. But not all are making their calling and election sure by persevering.” [TSGR, 16]

<sup>13</sup> “**I was, am, and will remain a Westminster Puritan within an irenic river of historic Reformed orthodoxy.**” (Mablog, 1/17/17) “If you’re going to make a nice dark beer with bark still floating in it... one of the things you have to get over when you’re marketing it, is that you have to not care that people don’t like how it tastes at first.” And Steve Schlissel is a good example of someone who doesn’t care if you don’t like how it tastes at first. He’s a passionate man and a passionate Christian pastor, I love him dearly, and I think he’s great as a provocateur. I think we need people to say ‘If you don’t like how it tastes; deal with it!’ So I don’t mind the fact that there are people out there that are advocating or articulating a dark oatmeal stout, but I also think we need — what I’m calling amber ale — is an interest in articulating and harmonizing what we’re saying with what our Reformed predecessors... — I’m talking about the last one hundred years in America — they have some legitimate concerns and interests that they don’t want to see obscured, and I think a number of times they have a legitimate point or a legitimate concern, and I think that some among us need to be careful that we hear that and articulate that. And that’s what I’m calling Federal Vision amber ale. I’m not trying to indicate disagreement with Federal Vision oatmeal stout, but it’s a difference of emphasis. So whenever I get together with Steve Schlissel or with Rich [Lusk] or with Steve Wilkins, all the different characters, we talk about it and we come to agreement in about five or ten minutes. But when we’re turned loose, we emphasize different things according to our situations, our backgrounds, the ministry in front of us, and so on.” (FV: Dark or Light? with Rich Lusk, 2005)

<sup>14</sup> From the cover of his book Rules for Reformers — Wilson pictured wearing a leather jacket emblazoned with a skeleton of John Calvin, with the following quotation from the New York Times: “**More like a lumberjack than a pastor, even when he wears a suit.**”