

5-1-1990

The "I" in the Storm: Paul's Use of the First Person Singular in Romans 7

Michael Middendorf

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, mike.middendorf@cul.edu

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THE "I" IN THE STORM: PAUL'S USE OF THE
FIRST PERSON SINGULAR IN ROMANS 7

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

by

Michael Paul Middendorf

May 1990

Approved by: James Voelz
Advisor
Jacob A.O. Preus II
Reader
Francis Rossow
Reader

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I wish to express gratitude to my advisor, Dr. James Voelz, for his many keen insights into this topic, as well as hermeneutical issues in general. I am also indebted to my readers, Dr. J. A. O. Preus, III, and Prof. Francis Rossow, and to all of the faculty members of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Lana. Without her love, support, and labors in the classroom, it would not have been possible.

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INTRODUCTION

While describing the letters of "our beloved brother Paul," the third chapter of 2 Peter notes that some things in them are "hard to understand" (*δυσνόητα*; vv. 15-16). One of the passages in Paul's epistles which has proven most difficult to comprehend is the seventh chapter of Romans. According to Anders Nygren, this chapter "is perhaps the most discussed and fought over part of Romans. It presents us with one of the greatest problems in the New Testament."¹ These thoughts are echoed by John A. T. Robinson, who concisely summarizes the major issues of dispute as follows:

More ink, I suppose, has been spilled over this passage of Romans than any other. Quite apart from the details of exegesis . . . two questions have agitated interpreters: (a) Does the use of the first person singular indicate genuine autobiography - or is it simply cast in the first person for vividness? and (b) Does it refer to the Christian or to the pre-Christian state - is the use of the present from verse 14 onwards again merely for vividness?²

The identification of the "I" in Romans 7 and a correct appraisal of the "I"'s spiritual status in verses 14-25 are not inconsequential questions over which one might simply

¹Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, tr. C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 284.

²John A. T. Robinson, Wrestling with Romans (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 82. See also C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962), 140.

"express resignation."³ On the contrary, it is precisely because of the presence of such questions that Romans 7 has appropriately been called

one of the few really pivotal passages in Paul's theology; . . . our understanding of it will in large measure determine our understanding of Paul's theology as a whole.⁴

The purpose here is not merely "to spill more ink." Rather, it is to address approaches to and facets of these issues which have not yet been adequately considered or appreciated.⁵ This thesis proposes to answer the questions surrounding the identity, the spiritual condition, and the purpose of the "I" in Romans 7. It will arrive at its conclusions by means of an exegetical study of Romans 7, through an analysis of Paul's use of the first person singular in his letters, and on the basis of Pauline theology as a whole.

In order to provide the necessary background for this

³As Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, tr. and ed. by G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 196, suggests; citing U. Luz, Geschichtverständnis des Paulus, BEVT 49 (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1968), 163. Käsemann, 196, properly concludes, "But this would mean dropping any understanding of a text which is obviously of supreme importance for Paul himself."

⁴James Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," Theologische Zeitschrift 31 (1975):257. He adds that this passage is particularly significant for our understanding of Paul's anthropology and soteriology.

⁵Despite the plethora of studies on Romans 7, many problems still remain to be resolved. For example, in his discussion of "The Complaint of the Enslaved (7:14-25)" and particularly regarding the "I" as depicted in verses 16 and 23, Käsemann concludes, 207, "It is astounding that the problem has not been sharply pinned down." His statement applies equally well to a variety of issues which surround the interpretation of this chapter.

study, the first chapter of this thesis will enumerate the various identifications of the "I" in Romans 7 which have been proposed.⁶ Both the complexity and the significance of the questions under consideration here are evidenced by the sheer number of answers which have been given to them. As a result, it will not be possible to conduct a complete historical survey.⁷ The overview provided here will concentrate upon the answers which have been given in contemporary scholarship.⁸

Within this sphere the landmark study is Werner Kümmel's Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus published in 1929.⁹

⁶The major proponents of each view, along with the main points in favor of and against each interpretation, will also be noted briefly.

⁷Werner Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929); reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 3, similarly concludes, "That total completeness is impossible, no expert in the area will deny" ("Daß restlose Vollständigkeit unmöglich ist, wird kein Kenner der Sachlage bestreiten"). Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, tr. H. Snape (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 213, n. 5, states, "Chapter vii of the epistle to the Romans has been the subject of so many different interpretations that it is quite impossible to enumerate them." However, it is not proper to proceed, as he does, by limiting "myself to describing the one which I think should be adopted."

⁸For a review of the major interpretations advanced prior to this century, see Appendix One, "A Survey of Interpretations of the 'I' in Romans 7 in Sources Prior to 1900," below, pp. 420-34.

⁹The basic tenets of Kümmel's position were suggested earlier by William Wrede, Paul, tr. E. Lummis (Lexington, KY: American Theological Library Association Committee on Reprinting, 1962), 92-97, 144-47; on this point see Matthew Black, Romans, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1973),

His basic conclusion is that the "I" in Romans 7:7-25 is a rhetorical figure of speech used to depict the *non-Christian* "whose condition is portrayed in the style of the first person and seen with the eyes of the Christian."¹⁰ The impact of Kümmel's "epoch-making study" cannot be over-exaggerated.¹¹

101; Stephen Westerholm, Israel's Law and the Church's Faith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 16-22.

¹⁰Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1948); also reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 186, "und Röm. 7,14ff. auf den Nichtchristen bezogen, dessen Zustand in der Stilform des Ich geschildert und mit den Augen des Christen gesehen werde." Here Kümmel is speaking specifically of verses 14-25, but, as will be seen, he reaches the same conclusion in verses 7-13; see idem., Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus, 118,134. [Hereafter, his two separate studies will be denoted Römer 7 and Das Bild des Menschen].

¹¹Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," Harvard Theological Review, 56 (1963):211, n. 19. According to Günther Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death: An Exegetical Study of Romans 7," in Early Christian Experience, The New Testament Library, tr. P. Hammer (London: SCM Press, 1969), 89, "This understanding, already demanded by the context, has been carefully established and developed at all points by W. G. Kummel, and now only a few exegetes dispute it." Käsemann, 192, states that the correctness of the rhetorical interpretation "is generally agreed since Kümmel's monograph." Douglas Moo, "Israel and Paul in Romans 7:7-12," New Testament Studies 32 (1986):122, concedes that the interpretation of the εἰώ as "a rhetorical figure . . . has been widely held since Kümmel's monograph." See also Ernst Gaugler, Der Brief an die Römer, vol. 1, Prophezei: Schweizerisches Bibelwerk für die Gemeinde (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1945), 1:240-41; Rudolf Schnackenburg, "Römer 7 im Zusammenhang des Römerbriefes," in Jesus und Paulus, ed. E. Ellis and E. Grässer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 239. Kümmel himself, Das Bild des Menschen, 186, asserts, "This view which I earlier propounded has found all sorts of agreement" ("Diese von mir früher neu begründete Anschauung hat mancherlei Zustimmung gefunden"); he proceeds, 186-87, n. 59, to cite over 15 scholars who have supported his conclusion.

His interpretation "has come to be regarded as all but definitive"¹² and Gerd Theissen can now speak of it as "the classical solution to the problem."¹³ Rudolf Bultmann, who adopted, further "developed and championed" Kümmel's interpretation,¹⁴ concludes, "It seems to me that these questions [concerning the 'I' in Romans 7] have been adequately discussed and that there can be no doubt about the answer."¹⁵ The sharpest evidence of Kümmel's influence is revealed in this statement by P. Demann:

The traumatic condition which it has been desired to see in Rom. 7 and which has been linked with the painful failure of Paul in the observation of the law, is now relegated to the museum of exegetical absurdities.¹⁶

Gerd Theissen, Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology, tr. J. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 178, agrees that "up to now no one has been successful in refuting the arguments convincingly formulated by Kümmel." Unfortunately, since Römer 7 has not yet been translated, Theissen, 177, n. 1, also observes, "Its complete success can be observed only in German-speaking areas."

¹²Westerholm, 53.

¹³Theissen, 234; even though Theissen himself supports a psychological interpretation, he concludes, 177, that in Römer 7, "Kümmel prepared an end to all efforts at psychological interpretation."

¹⁴So John Espy, "Paul's 'Robust Conscience' Re-Examined," New Testament Studies 31 (1985):161.

¹⁵Rudolf Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," in The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, tr. K. Crim (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967), 33. As he begins his study, Bultmann, 33, points out that Kümmel has "treated the problems with exemplary caution and came to correct conclusions."

¹⁶P. Demann, "Moïse et la loi dans la Pensée de saint Paul," in Moïse, l'homme de l'alliance (1953), 229; cited from Franz Leenhardt, The Epistle to the Romans, tr. H. Knight

Due to the influence of Kümmel's work, his conclusions will be a major focus throughout this study.

The second chapter of this thesis will comprise an exegetical study of Romans 7 within its total context. It has been asserted that "dispute about a tense, a phrase, a half-verse in Rom. 7 means in fact dispute about the whole character of Paul's gospel."¹⁷ In view of this, careful attention to each of these matters is certainly warranted. An exegetical study is further deemed necessary because the text itself, rather than one's own theological presuppositions, must be allowed to dictate the proper resolution to the problems surrounding Paul's use of the first person singular in this chapter. Finally, the debate concerning the identification of the "I" in 7:7-25 and the spiritual condition of that "I" in verses 14-25 must be considered within the overall structure of Paul's letter to the Romans.¹⁸

On the basis of this textual study, more specific attention will be directed toward the "I" in Romans 7. The third chapter of this thesis will seek to determine the identity of the "I." Can Paul be the *ἐγώ* in Romans 7, or is the manner in which he depicts the "I" there inconsistent with the way

(London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 181, n. *.

¹⁷Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 257.

¹⁸The importance of this is revealed by Käsemann, 192, who points out that one indication of the problematic nature of verses 7-25 is that they are "nearly always regarded as an excursus." He properly responds, 210, "Paul does not grant himself the luxury of digressions."

in which he describes his own life elsewhere? If this appears to be the case, is it possible to reconcile and make sense of these varied "portrayals"? If not, is the "I" someone other than Paul, or is Kümmel correct in directing us toward a rhetorical interpretation? An investigation of the various ways in which Paul employs the first person singular in other contexts will help to answer the question so crucial to Romans 7. When Paul utilizes the first person singular in verses 7-25, to whom does he refer?

The second contested issue surrounding Romans 7 concerns the spiritual state of the "I" in verses 14-25. This matter will be explored in the fourth chapter of this thesis. Is the "I" in verses 14-25 a believer, or is one led, and even forced, to conclude that Paul is characterizing the existence of a non-Christian? The answer to this question must be based upon the exegesis of Romans 7 as considered within the overall context of Paul's understanding of non-Christian existence and the Christian life.¹⁹

By clarifying these two issues, it is hoped that the deep division of interpretations surrounding Romans 7, "a division which has persisted from the earliest centuries until today," might begin to be resolved.²⁰ This is truly a desir-

¹⁹This has been hinted at cursorily by various commentators, but none has proceeded to explore Paul's letters thoroughly with this specific question in mind. See, for example, Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 289-90; Kümmel, Römer 7, 135; also below, p. 303, n. 6.

²⁰Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 257.

able goal since, as the final chapter of this thesis will show, Paul's purpose in writing Romans 7 is to convey a crucial aspect of his theology.

CHAPTER I
CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS OF THE "I"
IN ROMANS 7:7-25

Romans 7:7-11

Paul's discussion in Romans 7:7-11 utilizes the first person singular five times as a pronoun and three times as the subject of various verbs. He writes,

(7) Therefore what will we say, the Law [is] sin? May it never be! But I would not have come to know sin except through the Law. For I also had not known desire except the Law was saying, "You shall not desire." (8) But sin, seizing the opportunity, through the commandment worked out every desire in me. For without the Law sin was dead. (9) And I was formerly living without the Law, but when the commandment came, sin came to life (10) and I died. The commandment which was for life, this very one has been found to result in death for me. (11) For sin, seizing its opportunity through the commandment deceived me and through it killed [me].¹

Who is this "I"? Attempts at identifying the "I" in these verses have resulted in the following interpretations:

Paul

Proponents

The most "natural way to understand" the first person

¹The translations given throughout this thesis are my own. For specific details concerning the text of Romans 7, see the discussion of the appropriate verses in the second chapter of this thesis.

singular is to identify the "I" as Paul himself.² The "I" is used in an individual, personal, and autobiographical sense.³ If Paul is recounting his own experience, what stage in his life is being described? The past tense, as well as the content of these verses, would seem to indicate that they depict events which occurred prior to Paul's conversion.⁴ As Martin Franzmann suggests, "Paul is speaking of his Jewish past."⁵

²J. I. Packer, "The 'Wretched Man' in Romans 7," in Studia Evangelica, vol. 2, ed. F. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 622. Recognized also by Werner Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929); reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1974), 76. [Hereafter, Römer 7]. As a result, John A. T. Robinson, Wrestling with Romans (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 82, concludes there is "general agreement" among scholars that the "I" is Paul. However, as we will see, his evaluation overstates the case.

³C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols., The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979), 1:342, describes this view as "strictly autobiographical." The use of "strictly," however, seems to imply that if this interpretation is accepted, Paul would be excluding any application to others. This need not necessarily be the case.

⁴The death worked by sin through the Law's commandment in verses 7-11 especially points to this as recognized by Kümmel, Römer 7, 76-77. Later, 79, he argues that Paul made a sharp division between his existence before and after his conversion. He speaks of the latter as "a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17; see also 2 Cor. 4:6). See also the discussion below, n. 3, p. 300.

⁵Martin Franzmann, Concordia Commentary: Romans (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 125-26. He goes on to add [129], "He is looking back to his youth perhaps." See also C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Fontana Books,

A number of scholars have attempted to narrow down the time more specifically by focusing on verses 9-10a which state: "And I was formerly living without the Law, but when the commandment came, sin came to life and I died."⁶ These words have been interpreted as a description of an actual series of events which occurred at the end of Paul's childhood when he entered adolescence or adulthood.

If Paul's former life "without the Law" (v. 9) is understood in a literal sense, this phrase is applied to the time prior to Paul's *bar mitzvah* which occurred around the age of 12 or 13.⁷ C. K. Barrett describes the transition portrayed in verses 9-10 as

1959), 126.

⁶Against this attempt, see Kümmel, Römer 7, 75-84. Gerd Theissen, Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology, tr. J. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 251, recognizes that verse 9 presents "a chief argument against the thesis that Romans 7 has a personal background."

⁷The *bar mitzvah* occurs around the age of 12 when a Jewish youth pledges himself to be "a son of the commandment." See the discussion of W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 24-25; Adolf Deissmann, St. Paul, tr. L. Strachan (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922), 92; Ernest Best, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: At the University Press, 81. Aboth 5:21 in the Mishnah contains the following citation of Rabbi Judah ben Tema, "At five years old [one is fit] for the Scriptures, at ten years for the Mishnah, at thirteen for [the fulfilling of] the commandments, at fifteen for the Talmud, . . ."; cited from The Mishnah, ed. H. Danby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 458; compare also Lk. 2:40-42. Deissmann, 94, further contends, "Jewish teachers, at least of a later period, seem to have assumed that a child grew to the age of nine without knowing anything of sin" (citing Tanchuma, a late commentary on the Pentateuch, on Gen. 3:22).

the moment when the Jewish boy became a "Son of the Commandment," and assumed responsibility before the law. With this new legal responsibility sin took its place in the boy's experience.⁸

Robert Gundry agrees that a recollection of Paul's *bar mitzvah* leads him to make reference to himself.⁹ But Gundry proceeds to interpret the "desire" in verses 7-8 primarily in terms of sexual lusts which arose in Paul about the same time.¹⁰

A somewhat less literal interpretation of Paul's existence "without the Law" (v. 9a) is also advocated. William Arndt suggests that this phrase speaks of the days before Paul "became fully acquainted with the Law."¹¹ This period is further identified in psychological terms. According to Gerd Theissen,¹² it was the time when Paul had "an incom-

⁸C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1962), 143-44.

⁹Robert Gundry, "The Moral Frustration of Paul Before His Conversion: Sexual Lust in Romans 7:7-25," in Pauline Studies, eds. D. Hagner and M. Harris (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980), 232.

¹⁰Ibid., 232-33. In rebuttal of Gundry's attempt to stress the sexual reference, Barclay Newman, "Once Again - The Question of 'I' in Romans 7:7-25," The Bible Translator 34 (1983):134, argues that the 10th commandment cited in 7:7 does not refer just to sexual lust but encompasses all of man's relationships.

¹¹William F. Arndt, "Romans, n.d." Concordia Seminary Library, St. Louis, MO, 47. He further states, 46, "The time the apostle is speaking of here was a time when he either had not learned the written law at all, or had not fully grasped its meaning. He is referring to his younger days."

¹²Theissen, 222; he contends, "If any Pauline texts can be interpreted psychologically, it is these chapters" (Rom. 7 and 8). He later states, 260, "We therefore understand Romans 7 as a historically conditioned cognitive restructuring

plete consciousness of sin."¹³ William Sanday and Arthur Headlam also speak of it as the period "before the consciousness of law has taken hold upon him."¹⁴ Verses 7-11 are then said to describe the coming of sin and the Law which brought an end to the innocence of Paul's childhood. As a result,

Even in his old age there stood out clearly to his soul one experience of his childhood, concerning which he gives pathetic hints in his letter to the Romans. We might speak of it as his fall: [citing Rom. 7:9-11] . . . St. Paul does not say what the occasion was. But he indicates that this first sin wrought terrible havoc in his sensitive young soul: he felt himself deceived, it was as if he had tasted death.¹⁵

F. F. Bruce brings these interpretations together by stating, "In verses 7-13 Paul shows how entry into life under the law coincides with the dawn of conscience and the first awareness of sin."¹⁶

of the conflict with the law." See his overview, 222-23, of a variety of other psychological interpretations.

¹³Ibid., 231; he also speaks of it as the time when Paul's conflict with the Law was "unconscious." According to his interpretation, 229, verses 14-25 go on to depict how this "once-unconscious conflict with the law became conscious." Rather than seeing the end of this conflict in v. 10 ("I died"), Theissen contends that verses 14-25 depict the ongoing, but now conscious, conflict with the Law which continued up until Paul's conversion.

¹⁴William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 180.

¹⁵Deissmann, 93-94.

¹⁶F. F. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, rev. ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing, 1963), 139. He continues, 140, by pointing out how prohibitions awaken a desire to do what is forbidden and cites, as an example, a "No Smoking" sign.

Scholars have also narrowed the application of verses 7-11 to Paul in another manner, by means of his vantage point or perspective. Such an interpretation recognizes that if Paul is describing his pre-conversion state, including his days as a Pharisee, the negative effects of the Law presented in Romans 7:7-11 would seem to contradict Paul's other portrayals of his positive relationship with the Law prior to his encounter on the Damascus road (for example, compare vv. 9-11 with Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-6).¹⁷ As a result, they argue that "Paul here describes his pre-Christian experience from his *now Christian* standpoint."¹⁸

Objections

A number objections have been raised against identifying

¹⁷For example, in Phil. 3:4 Paul recalls the confidence he formerly placed in the flesh on the basis of the Law. This "contradiction" is pointed out by Günther Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death: An Exegetical Study of Romans 7," in Early Christian Experience, The New Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1969), 93; Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, tr. and ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 192.

¹⁸James Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," Theologische Zeitschrift 31 (1975):261. So also James Denney, "Romans," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1897), 639, asserts, "No one could have written the passage but a Christian." Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 83, agrees that this "is certain." Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, tr. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1969), 163, similarly concludes that Paul is not describing "his feelings before his conversion, but the way in which he later came to know himself through faith." Theissen, 222, describes Romans 7 as Paul's "retrospective on an unredeemed state"; similarly Johan Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 238,241-42.

the "I" as Paul. The notion that Paul, or any Jew for that matter, would have ever conceived of himself as being alive "apart from the Law" (7:9) is rejected.¹⁹ Whether or not some form of the *bar mitzvah* was practiced already in Paul's day is a disputed matter.²⁰ But even if it was, there is evidence which suggests that the Jews of that time considered themselves to be under the Law from birth.²¹ It is also argued that "the idea of childish innocence is completely unbiblical" and foreign to Judaism.²² In response to any

¹⁹According to Kümmel, Römer 7, 81, this is "unthinkable" ("undenkbar"). Franz Leenhardt The Epistle to the Romans, tr. H. Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 187, writes, "Is Paul alluding to the period of his life prior to his Mosaic initiation? One can hardly think so; the points of view are too diverse." Cranfield, 1:343, concludes that this objection is "insuperable"; so also Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 93; and Conzelmann, 233.

²⁰Kümmel, Römer 7, 84, argues that the Institution of the *bar mitzvah* "is a creation of the Middle Ages" ("ist eine Schöpfung des Mittelalters"). He also points out, 82, that the term itself occurs only once in the entire Talmud ("Baba mezia 96a unten"); for this reference, see The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nezikin, tr. and ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 556.

²¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 81, concludes, "According to a Jewish conception, then, the child knew and learned the Law from earliest childhood on" ("Denn nach jüdischer Vorstellung kennt und lernt das Kind von frühester Kindheit an das Gesetz"). He, 81-82, cites for support 2 Tim. 3:15; Philo, De Legatione ad Gaium, 16.115; 31.210; and Josephus, Contra Apion, 2.178. For these references, see Philo, tr. F. Colson, 10 vols., The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 10:59-57, 108-9; The Works of Josephus, tr. William Whitson, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 805; see also Cranfield, 1:343.

²²Käsemann, 193; he concludes that any such conception is "part of our modern theology." Newman, 134, asserts that verses 9-10 renounce any claims of an "age of innocence." Kümmel, Römer 7, 81-83, also rejects it.

psychological interpretation of verses 9-10, Richard Longenecker contends,

Paul's use of 'life' and 'death,' while not designating physical life and death, certainly cannot easily be weakened to mean only untroubled childhood and a consciousness of guilt.²³

As a result, Werner Kümmel concludes that the text of verses 7-11 will not allow any application of the events there depicted to Paul's own life.²⁴

Kümmel also points out that Paul's main concern in Romans 7 is to defend the Law.²⁵ He contends that such a far-reaching apologetic purpose could not be accomplished if Paul is only speaking of his own experience.²⁶ Therefore

²³Richard Longenecker, Paul (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 91.

²⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 84, states, "Whether Paul speaks only of himself or himself as [a] type, at any rate he speaks of himself, and that it appears to me the text does not allow" ("Denn ob Paulus von sich allein oder von sich als Typus redet, jedenfalls redet er von sich, und das scheint mir der Text nicht zuzulassen"). Whether or not this objection is properly founded upon the text of Romans 7 is a matter which will be discussed and evaluated in the following chapter.

²⁵Ibid., 9-11, 56, 74; see also idem., Das Bild des Menschen (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1948), reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1974), 192. [Hereafter, Das Bild des Menschen].

²⁶Kümmel, Römer 7, 84, where he concludes, "Now whether Paul could assume that all Jews had the same experience most certainly appears very doubtful to me" ("Nun scheint es mir allerdings sehr zweifelhaft, ob Paulus voraussetzen konnte, daß all Juden die gleiche Erfahrung machten"); see also ibid., 12. Käsemann, 195, notes that there is some validity to Kümmel's objection since these verses do respond directly to the question of 7:7a. While 7:7-13 may reflect Paul's experience, a self-disclosure is not his primary purpose.

"the portrayal cannot be merely personal."²⁷

Adam

Proponents

Another effort at a personal interpretation identifies the "I" in verses 7-11 as Adam. This is based upon the prevalence of motifs, imagery, and language from Genesis 2-3 in this section.²⁸ J. Christiaan Beker contends that these verses display "Paul's midrashic use of Genesis 3."²⁹ Indeed, when they are set forth, the points of correspondence between the initial chapters of Genesis and Romans 7:7-11 appear to be quite substantial.³⁰ As a result, Günther Bornkamm con-

²⁷Kümmel, Römer 7, 12.

²⁸This view has been championed in recent years by Stanislas Lyonnet, "'Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas' (Rom. vii 7)," in Neotestamentica et Patristica, Novum Testamentum Supplements, vol. 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 157-65; idem., "L'histoire du Salut selon le Chapitre VII de l'Épître aux Romains," Revue Biblica 43 (1963):130-42. This interpretation is advocated by Leenhardt, 184-90; Longenecker, 92-96. It is accepted in part, by Barrett, 143-45; Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 93-94; Dodd, 124; John Espy, "Paul's 'Robust Conscience' Re-Examined," New Testament Studies 31 (1985):169; Hans Hübner, Law in Paul's Thought, tr. J. Greig, ed. J. Riches (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), 70-76; and Cranfield, 1:343. The latter admits that Genesis 3 was likely on Paul's mind and concludes that interpreting the "I" of these verses in the name of Adam is possible, but forced.

²⁹Beker, Paul the Apostle, 239; according to Matthew Black, Commentary on Romans, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1973), 103, "Verse 11 is a kind of allegorizing of the story of the Fall."

³⁰Compare, for example, the deception of Gen. 3:13 with Rom. 7:11; the commandment of Gen. 2:17 with 7:7-8. See Espy, 169; and Dodd, 124, who concludes that when this section of Romans 7 is compared with the narrative of Gen. 2-3, "it fits like a glove."

cludes, "The Adam of Rom. 5.12ff. speaks in the 'I' of Rom. 7.7ff."³¹ It is also pointed out that Adam alone could legitimately declare, "I was formerly living without the Law, but when the commandment came, sin came to life and I died" (9-10a).³²

Objections

A number of objections to the Adamic interpretation have been made.³³ For example, Kümmel argues that Adam cannot be involved in Romans 7 since Paul's major concern here is a defense of the Mosaic Torah.³⁴ As evidence for this he points out that Paul cites the tenth commandment as it was given to Moses on Mount Sinai (v. 7; compare Ex. 20:17).³⁵ This commandment is not at all present in the narrative of Genesis 2-3.³⁶ Finally, while the account of the fall in Genesis is depicted in external terms, the events in Romans 7:7-11 occur

³¹Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 94; but see Kümmel, Römer 7, 86, for a harsh rejection of any connection between Adam in chapter 5 and the "I" in Romans 7.

³²Käsemann, 196, goes so far as to state, "Methodologically the starting point should be that a story is involved in vv. 9-11 and the event depicted can refer strictly only to Adam."

³³Kümmel, Römer 7, 86-87; Douglas Moo, "Israel and Paul in Romans 7:7-12," New Testament Studies 32 (1986):125. For a detailed attempt to refute these objections, see Lyonnet, "'Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas' (Rom. vii 7)," 157-65.

³⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 87.

³⁵Ibid., 56,87.

³⁶Theissen, 202; though he strives to overcome these difficulties.

within the "I."³⁷

Israel

Proponents

In view of the importance of the Mosaic Torah in Romans 7, Douglas Moo proposes that "Rom 7.7-12 has as its main focus the giving of the law to Israel."³⁸ If these verses are taken as a description of the events and effects of Israel's experience at Mount Sinai, the "I" is interpreted as representing the people of Israel in a corporate or collective manner.³⁹

The interpretation of Ethelbert Stauffer is comparable. He contends that through his use of ἐγώ Paul is speaking in terms of salvation history.⁴⁰ In verses 7-8 Paul describes

³⁷Ibid., 202-3; he terms this "the interiorization of the fall." For example, there is no mention of the serpent, the tree, the fruit, Eve, and so forth in Romans 7.

³⁸Moo, 123,129; he adds, 123, "The narrative sequence of the text reflects a Pauline theological pattern having to do with the redemptive-historical experience of Israel with the Law." See also Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, tr. and ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1973), s.v. "ἐντολή," by Gottlob Schrenk, 2:550-51. [Hereafter, TDNT].

³⁹Moo, 129; however, he also concludes that Paul "uses the first person singular because he himself, as a Jew, has been affected by the experience."

⁴⁰Ethelbert Stauffer, in TDNT, s.v. "ἐγώ," 2:356-62. He, 357, links the use of "I" here with the "Rabbinic disputation and debate concerning the Torah" as in Galatians 2:15-21. He concludes, 358, that the purely autobiographical and rhetorical interpretations are "destroyed by the . . . fact that Romans deals neither with experiences and confession of the individual soul nor with investigation of the constitution and forms of human existence, but first and last with the progress of salvation history."

the time before Moses when "sin was dead" (v. 8; compare 5:12-14); in verses 9-11 the entrance of the Law into human history and its effects upon mankind are depicted.⁴¹

Objections

Rudolf Bultmann responds to the suggestion that the "I" here represents Israel by pointing out that this contradicts the manner in which Paul generally characterizes the Jewish people.

The main difficulty is that what this view would regard as the sinful nature of the Jews is not such in the rest of Paul's writings, and what is elsewhere regarded as the real sin of the Jews would not even enter the picture here!⁴²

Kümmel excludes this interpretation because nothing in the text explicitly indicates that the "I" is to be understood as Israel and because of the inconsistencies which arise as one attempts to relate this identification with the "I" in verses

⁴¹Ibid., 358, "Again and again Romans refers to the three great stages of history." Verses 7-8 depict the first stage. In the second, inaugurated in verses 9-10, "the divine impulsion [of the Law] is turned into its opposite by demonic counterpressure." The coming of Christ initiated and "leads to the third and final step of history, the accomplishment of the will of God in a final triumph."

⁴²Rudolf Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," in The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, tr. K. Crim (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967), 34; citing Rom. 2:17-24; 3:29. See also idem., Theology of the New Testament, 2 vols. in 1, tr. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 1:266-67, "Nor does Paul elsewhere argue against the way of the Law with the argument that this way leads to subjective despair, His accusation against Jews and Judaizers is that the way of the Law is wrong . . . because its *direction* is wrong, for it is the way that is supposed to lead to 'one's own righteousness' (Rom. 10:3, cf. Phil. 3:9)."

14-25.⁴³ The difficulties these would pose for Paul's readers are judged to be insurmountable.

Transpersonal

Proponents

Kümmel advances a more general interpretation which proposes that Paul employs the "I" in verses 7-11 as a "figure of speech" or "rhetorical form."⁴⁴ On the basis of verses 9-10a, Kümmel suggests that Paul's readers would have questioned and then rejected any notion that Paul himself is the subject.

But then there is left for them only one remaining solution, that the I is a figure of speech, that is, that Paul through the first person expresses a general thought in a lively manner.⁴⁵

⁴³Kümmel, Römer 7, 85.

⁴⁴Ibid., 87, 124, "eine Stilform" or "ein rhetorische Form"; see also 86-90. He supports this view, 121-23, by citing a number of parallels where the first person is also used by Paul in a non-autobiographical sense. These will be evaluated more fully in chapter three.

Those who generally support Kümmel's conclusions include Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 85, 89-92; Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 33; Leenhardt, 183-84; and Käsemann, 193, who concludes that the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ "implies the use, stylistically, of a rhetorical figure with general significance." He further concludes that this use is paralleled in the Greek world, as well as in the Old Testament Psalms of Thanksgiving which confess divine deliverance from death. On this point see also Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Römer, Kritischer-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 13th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966), 170-71, who makes further reference to the Hymns of the Qumran community. The applicability of these suggested parallels will be discussed in chapter five.

⁴⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 124, "Denn blieb aber für sie nur die Lösung übrig, daß das Ich eine Stilform sei, d. h. daß Paulus einen allgemeinen Gedanken durch die 1. Person lebendig ausdrücke."

This reveals a significant aspect of Kümmel's methodology. He neither reaches nor defends "a rhetorically fictive interpretation of the 'I'"⁴⁶ solely upon its own merits. Rather, he arrives at it only after excluding the other possibilities which have been suggested. He writes,

Therefore it appears to me not only the interpretation to Paul, but also to the Jewish people or humanity in Adam, fail when compared with the text of Romans 7:7-13. But if Paul does not speak of himself, then there remains no other possibility than to seek after another subject and to ask whether the 'I' is not somehow a rhetorical form [used] for the carrying out of a thought.⁴⁷

These verses are said to illustrate the use of the first person singular "to represent any third person in order to illustrate something universal in a vivid manner."⁴⁸ The

⁴⁶Since the "I" cannot be Paul or anyone in particular, Theissen, 234, legitimately applies the term "fictive" to Kümmel's identification.

⁴⁷Kümmel, Römer 7, 87, "So scheinen mir sowohl die Deutung auf Paulus wie auf das jüdische Volk oder die Menschheit in Adam dem Text von Röm. 7,7-13 gegenüber zu versagen. Wenn aber Paulus nicht von sich selber redet, so bleibt nichts anderes übrig, als nach einem andern Subjekt zu suchen und zu fragen, ob das Ich nicht irgendwie eine rhetorische Form zur Ausführung eines Gedankens ist." In verses 14-25, this same methodology persists; see *ibid.*, 117-18. In speaking explicitly of the "historical sequence" in 7:7-12, Moo, 126, properly assesses that Kümmel's interpretation is "established *via negationis*: no single set of circumstances, it is argued, can satisfactorily account for all the details of the text, so a generalized situation is posited."

⁴⁸F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, tr. and rev. R. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 147[281]; though they add that this "does not appear in Greek as frequently as in other languages." Nigel Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 86, on the other hand, describes this as "conventional rhetoric." Lucien Cerfaux, The Christian in the Theology of St. Paul, tr. Lilian Soiron (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 436, also states that the "use of

"I" is not to be identified as Israel, Adam, or even Paul. Rather, it is used by Paul more generally in order to speak of mankind as a whole.⁴⁹ The entirety of verses 7-25, though written from a Christian perspective,⁵⁰ are a presentation of the truth that sin uses the Law as a means of bringing death to man and that man under the Law cannot redeem himself from this predicament.⁵¹ The "I" in verses 7-11 gives an objective description of the death which the Law inflicts upon those who are under it.⁵² In verses 7-8 Paul begins to make his point

through the reference to the psychological fact that the forbidden always has a special temptation, . . . but he uses it for a portrayal of the 'objective existence of the unredeemed'.⁵³

the first person singular [in] a purely rhetorical method, . . . was well known at that time both in Greek and Latin literature and . . . had penetrated into the Jewish world."

⁴⁹According to Kümmel, Römer 7, 89, Paul "employed the first person for [a] portrayal of general human experiences" ("er benütze die erste Person zur Schilderung allgemein menschlicher Erlebnisse"). Leenhardt, 184, similarly concludes that Paul speaks of "man in general."

⁵⁰Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen, 192.

⁵¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 124.

⁵²Ibid., 85-89. Although sin existed apart from the Law, it was "dead" (v. 8) until the Law came and brought death to the "I."

⁵³Ibid., 124, "Dieser Gedanke ist ausgeführt zuerst durch den Hinweis auf die psychologische Tatsache, daß das Verbotene immer einen besonderen Reiz hat, . . . aber [Paul] benutzt sie zur Schilderung des 'objektiven Seins des Unerlösten'." According to note 2, his concluding citation is from Rudolf Bultmann, "Das Problem der Ethik bei Paulus," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 23 (1924):130; an English translation is

Kümmel contends that Paul's original readers would have understood these verses in this way and concludes that this identification of the "I" avoids the difficulties present in all of the other interpretations.⁵⁴

One indication of the impact of Kümmel's view is revealed in the statement that it "lies at the heart of Bultmann's influential existentialist analysis of Paul's theology."⁵⁵ Bultmann characterizes verses 7-11 as "a passage in which Paul so depicts the situation of man under the Torah as it has become clear to a backward look from the standpoint of Christian faith."⁵⁶ Following Bultmann, Hans Conzelmann paraphrases the words of the "I" in this manner: "Only faith

"The Problem of Ethics in the Writings of Paul," in The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, 7-48.

⁵⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 10-12, 126.

⁵⁵Dunn, "Rom. 7, 14-25 and the Theology of Paul," 258. See Rudolf Bultmann, "Romans 7 and the Anthropology of Paul," 147-57; idem., Theology of the New Testament, 1:245-49.

Reinhard Weber, "Die Geschichte des Gesetzes und des Ich in Römer 7, 7-8, 4," Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie 29 (1987):179, then joins the positions of Stauffer and Bultmann by concluding that an analysis of Paul's uses of νόμος in 7:7-8:4 "will help to show the reciprocal 'folding-together' of both viewpoints [the perspectives of salvation history and individual anthropology] in a mutual interpretation."

⁵⁶Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1:247; yet to do this he is almost forced to conclude, "The Torah, therefore, belongs to the sphere of 'flesh.'" Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 94, agrees that what is here revealed "first becomes apparent under the divine aspect." Käsemann, 192, contends that the "I" is "depicting pre-Christian being from a Christian standpoint."

shows me that without faith I was objectively in despair."⁵⁷

Reference should also be made to Karl Barth's interpretation. He similarly contends that these verses speak of the problem which affects all ages and peoples.⁵⁸ But for Barth man's fall consists in a recognition of his creatureliness which leads him to worship God and to practice religion independently of God. By marking out the difference between God and man, religion places all men under death. "So it is that religion becomes the occasion for sin" (v. 8).⁵⁹ Following Barth, Barrett concludes that Paul does not intend to relate personal experience. Rather, he is critiquing the Law, that is,

The Old Testament religion. . . . And what Paul says of the religion of Judaism, the highest of all religions, is true *a fortiori* of all religion. It is in the last resort the main of religion that is analysed here.⁶⁰

Objections

How should one respond to the rhetorical or impersonal interpretation of the "I" in verses 7-11? One cannot deny

⁵⁷Conzelmann, 163.

⁵⁸Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, 6th ed., tr. E. Hoskyns (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), 249, where he concludes on 7:9, "There is no question here of contrasting a particular epoch in the life of a single individual, or of a group, or indeed of all mankind, with some other epoch, past or future."

⁵⁹Ibid., 247. Barrett, 141-42, similarly asserts that the coming of the Law makes man aware of his limitations, his creatureliness.

⁶⁰Barrett, 140.

that it is possible and should, therefore, be seriously considered.⁶¹ However, the validity of its basis within the text of Romans has been questioned.⁶² In addition, Bornkamm challenges any purely "rhetorical" interpretation with this response:

It is not by chance that Rom. 7 does not speak about "man"; rather, it refers to that man which can be spoken of only in the first person, more precisely, in the first person singular (not even in the first person plural!). It is in the nature of things that Paul can only say "I" - not "man" - nor even "we." An interpretation which overlooks this fact, however correct it might be in detail, would not do justice to the content if it tried to speak *about* it rather than *from* it.⁶³

The vivid aorist tenses in verses 7-11 also speak against such an unspecific or "timeless" interpretation.⁶⁴

Combinations of the Above

Many of those who support one of the previous identifica-

⁶¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 123.

⁶²See, for example, Andrew Bandstra, The Law and the Elements of the World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, n.d.), 136-38; Moo, 125-27. This will be a particular focus in the following chapter.

⁶³Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 87. See also Bandstra, 135-36; Gundry, 228-29; Moo, 130, n. 5; and Stauffer, 357. Leenhardt, 184, attempts to explain that Paul introduces the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ in these verses "to speak in the name of all" because the term $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ would have been too abstract.

⁶⁴Because of the aorist tenses and the very personal manner of speaking, Stauffer, 357, rejects any "gnomic and timeless sense." As Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 91, affirms, "For Paul this murderous clash between sin and the 'I' is not a timeless dialectic of human existence but a temporal, historical event." See also Longenecker, Paul, 90. While this speaks most directly against Barth's interpretation, it is factor to be considered against Kümmel's as well.

tions of the "I" proceed to mingle their interpretation with one or more aspects of the other positions. Some of those who support the identification of the "I" as Paul himself include in their view the suggestion that the events portrayed in verses 7-11 have a far wider application.⁶⁵ T. W. Manson can even conclude, "Here Paul's autobiography is the biography of Everyman."⁶⁶

Those who identify the "I" with Adam suggest that some sort of "Adam typology" is present in verses 7-11.⁶⁷ According to Franz Leenhardt, "The apostle thought out the scene which he here constructs on the basis of the picture of Adam as at once collective and individual."⁶⁸ John Espy begins his comments on these verses by asserting,

The first point to be noted here is that Paul speaks on two levels, referring both to Adam and Eve and to a more contemporary party. . . . As in 5.12ff., a member of the first couple is set forth as a prototype for sins under the Law.⁶⁹

What is Paul's purpose in combining the events of his

⁶⁵For example, Theissen, 178, states, "What Paul says in general about man under the law has its Sitz im Leben in his own experiences." See also Bandstra, 136.

⁶⁶T. W. Manson, "Romans," in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. M. Black (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), 945.

⁶⁷In addition to those cited below, see Barrett, 143-44; Gundry, 230-31.

⁶⁸Leenhardt, 185; Longenecker, Paul, 92, supports this by referring to "the strictly Hebrew concepts of 'identification' and 'corporate community.'"

⁶⁹Espy, 169; he adds, "that is, for the *transgressions* of an *individual*."

own life with the experience of Adam? It is proposed that Paul is affirming and confessing that he, as well as all other people, were implicated and share in the fallen nature of Adam.⁷⁰ Since "every man recapitulates in his own personal life the fall of Adam,"⁷¹ all people under the Law can identify themselves in the experience of the "I" in verses 7-11.⁷²

Espy concludes,

Thus, it is because Romans 7 takes up the question of the Law that we find here the troublesome "I" and "me". To speak of sin under the Law, Paul must speak of the individual. The "I" is natural - but it must be understood, not as hypothetical, nor as representing a nation or mankind, nor as Paul in some highly and privately personal sense; but as any man under the Law, including Paul.⁷³

It may be noted here that the influence of Kümmel's interpretation has exhibited itself in two diverse tendencies. First, a number of scholars now espouse interpretations which tend to avoid the basic issue of whether the "I" refers directly to Paul or not.⁷⁴ Second, it has resulted in a number of attempts to combine a rhetorical or "transper-

⁷⁰Käsemann, 196, proposes that here we have "the style of confessional speech."

⁷¹Black, 101.

⁷²Bandstra, 136.

⁷³Espy, 170.

⁷⁴While attempting to retain some degree of autobiographical influence, many interpreters who agree that the "I" is utilized for rhetorical vividness, make statements which are ambiguous on the point of Paul's personal involvement. For example, Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 260, states that Paul is "at least describing *typical experience* of an 'I' . . ." (citing for comparison 2 Baruch 54:19); see also Gundry, 229; and Moo, 135, n. 59.

sonal" interpretation with the other identifications noted above. For example, C. E. B. Cranfield suggests that the "I" in these verses is "speaking in the name of Adam" and/or being used "in a general way without intending a specific reference to any particular individual or group, to depict the situation in the absence of the law and in its presence."⁷⁵ Since, according to Kümmel, the Mosaic Law is the focus of Paul's argument, the rhetorical "I" is also said to represent the objective predicament of the Jewish people.⁷⁶ Gundry contends that the "I" is descriptive of a typical Jewish individual.⁷⁷ Käsemann finally concludes, "It is to be maintained under all circumstances that the apostle is speaking . . . specifically of the pious Jew."⁷⁸

⁷⁵Cranfield, 1:342; he concludes, 343, that the latter option is "most probable" and evaluates the "I" as a modified expression of the "general use of the first person singular."

⁷⁶It does so objectively and does not characterize their own subjective or perceived experience in relation to the Law.

⁷⁷Gundry, 232, suggests that Paul's use of the first person singular denotes individual Jews and seeks to demonstrate the inability of the Law to attain righteousness. He goes on to contend that these verses are not to be applied to Gentiles since Paul uses the first person plural pronouns when referring to both Jews and Gentiles in chapters six and eight.

⁷⁸Käsemann, 195. He admits, 192-93, that "no pious Jew regarded the law as impossible to fulfill in principle or as a spur to sin" and that the statements in 7:7-11 would have been blasphemous on the lips of such a Jew. Therefore, this description must be from a Christian vantage point. Beker, Paul the Apostle, 238, similarly concludes that Paul is looking "in hindsight at the plight of the Jews under the law"; see also Gundry, 232.

If one adopts Käsemann's identification of the "I," which is based upon Kümmel's work, it is hard to imagine how the experience of the people of Israel and even Paul's own pre-Christian life could be far from any identification of the "I" as a "typical" or "pious" Jew. Yet these are two interpretations Kümmel explicitly rejects!

In conclusion, the number of identifications which have been made of the "I" in verses 7-11 is perplexing enough. However, the mixing together of these varied interpretations has only resulted in further confusion. As this survey moves on to examine the various identifications which have been made of the "I" in verses 14-25, the waters become, if anything, even more murky.

Romans 7:14-25

After Paul draws a number of extremely significant conclusions regarding the Law in Romans 7:12-13,⁷⁹ the "I" once again becomes a prominent focus in his discussion. Paul continues,

(14) For we know that the Law is Spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold under sin. (15) For I do not approve of that which I accomplish; indeed, I do not practice that which I will, but that which I hate, this I do. (16) But since I am doing that which I do not will, I agree with the Law that [it is] excellent. (17) But,

⁷⁹Those verses read: "So then the Law [is] holy and the commandment [is] holy, just, and good. Therefore did that which is good become for me death? May it never be! But sin, in order that it might be shown [to be] sin, [was] accomplishing death in me through that which is good, in order that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."

this being the case, it is not then I who am accomplishing this, but sin which is dwelling in me. (18) For I know that good is not dwelling in me, this is, in my flesh. For to will [the good] lies at hand for me, but the accomplishing of the good, no. (19) For I am not doing [the] good I will, but [the] evil I do not will, this I am practicing. (20) But if I am doing this which I do not will, I am no longer accomplishing it but the sin which is dwelling in me. (21) So then I find the Law for me the one determining to do the excellent [thing], that for me evil lies at hand. (22) I rejoice with the Law of God according to the inner man. (23) But I see another Law in my members waging war against the Law of my mind and taking me captive to the Law of sin which is in my members. (24) I am a distressed/miserable man; who will rescue me from this body of death? (25) Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself in my mind am enslaved to [the] Law of God, but, on the other hand, in the flesh, [I am enslaved to the] Law of sin.

At the outset, Andrew Bandstra observes,

The purely autobiographical interpretation quite clearly has the least to commend it when applied to vv. 7-13; the rhetorical and 'salvation-history' interpretations give a less satisfactory account of the intense personal emotions expressed in vv. 14-25.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue with the "rather obvious point that the 'I' is the same as the 'I' of vv. 7-12."⁸¹

The identification which is accepted in verses 7-11 is in many ways determinative of the conclusions which will be

⁸⁰Bandstra, 135-36.

⁸¹Espy, 173; also Kümmel, Römer 7, 97,110. However, the implications of this statement are not always appreciated. For example, James Dunn, Romans 1-8, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a, eds. R. Martin, D. Hubbard, and G. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 405, essentially identifies the "I" in verses 7-11 as Adam, but then adds, "Even if the 'I' of vv 7-13 has no specific self-reference to Paul, the expressions which follow are too sharply poignant and intensely personal to be regarded as simply a figure of speech." The problem which Espy's statement poses for a number of the interpretations above will be noted in chapter three of this thesis.

made about the "I" in verses 14-25.⁸² As a result, a number of issues already discussed concerning the "I" in verses 7-11 resurface and are equally applicable here. Though these will not all be repeated, the integral connection between the two sections cannot be over-stressed.⁸³

The question which generally receives the most attention in verses 14-25 is whether the first person singular is being used by Paul to portray a Christian or a non-Christian.⁸⁴ The majority of scholars contend that this "passage refers to the unregenerate man."⁸⁵ Usually this is concluded because descriptions such as "having been sold under sin" (v. 14), "practicing evil" (vv. 19,20), and, indeed, the entire characterization of the "wretched man" (v. 24) are said to employ language which Paul uses nowhere else "of the regenerate

⁸²For example, Kümmel, Römer 7, 110, concludes "that Paul himself cannot be the subject in 7:14ff., because in 7:7-13 this is impossible" ("daß in 7,14ff. nicht Paulus selbst Subjekt sein kann, wenn in 7,7-13 diese Deutung unmöglich ist"). Cranfield, 1:347, similarly contends that on the basis of verses 7-13, "It is hardly possible to understand the first person singular as strictly autobiographical" in verses 14-25.

⁸³Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 95, justifiably asserts, "It is disastrous to connect the anthropological problem of ch. 7 essentially only to 7.14ff., as usually happens."

⁸⁴There is virtually unanimous agreement that verses 7-11 describe the experience of a non-Christian; see above, p. 10, n. 4, and the entire discussion on pp. 10-30.

⁸⁵Sanday and Headlam, 184; they are joined, for example, by Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," especially 43-45; Conzelmann, 233-35; Dodd, 125-26, 132; Käsemann, 201; Kümmel, Römer 7, 98-9, 106, 109; Leenhardt, 195-99; Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 83.

state."⁸⁶ If this track is followed, verses 14-25 are often read as the pre-conversion experience of Paul himself.

Paul Prior to His Conversion

Proponents

At the beginning of this century, the dominant interpretation saw verses 14-25 as autobiographical of Paul's pre-conversion experience.⁸⁷ In speaking of this section, Sanday and Headlam conclude, "We shall probably not be wrong in referring main features of it especially to the period before his Conversion."⁸⁸ Yet even this view is divided into two main factions according to the vantage point of the "I." Does the "I" convey the actual experiences Paul had prior to his conversion, or is he writing about that time with the insight he has now gained by virtue of his Christian faith?

On one hand, verses 7-25 have been appraised as representing Paul's pre-conversion experience *as seen by him then*.

⁸⁶Sanday and Headlam, 185.

⁸⁷Kummel, Römer 7, 141-42, n. 2, cites over 50 adherents of this position. A few may be noted here. James Stewart, A Man in Christ (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), 99, states that Romans 7 portrays "the experience of a life still requiring to be born again." Johannes Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity, 3 vols., completed by R. Knopf, tr. and ed. F. C. Grant (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1937), 515, n. 4, writes, "What purpose could rebirth and redemption have had, if they could not even remove the unhappy condition of inner conflict and servitude?"

⁸⁸Sanday and Headlam, 186; Dodd, 126, evaluates the entirety of Romans 7:7-25 as "an authentic transcript of Paul's own experience during the period which culminated in his vision on the road to Damascus."

While verses 7-11 portray the innocent days of Paul's childhood, the latter verses describe "the incubus of the Law he had felt most keenly when he was a 'Pharisee of Pharisees.'"⁸⁹ The struggle in verses 14-25 reveals "the terrible hours of anguish for the faithful Pharisee."⁹⁰ Heinrich Weinel very dramatically recounts Paul's situation as follows:

In this conflict Saul lived, as Pharisee and persecutor. Heavier and heavier did the curse of the law become to him, the more he studied it and the more exactly he tried to keep the commandment. . . . It was just his vehement, proud and fiery temperament that longed after good so passionately, just this rushed headlong into manifold sins that separated him farther and farther from God. What struggles must have raged through his conscience, until, at last, he breaks out in a despairing cry: . . . (7:18-20).⁹¹

W. D. Davies contends that through most of Romans 7 "Paul reflects and possibly has in mind the doctrine of the Two Impulses."⁹² The background for this is found in the

⁸⁹Sanday and Headlam, 186.

⁹⁰Heinrich Weinel, St. Paul, Theological Translation Library, tr. G. Bienemann, ed. W. Morrison (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), 75. As Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 257, concludes, this interpretation sees these verses as reflecting the "torment of [Paul's] vain attempt to gain righteousness by his own efforts."

⁹¹Weinel, 74-75. This conflict is often depicted as being preparatory to Paul's conversion. Theissen, 235-36, cites extensively from Oskar Pfister, "Die Entwicklung des Apostels Paulus," Imago 6 (1920):277, who concludes that prior to his conversion "Paul came into contact with the Christians and their teaching as an unsatisfied man, torn by inner needs." His hatred toward Christianity was a result of their calling his attachment to the Law into question. Pfister, 279, suggests that "the persecutor found in the persecuted some great things which he could not deny."

⁹²Davies, 27; he contends, 21, that "in the later Rabbinic literature . . . [this] becomes the dominant description of sin." Others who agree that this conception is present

Jewish rabbis who characterized the struggle between good and evil in man as a conflict between two opposing forces. They called the evil impulse which directs man to all sorts of sins the יצר הרע.⁹³ However, the rabbis did not conceive of this impulse as evil in and of itself. It basically reflects "the urge to self-preservation and propagation in a man and can therefore be mastered and put to good use."⁹⁴ The way to direct and control this יצר הרע is through the study of the Torah.⁹⁵ Though this impulse to evil cannot be destroyed until the Age to Come, repentance is available and required for those who yield to it.⁹⁶ The rabbis held that the יצר הרע was thirteen years older than the impulse to good (יצר הטוב)⁹⁷ which arrived when a boy became a morally

in Romans 7 include Barclay Newman and Eugene Nida, A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans, Helps for Translators, vol. 14 (London: United Bible Societies, 1973), 133,137; and Hans Schoeps, Paul, tr. H. Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 184-86.

⁹³Davies 20-21; it is described variously as existing on the left side of man, in his kidneys, and in the heart. The impulses are directed especially toward sexual sins. Davies, 26, proposes that the יצר הרע is comparable to the φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός in Paul (8:6) and to that which Paul describes as σάρκινος/σαρκικός (7:14).

⁹⁴Ibid., 22.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶George F. Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, 2 vols. (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 1:491,520; Schoeps, 185-88.

⁹⁷According to Davies, 20, the יצר הטוב is represented in Paul by πνευματικός and ψυχικός.

responsible "son of commandment."⁹⁸ Davies concludes, "Paul's description of his moral experience in [Romans 7:14-25] is probably an account of his struggle against his evil *yêtzter*."⁹⁹

On the other hand, a number of scholars propose that verses 14-25 describe Paul's pre-conversion experience as seen by him now, and only, *in the light of his Christian faith*.¹⁰⁰ In Beker's words, "In Romans 7, Paul views in retrospect the objective condition of his former Jewish life."¹⁰¹ This interpretation largely stems from a recognition of the difficulties which passages such as Galatians 1:13-14 and Philippians 3:5-6 pose for applying Romans 7:14-25 to Paul's experience prior to his conversion.¹⁰²

Theissen also believes Romans 7:7-24 "is a retrospec-

⁹⁸Ibid., 24-25; noting Aboth 5:21 from the Mishnah as cited above, n. 7, p. 11.

⁹⁹Davies, 23-24. He contends, 25, "The similarity is obvious." Davies, 24, applies the struggle in verses 14-25 to the second period in Paul's life inaugurated by the events in verses 7-11. In these latter verses "he becomes a Jekyll and Hyde [until] the Spirit comes to deliver him."

¹⁰⁰Barrett, 151; Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, tr. C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 286.

¹⁰¹Beker, Paul the Apostle, 241.

¹⁰²For example, Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, tr. H. Snape (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 213, contends that prior to his conversion, "Paul felt that he had amply fulfilled these terms and showed that he was beyond reproach as far as legal justice was concerned (Phil. iii. 6). But after his conversion he considered justification by obedience to be possible in theory but beyond realization in practice. We can see a startling contrast when we compare . . . Philip-pians iii. 6 with the poignant phraseology of Romans vii. 13ff. . . ." See the discussion of the relationship between these passages below, pp. 261-71.

tive¹⁰³ on an unredeemed state."¹⁰⁴ He argues, from a psychological perspective, that what is portrayed in these verses is "a progressive process of developing consciousness of a formerly unconscious conflict with the law."¹⁰⁵ What had been unconscious in verses 7-11 is "replaced step by step with conscious insight" (vv. 14-24).¹⁰⁶ Since "there are no convincing linguistic or stylistic grounds to exclude in principle the person of Paul from the *ego* ('I') of Romans 7," Theissen concludes that the experience represented is that of Paul himself.¹⁰⁷ But he argues that Paul's "becoming conscious" of his conflict with the Law was not preparatory to his conversion.¹⁰⁸ Neither was this conflict overcome simply by his becoming conscious of it. Rather, it ended "through the

¹⁰³Theissen, 265, concludes, "It is impossible to miss the fact that the past is retrospectively made conscious on the basis of the change to the positive that has already been made."

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 222. He later adds, 235, "Romans 7:13-24, in my opinion, is all too clearly concerned with unredeemed humanity."

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 234.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 232; this explains the transition to the present tense. Beker, Paul the Apostle, 241, adopts a similar interpretation, but disputes this point by contending that this was "a conflict that only the Christophany *unmasked* and resolved" (emphasis mine).

¹⁰⁷Theissen, 234; similarly Beker, Paul the Apostle, 240, who refers especially to the cry of verse 24.

¹⁰⁸See Theissen's critiques of Oskar Pfister, Carl Jung, and H. Fischer on this point, 235-37.

saving intervention of Christ."¹⁰⁹

All of the previous interpreters proceed to draw a sharp contrast between Romans 7 and Romans 8 which reveals an "entirely different atmosphere."¹¹⁰ The emphatic $\nu\theta\nu$ of 8:1 is said to signal Paul's conversion to Christianity, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the beginning of the life described in chapter 8. In Gundry's words, all of 7:7-25 moves Paul ahead toward the "availability of moral victory in Romans 8:1-17, a victory that is characteristic as well as possible."¹¹¹

Objections

There are a number of significant objections to interpreting these verses as representative of Paul's pre-conversion experience. The major difficulty for those who interpret Romans 7:14-25 as Paul's account of his own struggles with the Law which he felt prior to his conversion is that what

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 246; he concludes that this is the "decisive difference" between psychoanalysis and Paul's portrayal of the "I" in Romans 7.

¹¹⁰Charles Mitton, "Romans 7 Reconsidered," Expository Times 65 (1953-54):79; Schoeps, 184; Theissen, 182-83. Sanday and Headlam, 186, agree since in 7:7-24 there is not "a single expression which belongs to Christianity." They point out that there is no mention of Christ or the Holy Spirit, whose presence dominates chapter 8. However, while the Holy Spirit is said to be absent from these verses, the expressions in 7:6,14 and 25 should not be overlooked.

¹¹¹Gundry, 240. Alfred Garvie, Romans, The Century Bible, vol. 27 (London: Caxton Publishing, n.d.), 175, states, "To apply all that precedes this verse [7:25] to Paul as a Christian, however, would be to admit practically that the grace of God is as powerless against sin as the law is."

these verses depict is not at all consistent with the other descriptions Paul makes of his pre-conversion experience. In fact, the intense conflict of Romans 7 is said to be "altogether contrary" to the picture Paul presents of himself in Philippians 3:5-6 and Galatians 1:13-14.¹¹² Kümmel argues that Paul was a typical Pharisee and concludes, "Nothing forces [one] to the conclusion that the uncertainty in the ability to fulfill the Law came already to the Pharisee Paul."¹¹³ On the contrary, these other passages indicate that the condition characterized in verses 14-25 "was not a matter of conscious reflection while [Paul] was a Pharisee."¹¹⁴

As Leenhardt observes,

The conversion of Paul was not that of a heart devoured by remorse for its acts of disobedience, but rather that of a proud soul exalting itself before God because of its obedience to the law.¹¹⁵

¹¹²Pointed out, for example, by Cranfield, 1:344; Bandstra, 141; Beker, Paul the Apostle, 217-18; Espy, 161; Kümmel, Römer 7, 117; Mitton, 80; Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 286, 290-01; Theissen, 234; see also Acts 22:3.

Gundry, 233-34, responds that the passages from Philippians and Galatians refer to the Pharisee as seen by an outside observer, while Romans 7 depicts the true inward struggle of Paul, the Pharisee, who delighted in the Law, yet was frustrated by certain commandments. Specifically for Gundry, this would be the sexual lust noted above, p. 12, n. 10.

¹¹³Kümmel, Römer 7, 114, "Nicht zwingt zu der Annahme, daß die Zweifel an der Erfüllbarkeit des Gesetzes schon dem Pharisäer Paulus kamen." He concludes, 115, that although Paul knew of his sin as a Pharisee, he also knew of the repentance which removed the burden of sin.

¹¹⁴Beker, Paul the Apostle, 241; as also argued effectively by Kümmel, Römer 7, 111-17.

¹¹⁵Leenhardt, 181. Barrett, 151-52, similarly states, "In passages where Paul certainly describes his life before his conversion there is no trace of spiritual conflict or of

Specifically in response to Davies's proposal, is it possible that Paul is describing the battle between the "two impulses" which took place in him prior to his conversion? A number of scholars have answered, "No."¹¹⁶ First, as Davies recognizes, there is no equivalent to the יצר הטוב in Romans 7.¹¹⁷ For Paul, the impulse toward good comes only from outside of man.¹¹⁸ Second, it is asserted that Paul would strongly object to any notion that the inclination to evil in man, namely, sin, is basically directed toward "self-preservation and propagation," and merely needs to be controlled and used for good.¹¹⁹

a 'divided self'. Gal. i. 13 f. and Phil. iii. 4 ff. depict a Jew practising his religion more successfully than any of his contemporaries, blameless in his observance of the law, and entirely satisfied with his own righteousness."

¹¹⁶For example, Barrett, 148; Beker, Paul the Apostle, 237; Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 143, n. 1. Black, 102, accepts Davies's theory to a point, but later, 106, argues that the enemy in Romans 7 is not described in terms of an "evil impulse" but as sin itself.

¹¹⁷Davies, 26; citing F. C. Porter, Biblical and Semitic Studies, in Yale Bicentennial Publications, 134, whom Davies, 26, n. 1, evaluates as being "right in saying that Paul's conception of the Spirit has almost nothing in common with the relatively unimportant rabbinical idea of the good yétzer."

¹¹⁸Paul would affirm that it could come through study of the Torah in the broad sense, as νόμος is used in 3:21b, for instance. But that is not how Paul speaks of νόμος throughout Romans 7. Here it denotes the commanding aspect of the Torah which only serves to identify and increase sin (vv. 7-13), as well as to inform the will of the "I" (in vv. 14-25). See the discussion of νόμος throughout chapter two.

¹¹⁹As Davies, 22, suggests. Barrett, 148, agrees that the two may be similar. For Paul, however, "there is an element in human nature so completely under the power of sin that . . . it corrupts all man's activity" (see, for

Any psychological interpretation must reckon with the objection that in Romans 7 Paul is engaged in a theological discussion regarding the Law which is "not the least interested in psychology."¹²⁰ Therefore Beker concludes,

We cannot revert to speculations about Paul's psyche which lie behind the text. Speculations about Paul's encounter with the 'evil impulse' (*yetzer harah*) after his youthful innocence, or about his bar mitzvah and his subsequent frustration with the law are illegitimate and have no warrant in the text.¹²¹

A number of further objections have been levied against interpreting the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 as descriptive of Paul's pre-conversion experience from either his pre-Christian or Christian vantage point. The first is that Paul switches to verbal forms in the present tense in verse 14 and consistently employs them throughout the rest of the chapter.¹²² This change to the present tense is explained by those who advocate a pre-conversion interpretation as indicative of an

example, 1:18-32; 2:21-24; 3:9-18).

¹²⁰Barrett, 145.

¹²¹Beker, Paul the Apostle, 237.

¹²²Cranfield, 1:344, concludes that this objection "weighs heavily" against interpreting these verses of Paul's pre-Christian experience. His evaluation, 1:344-45, is that "the use of the present tense is here sustained too consistently and for too long and contrasts too strongly with the past tenses characteristic of vv. 7-13 to be at all plausibly explained as an example of the present used for the sake of vividness in describing past events which are vividly remembered." See also Barth, 270.

"intensification" in the conflict¹²³ or as being dramatic. "The Apostle throws himself back into the time which he is describing."¹²⁴

A second major objection to any application of verses 14-25 to Paul's pre-conversion experience is the order of the sentences in verses 24-25. If Paul is describing his pre-conversion experience, it would seem that verse 25a announces his release from "this body of death" in declaring, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Yet verse 25b immediately adds, "So then I myself in my mind am enslaved to [the] Law of God, but, on the other hand, in the flesh, [I am enslaved to the] Law of sin." As it stands verse 25b implies that the deliverance of 25a has left the "I" in the same condition as he stood in verse 24¹²⁵

As a result of the latter objection, some adherents of the pre-conversion interpretation have attempted to rear-

¹²³Asserted by Eduard Ellwein, "Das Rätsel von Römer VII," Kerygma und Dogma 1 (1955):262, "diese Steigerung." See also Karl Kertelge, "Exegetische Überlegungen zum Verständnis der paulinischen Anthropologie nach Römer 7," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 62 (1971): 113; and Theissen, 233.

¹²⁴Sanday and Headlam, 185. Gundry, 229, also counters this objection by pointing out that Paul also uses the present tense in Philippians 3:6. He contends that the use of the present tense, introduced both in Romans 7:14a and Philippians 3:4b, is triggered by Paul's use of the present tense with another subject. He also points out that in both places, the first person singular pronoun is employed.

¹²⁵See Cranfield, 1:345. In addition, he points out that the cry of verse 24 would be somewhat melodramatic if it was not a present cry for deliverance.

range verses 24-25. James Moffatt's translation, for example, places verse 25b before verse 24. He justifies this by noting that he is "restoring the second part of ver. 25 to its original and logical position."¹²⁶ Ernest Best responds, "There is no evidence in any manuscript that [the position of verse 25b] is other than where we have it."¹²⁷ If the order of the text is allowed to stand as is, Barclay Newman has suggested that verse 25b "is a brief restatement of the problem in anticipation of the full reply which follows in chapter 8."¹²⁸

Paul's Christian Experience

Proponents

Could Paul, in Romans 7:14-25, be describing his own present and continuing existence as a Christian?¹²⁹ In view of the switch to the present tense in verse 14, the consistent use of the first person singular in verses 14-25, and Paul's use of both of these elements to describe his present Christian

¹²⁶James Moffatt, A New Translation of the Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), note on p. 194.

¹²⁷Best, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 84.

¹²⁸Newman, 135. Similarly for Best, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 84, it is a "summary of the argument of verses 7-24 which is to be fully answered in chapter 8."

¹²⁹As asserted by Espy, 172-75; Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 258-64; Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 284-303; John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1959,1965), 1:256-59; R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of Romans, Commentaries on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1961), 473-74; Franzmann, 134-37.

experience in other passages, this is hailed as the most natural identification of the "I" and the one which should be accepted.¹³⁰ Its adherents argue that since there are no compelling reasons which force one to abandon this interpretation,

The emphatic "I" must refer to Paul himself as he is now; . . . if this is not understood as Paul's actual, present experience, the cry of v. 24 - "Wretched man that I am! . . ." - is theatrical and inappropriate.¹³¹

In further support of this interpretation, it is pointed out that certain expressions in these verses could *only* be used by Paul to refer to himself as a Christian.¹³² Paul describes all people before conversion as slaves of sin (6:17, 18,20) and declares, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (8:7). But here Paul writes that "I" will the good (15,16,19,20), delight in the Law of God (22), and serve it

¹³⁰Packer, 622, again states that this is "the most natural way to read" this section; also admitted by Kümmel, Römer 7, 90. Paul does use the present tense in a similar manner to describe his own present experience as a Christian in numerous places, for example, 1 Cor. 9:26-27; see the complete discussion below in chapter three.

¹³¹Espy, 168.

¹³²Franzmann, 136, states: "If we refer 7:14-25 to man outside Christ, we find Paul here attributing to the natural human 'mind' an assent to, and harmony with, the law of God which he expressly denies elsewhere." For an example of this, see Sanday and Headlam, 181, who conclude: "The section which follows [7:14-24] explains more fully by a psychological analysis how it is that the Law is broken and that Sin works such havoc. There is a germ of good in human nature, a genuine desire to do what is right, but this is overborne by the force of temptation acting through the bodily appetites and passions." See the complete discussion of this issue below in chapter four.

with my mind (25b). Those who support this interpretation conclude that, for Paul, such things are "not possible for the man not under grace."¹³³ Therefore Paul cannot be referring to his own pre-conversion experience or to any other non-Christian.¹³⁴ The terms ἐγώ, νοῦς (vv. 23,25b), and τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον (v. 22) must be describing the human self which is being renewed by the Holy Spirit. The "I" is a believer in Christ who is part of the new age, but who is, at the same time, still in the flesh.¹³⁵ Cranfield asserts, "A struggle as serious as that which is here described, can only take place where the Spirit of God is present and active (cf. Gal. 5.17)."¹³⁶

Furthermore, it is argued that Paul speaks of the Christian life in a manner comparable to Romans 7:14-25 in Galatians 5:17 which states,

For the flesh desires [what is] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. For these are opposing one another, with the result that you do not do the things which you will.¹³⁷

¹³³Espy, 168. He later states, 174, "Linked with this is the observation that the subject no longer works the evil himself (vv. 17,20)."

¹³⁴Murray, 1:257, concludes, "It would be totally contrary to Paul's own teaching."

¹³⁵Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 262.

¹³⁶Cranfield, 1:346.

¹³⁷According to Espy, 186, n. 70, this shows that the flesh of the believer is not dead. Referring to Gal. 5:17, Nygren, 294, asks, "Since Paul, in Galatians, can say that about the Christian, why should it be impossible for him to say it in Romans 7:14-25?"

In Romans 8:23 Paul includes himself in declaring, "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." So R. C. H. Lenski concludes that the "I" is Paul himself and that verses 14-25 are "written from the standpoint of a regenerate man, whose experience is normal."¹³⁸

Objections

The main argument against viewing these verses as descriptive of Paul's continuing Christian experience is that they paint a very dismal picture of his Christian life.¹³⁹ Even though these objectors admit that Paul is aware of the possibility that he and other Christians might sin,¹⁴⁰ they contend that sin, the flesh, and the Law cannot have the power over Paul the Christian which is ascribed to them here. The portrayal of the "I" in 7:14-25 contradicts the Christian's liberation from sin and the "death to the Law" already announced by Paul (6:6-7,14-15,17-18,22; 7:1-6). If the Christian of 7:6 is freed from the Law, how can what the "I" states in 7:14 also be true of him? In chapter 8 Paul includes

¹³⁸Lenski, 475.

¹³⁹According to Sanday and Headlam, 183, "As a Christian he seems above it." Kümmel, Römer 7, 97-104, argues that it is "impossible" ("Unmöglichkeit") for these verses to be describing Paul as a Christian or any other Christian.

¹⁴⁰For example, Kümmel, Römer 7, 101; Leenhardt, 182, observes, "It is not that believers are immune from the necessity of struggling." However, Kümmel, Römer 7, 103, contends that Paul was not aware of any individual sin he had committed.

himself among Christians "who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (8:4).¹⁴¹ As a result, a number of scholars have concluded that, when compared with Paul's statements in 6:1-7:6 and 8:1-39, the "I" in 7:7-25 cannot be a Christian.¹⁴² Phrases such as "fleshly," "sold under sin," and "captive to the Law of sin" cannot apply to a believer (vv. 14,23). In fact, there is "no single expression in chapter 7 (until the parenthesis of verse 25) which is distinctively Christian - no mention of Christ or the Spirit."¹⁴³

An additional argument which weighs heavily against the application of 7:14-25 to Paul the Christian is the contention, "Nowhere else does Paul speak thus of the present Christian life."¹⁴⁴ Galatians 5:17 is rejected as a parallel because Paul there exhorts Christians to use their freedom to choose and to obey.¹⁴⁵ In contrast, Romans 7:14-25 depicts

¹⁴¹Compare also 8:2; 2 Cor. 10:3; 13:6. Packer, 622, admits that a *prima facie* contradiction exists between chapters 7 and 8.

¹⁴²See, for example, Kümmel, Römer 7, 126.

¹⁴³Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 84; Leenhardt, 194; Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen, 190-91, points out that the Holy Spirit, who differentiates Christians from non-Christians, is absent from Romans 7:14-25.

¹⁴⁴Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 85; see also 87.

¹⁴⁵On this point, see Kümmel, Römer 7, 104-6; Leenhardt, 182-83; Mitton, 102; Michel, Der Brief an die Römer, 171. Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 100-1, argues that in Gal. 5, the battle is not hopeless and the flesh, though a threatening power, is not dominant as in Romans 7. Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 87, also contends that Gal. 5:16 makes this

a situation of utter helplessness. The "I" is sold under sin and exhibits continued and uninterrupted failure and despondency.

Kümmel is representative of those scholars who contend that any identification of this "I" with Paul the Christian must be given up.¹⁴⁶

The reader who had heard most distinctly from Paul in chapter 6 that the Christian is free from sin (6:22) could not come to the conception that Paul here describes himself.¹⁴⁷

In Paul Althaus's words, "Although expressed in the present tense, what is here presented is clearly something past" for Paul.¹⁴⁸

Transpersonal

Many of those who reject an autobiographical interpretation of the "I" in verses 7-11 also opt for an "impersonal" or "rhetorical" interpretation in verses 14-25. Kümmel, again by way of negation, has championed this view. He enu-

clear. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 144, agrees that the conflict in Galatians 5 is "not identical" with the one presented in Romans 7.

¹⁴⁶Kümmel, Römer 7, 118.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 125, "Die Leser, die in Kap. 6 von Paulus eindringlich gehört hatten, daß der Christ von der Sünde befreit ist (6, 22), konnten nicht auf den Gedanken kommen, daß Paulus sich hier selber schildere." He, 12, argues that the "I" is either a different subject or in a different situation than presented in chapter 6.

¹⁴⁸Cited by Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 289, without documentation.

merates the following reasons for his conclusion:¹⁴⁹

- 1) The difficulties involved in ascribing verses 7-13 to the life of Paul are insurmountable.
- 2) It is impossible for verses 14-25 to be a characterization of Paul the Pharisee.
- 3) The close connection between the two sections indicates that the "I" is the same throughout verses 7-25.
- 4) The transition to chapter 8 excludes the interpretation that the "I" in 7:14-25 is a Christian.

As a result, any attempt "to understand and to employ Romans 7:7-24 as a biographical text of Paul" must be given up.¹⁵⁰

In addition, aside from the Christian views which intrude in verses 14a and 25a,¹⁵¹ "it is . . . clear that the portrayed person can only be the non-Christian, that is, the person here [is] under the Law."¹⁵² Verses 14-25 describe the conflict within an unbelieving "I" who wills to obey God's Law, but cannot do so because sin has made the "I" its prisoner.

Who then is the "I"? For Kümmel the subject of the "I" is everyone, at least in general, and ultimately no one.

No one or everyone is [the] subject. Certainly it is better that $\tau\lambda\varsigma$ be thought of as [the] subject. But then it results that the portrayal may not be presented as a portrayal of a distinct experience, but must be

¹⁴⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 117; see also 117-26. It should be noted that two of his four objections are directly related to verses 7-13.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 117, "Röm. 7,7-24 also biographischen Text des Paulus zu verstehen und zu verwenden . . ."

¹⁵¹Ibid., 125.

¹⁵²Ibid., 118, "Es ist . . . klar, daß der geschilderte Mensch nur der Nichtchrist, d. h. hier der Mensch unter dem Gesetze sein kann."

presented as [a] general, more or less theoretical presentation of the thought that the Law must assist sin for the death of the person and that the person therefore cannot come out of the condition of inability.¹⁵³

Paul cannot be speaking of himself or any other Christian. Neither is the "I" to be identified as anyone in particular. Rather, it is a "rhetorical fictive 'I'"¹⁵⁴ utilized by Paul to present the condition of man in general outside of Christ.¹⁵⁵ As in verses 7-11, Paul uses the first person singular as a "figure of speech" in order to make the portrayal more vivid.¹⁵⁶

Kümmel's explanation of the change in tenses is that the aorist tense is used initially

because in 7:7-13 how the person fell to death through sin which used the Law is being described on the basis of a psychological fact. Consequently an event is being portrayed. But in 7:14-24 the essence of the Law and of mankind is used to clarify the event of 7:7ff.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³Ibid., 132, "niemand oder jedermann ist Subjekt. Doch ist es besser, sich $\tau\lambda\varsigma$ also Subjekt zu denken. Dann aber ergibt sich, daß die Schilderung nicht als Schilderung eines bestimmten Erlebnis gefaßt werden darf, sondern als allgemeine, mehr oder weniger theoretische Darstellung des Gedankens gefaßt werden muß, daß das Gesetz der Sünde zum Tode des Menschen verhelfen muß und daß der Mensch darum unter dem Gesetz nicht aus dem Zustand des Nichtkönnens herauskommt."

¹⁵⁴Since the "I" cannot be Paul, Theissen, 177-78, aptly characterizes Kümmel's view in this way.

¹⁵⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 7, 126; he uses the term "Stilform."

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 124.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 126, "Denn in 7,7-13 wird ausgehend von einer psychologischen Tatsache, geschildert, wie der Mensch durch Sünde, die das Gesetz benützt, dem Tode verfällt. Es ist also ein Geschehen geschildert. In 7,7-24 aber wird das Wesen des Gesetzes und des Menschen benutzt, um das Geschehen von 7,7ff. zu erklären."

Paul's use of the present tense in verses 14-25 is due to "the lively contemporization of that which is portrayed."¹⁵⁸ These verses describe the condition which inevitably results from the events which occur in verses 7-11. Verse 24 then expresses the desire of the "I" to be released from the life ruled by sin, a desire which is satisfied in chapter 8.¹⁵⁹

A number of scholars have built upon or expanded Kümmel's view.¹⁶⁰ Bultmann, for example, agrees that in Romans 7 we have Paul's fullest expression of human existence apart from faith.¹⁶¹ Paul's purpose in verses 14-25 is to show "how law and sin determine man's nature."¹⁶² For Bultmann, the Law determines man's condition primarily by leading a person into deception and a false-striving to "become right with

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 110, "aus der lebhaften Vergegenwärtigung des Geschilderten."

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 68-73, 117; see also Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 100-1; Käsemann, 210.

¹⁶⁰In addition to those cited below, see also Keith Nickle, "Romans 7:7-25," Interpretation 33 (1979):181-87. Nickle, 186, views the sin here in terms of "the desire to be religious The 'evil which lies close at hand' (7:23) is precisely the desire 'to do right' (7:21)"; so Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 42-43. However, Paul Althaus, Paulus und Luther über den Menschen, Studien der Luther-Akademie, 14 (Gütersloh: "Der Rufer" Evangelische Verlag, 1938), 38-40, considers the sin here more in terms of transgression of the Law; see also Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 97.

¹⁶¹Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1:191; Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 96, supports "the correctness of Bultmann's explanation."

¹⁶²Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 41.

God by keeping the law."¹⁶³ "The object of man's intention is life, but the results of what he does is death."¹⁶⁴ So "then *the ultimate purpose of the Law is to lead man to death.*"¹⁶⁵

But the Law does this not by leading man into subjective despair, but by bringing him into an objectively desperate situation which he does not recognize as such until the message of grace hits its mark.¹⁶⁶

According to Bultmann, Paul uses verses 14-25 to reveal, from an objective vantage point, the impossibility of obtaining self-righteousness. This section then characterizes "the total tendency of human existence, and transcends subjectivity."¹⁶⁷ Hans Conzelmann puts it this way: "Paul describes in general terms the objective situation of the man outside of faith - where 'objective' means the perspective which

¹⁶³ Ibid., 35; Käsemann, 201, characterizes these verses as depicting "the religious mode of self-assertion." Leenhardt, 196, also contends that every person is confronted with some type of law and "justifies himself by what he does."

¹⁶⁴ Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 43. As Käsemann, 203, puts it, "What a person wants is salvation. What he creates is disaster."

¹⁶⁵ Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1:267; emphasis his.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 1:266.

¹⁶⁷ Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 37-38; he adds, 37, "The tendencies of will and act which give man his characteristics are not his subjective strivings. Rather Paul regards humanity as transcending the sphere of its own consciousness." See also Kümmel, Römer 7, 133, who partially agrees in that "the topic is only of the objective fact of the 'death'" ("nur von der objektiven Tatsache des 'Sterbens' die Rede ist").

faith has on unbelief."¹⁶⁸

On the basis of Kümmel's work, other interpreters have concluded that Paul employs the "I" in Romans 7 to portray, *in subjective terms*, "the schizophrenia of the unredeemed person" or the divided state of the soul of man under the Law.¹⁶⁹ The "I" is an unbeliever who is able to will both good and evil, but who is torn asunder by his inability to accomplish the good. "At the very heart of his being is a deep schism which robs him of the power to accomplish the will of God."¹⁷⁰ In verses 14-25 we have "man wrenched apart under the rule of the Law."¹⁷¹

One dramatic sign of the impact of the rhetorical line of interpretation upon Romans 7 is Die Gute Nachricht's trans-

¹⁶⁸Conzelmann, 230; see also 234. He adds, 231, "In putting these words in the mouth of the Jewish Paul, the Christian Paul is asserting the identity of the believer with the unbeliever."

¹⁶⁹Beker, Paul the Apostle, 238. See also Althaus, Paulus und Luther über den Menschen, 37-38; on Althaus's view, see the undocumented citations made by Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 290-92.

¹⁷⁰Leenhardt, 198; he also calls this, 197, an "eternal rent in man's being."

¹⁷¹Newman, 134. He contends that the closest analogy to Romans 7 is then Galatians 2 where Paul addresses Jewish believers concerned with the role of the Law in salvation (Gal. 2:15-16). There he also contends that the Law became an instrument of death to the "I" (Gal. 2:19; Rom. 7:9), and, as in Romans, switches between the first person singular and plural.

lation of the "I" in 7:7 as "wir Menschen."¹⁷² This is followed by the use of the inclusive forms "wir" and "uns" for the first person singular throughout the remainder of the chapter.¹⁷³

In regard to the spiritual state of the "I," those who adopt Kümmel's interpretation contend that the difference between the "I" in verses 7-11 and in verses 14-24 "is in vocabulary, not in content."¹⁷⁴ According to Käsemann, the past tense in verses 7-11 speaks of the Jewish people under the Law. With the present tense in verses 14-25, "the perspective is at least broadened" to include all unbelievers.¹⁷⁵ For Käsemann, the "I" throughout Romans 7 represents the pious person who "typifies as no one else can the nature of self-willed, rebellious, perverted, and lost creation."¹⁷⁶

Objections

Certainly, as Kümmel effectively argues, one must accept the possibility that Paul may be using a rhetorical "I" as a

¹⁷²Die Gute Nachricht, ed. Bibelgesellschaften und Bibelwerk im deutschsprachigen Raum (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1976), 352, "we human beings."

¹⁷³Ibid., 352-53, "we" and "us"; Newman, 134, agrees that this translation "would appear to suit best the demands of the context."

¹⁷⁴Käsemann, 202; so Kümmel, Römer 7, 90.

¹⁷⁵Käsemann, 195; he adds, 202, "The change of vocabulary, and the alteration of perspective manifested thereby, derives from the difference between our own situation and that of Adam." See also Newman, 133.

¹⁷⁶Käsemann, 209.

"figure of speech."¹⁷⁷ However, a number of objections may be cited against the "confident assumption" of this interpretation.¹⁷⁸ The first concerns the resulting place of Romans 7:14-25 within the entire Epistle. Since the main topic in the rest of Romans 5-8 concerns the Christian life, this interpretation necessitates viewing these verses as a digression.¹⁷⁹ Second, Kümmel's explanation of the change in tenses is questionable.¹⁸⁰ Third, if this rhetorical "I" is said to depict what is true of "man" in general, how can Paul be completely excluded? Indeed, it has been argued,

The existential anguish and frustration of vv. 15ff. and 24 is too real, too sharply poignant to permit any reduction of the "I" to a mere figure of style. Whatever else this is, it is surely Paul speaking from the heart of his own experience.¹⁸¹

To claim that the experience described here is typical is one thing, but to contend that the "I" is rhetorically fictive and in no way a description of Paul's own experience is said to ignore the fact that

¹⁷⁷As Kümmel, Römer 7, 119,132 argues; see the examples of this use he cites from Greek and Jewish sources, 126-32.

¹⁷⁸Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 144; he is skeptical of the attempt to omit any autobiographical element because what Paul describes here "has been the real experience of too many Christians."

¹⁷⁹Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 288; see also below, pp. 85-86,88-89.

¹⁸⁰Though the view advocated by Käsemann is somewhat more plausible, see above, p. 54.

¹⁸¹Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 260; see also idem., Romans 1-8, 405; Dodd, 123-26; Goguel, 213-14; Cranfield, 1:344.

apart from one or two [passages] which quote the objections of (real or imaginary) objectors, in the rest Paul uses 'I' as including me, not 'I' meaning anyone but me."¹⁸²

In addition, two of the objections cited previously against identifying the "I" as Paul's pre-conversion experience also speak against Kümmel's rhetorical line of interpretation. The first of these asks how the struggle depicted in Romans 7:14-25 could occur in unregenerate man.¹⁸³ Even Kümmel recognizes a problem here when he admits,

There can be no doubt, in my opinion, that, in Romans 7:14ff., there is ascribed to the person a natural harmony with the spiritual Law, which Paul does not recognize elsewhere.¹⁸⁴

A final objection to the "rhetorical" interpretation as a whole is found in the text of Romans 7 where the order

¹⁸²Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 261; the passages Kümmel, Römer 7, 121, cites to the contrary will be evaluated in chapter three.

¹⁸³For example, Cranfield, 1:346; also recognized, by Althaus, Paulus und Luther über den Menschen, 35. Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 289, critiques the inconsistency in Althaus's interpretation which attempts to differentiate between the Spirit of God which activates man and the Holy Spirit which Christ gives. Some concept of the general activity of the Spirit is required by this interpretation.

¹⁸⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 135, "Es kann m. E. kein Zweifel daran sei, daß dem Menschen in Röm. 7, 14ff. eine natürliche Übereinstimmung mit dem pneumatischen Gesetz zugesprochen wird, die Paulus sonst so nicht kennt." He attempts to answer this objection by asserting, 125, that Paul's Christian faith enters into and influences this description, particularly in verses 14a and 25a. In addition, he contends, 134-38, that Paul's Christian experience of the Spirit's resistance to the flesh has colored his picture of the struggle between the mind and the flesh. Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen, 191, finally resolves this tension by placing the blame upon "Paul's inadequate, dualistic, form of expression" ("die unzulängliche dualistische Ausdrucksform des Paulus").

of verses 24-25 oppose it. A number of solutions have been proposed in attempts at resolving this difficulty.¹⁸⁵ The attempts at rearranging these verses have been noted previously.¹⁸⁶ Bultmann is led to argue that 7:25b is a later gloss.¹⁸⁷ However, both of these alternatives lack any textual evidence.¹⁸⁸ Kümmel prefers to see verse 25b as a summary of the pre-Christian experience described in verses 7-24.¹⁸⁹ Dunn responds that this "makes too light of v. 25a and leaves 7,25b as a pathetic anti-climax."¹⁹⁰

Specifically in response to Bultmann's view, Beker points out that any "striving for righteousness" is completely

¹⁸⁵The attempts to alter the text of verses 24-25 or to explain them in some other way will be discussed in detail in the second chapter of this thesis under those verses and also in Appendix Two, "The Text of Romans 7:24-25."

¹⁸⁶See above, pp. 42-43; and Appendix Two, "The Text of Romans 7:24-25," below, pp. 435-40.

¹⁸⁷Bultmann, "Glossen im Römerbrief," Theologische Literatur-zeitung 72 (1947):cols. 198-99. See also Otto Kuss's discussion "Zur Geschichte der Auslegung von Röm. 7,7-25," in Der Römerbrief, 3 vols., (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1963), 2:461, who evaluates v. 25b as "the gloss of a reader or copyist" ("die Glosse eines Lesers oder Abschreibers").

¹⁸⁸See Best, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 94, cited also above, p. 43, n. 127; also Kümmel, Römer 7, 67.

¹⁸⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 65-66; see also Sanday and Headlam, 184.

¹⁹⁰Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 263, n. 32.

absent from verses 14-24.¹⁹¹ In addition, Bultmann's trans-
subjective interpretation

is based, first, on identifying the good and evil in Rom. 7:18-19 with life and death (7:10, 13), i.e., identifying them not with the good and evil actions themselves but with their results, and second, on the position that the motif of illusion in Rom. 7:11 is also presupposed in 7:13-23.¹⁹²

Theissen contends that neither of these are supported by the text.¹⁹³ Kümmel rejects the "objective" aspect of Bultmann's interpretation because the "I" is not completely oblivious to his situation. On the contrary, the "I" subjectively recognizes his utter helplessness and his need for a Redeemer.¹⁹⁴ As a result, Beker concludes that Bultmann's interpretation "does not apply."¹⁹⁵

Combinations of the Above

A number of the previous interpretations of the "I" in verses 14-25 have been mingled together. One approach ac-

¹⁹¹Beker, Paul the Apostle, 239-40. Yet he sounds more like Bultmann when he concludes, 238, "A Christian looks here, . . . in hindsight at the plight of the Jews under the law and describes their objective condition of despair."

¹⁹²Theissen, 232, n. 22.

¹⁹³Ibid., "Observations with regard to verbal semantics [equating the 'good' with 'life'], structure [the deception of 7:11 is revealed by v. 13], and the history of tradition [citing, for example, Althaus, Paulus und Luther über den Menschen, 45-47; Kuss, 2:496-72] speak against this interpretation."

¹⁹⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 134; though he also allows for some "Christian coloring" ("christliche Färbung") in these verses.

¹⁹⁵Beker, Paul the Apostle, 239.

knowledges that the statements of the "I" depict Paul's own experience, but the scope of the words is expanded to represent the situation of other people as well. As Newman states,

Whether or not Paul is speaking in the first instance of himself, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that he intends to include others . . . together with himself in the description of the "I".¹⁹⁶

Scholars who identify the "I" with Paul's pre-conversion experience suggest that the struggles of the "I" are typical of Jewish unbelievers. According to Hans Schoeps, Paul intends verses 14-25 to be understood as "a description of the life of all Jews, including that of Saul."¹⁹⁷ Bandstra contends that they more specifically present "a description of the Saul on the Damascus road, and, indeed, all Jewish Christians when confronted with the crucified and risen Messiah."¹⁹⁸

Other interpreters expand the application of verses 14-25 even further to include all non-Christians.¹⁹⁹ Weinel contends that the description of the "I" represents "an ex-

¹⁹⁶Newman, 134; Barrett, 152, similarly concludes that although "Paul wrote what he smartingly did feel," these verses provide "an analysis of human nature."

¹⁹⁷Schoeps, 184.

¹⁹⁸Bandstra, 147; see also 143. Cranfield, 1:344, responds that the "I" cannot describe non-Christian Jews since this would be "inconsistent with the picture of Jewish self-complacency which Paul gives in chapter 2." He cites for support Mark 10:20; and Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, 6 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1954) 1:814.

¹⁹⁹Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 87, cites Romans 2:14-17 as indicating the ability of unbelievers to know, agree with, and do God's will "precisely as 7.16 and 22 depict."

perience common to us all."²⁰⁰ Gundry points to the "I"'s ability to delight in the Law (7:22) as indicative of a "moral monitor" present in all people.²⁰¹ Sanday and Headlam support this by making reference to "parallels . . . from Pagan literature."²⁰² Yet they somewhat more cautiously conclude,

The process described comes to different men at different times and in different degrees; . . . in one it would be quick and sudden, in another the slow growth of years.²⁰³

Those who see the "I" in verses 14-25 as representative of Paul's Christian experience often extend the struggle characterized by them to other Christians.²⁰⁴ The present tense is said to warrant their application as one aspect of present Christian existence.²⁰⁵ According to J. I. Packer, Paul means the whole experience . . . to be understood,

²⁰⁰Weinel, 74; though he qualifies this by stating that it does not affect all of us "with such profoundness and power."

²⁰¹Gundry, 236, citing Rom. 1:18-32; 2:14-15.

²⁰²Sanday and Headlam, 185. For example, they cite Ovid who writes in Metamorphoses 7,21: "video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor" ("I see the better and approve; the lower I follow"). Cerfaux, 438, concludes, "It is reasonable to compare the inner conflict which Paul describes with that of Greek psychology." See the more complete discussion concerning these "parallels" below, pp. 161-64.

²⁰³Sanday and Headlam, 186.

²⁰⁴For example, Black, 101. When this is recognized, the personal application to Paul is generally maintained. Cranfield, 1:347, finally concludes that the question of whether these verses are autobiographical of Paul or descriptive of the experience of Christians generally is "relatively unimportant."

²⁰⁵Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 288-89; Franzmann, 128; Packer, 626-27.

not as a private peculiarity of his own, but as a typical and representative experience, for he presents it as affording a universally valid disclosure.²⁰⁶

Anders Nygren's view is that beginning in verse 14 Paul "describes the *present status* of the Christian, and the role of the law in the Christian life."²⁰⁷ He concludes that Paul here intends to portray himself *and* all other Christians as being free from the Law, and yet not righteous by it.²⁰⁸ Although the Christian does not completely fulfill the Law in the flesh, he is now free from the Law "principally in the sense that he has been justified entirely without the co-operation of the law."²⁰⁹

A recognition of the difficulties present in all of the above interpretations has resulted in an entirely different approach to the problem. John A. T. Robinson suggests that simply asking whether the "I" in verses 14-25 is a Christian or not is to ask the wrong question. The contrast in verses 14-25 is not between the "then" and the "now" of the believer but between the "I" and the Law.²¹⁰ As a result, the issue of the spiritual condition of the "I" "is a little

²⁰⁶Packer, 623; he speaks this of verses 7-25 as a whole.

²⁰⁷Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 275.

²⁰⁸Ibid., 296-97.

²⁰⁹Ibid., 302; he adds, 303, that this "only makes the gospel stand out the more in its overwhelming greatness."

²¹⁰Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 88.

too complicated to be solved by a single Yes or No."²¹¹

By following this approach, it is argued that interpreting the "I" *either* as Paul before his conversion or as Paul after he became a Christian makes an unwarranted temporal limitation. Michael Grant applies the statements of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 both to Paul's pre-conversion experience and to his life after conversion to Christianity. After citing verses 19, 21, and 24, Grant concludes, "These self-tortures continued throughout [Paul's] life."²¹² Charles Mitton similarly contends that Paul is not merely describing his experience before conversion. Rather, this is

also the similar experience into which that same man, even after his conversion, can all too easily relapse . . . if ever he begins to imagine that it is in his own strength that he stands.²¹³

The "I" then reveals "that which was true of Paul's past, and may become true of the present."²¹⁴ Barth's interpretation is comparable.²¹⁵ He proposes that in verses 14-25

²¹¹Emil Brunner, The Letter to the Romans, tr. H. Kennedy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), 62.

²¹²Michael Grant, Saint Paul (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), 109; though he adds, "But it was before his conversion that they had reached the most intolerable heights."

²¹³Mitton, 132. He further explains the latter statement in this way: "If one begins to imagine that this new inner strength, this new wholeness of heart, is his own, and any trace of pride and self-confidence creeps in, he is doomed."

²¹⁴Ibid., 134.

²¹⁵Barth, 257-70, does identify the "I" with Paul; however, he contends that Paul's major concern here is to depict "The Reality of Religion." He asserts, 268, "Religion is the

Paul describes his past, present, and future existence. He portrays a situation as real after the episode on the road to Damascus as before it. He is writing about a man, broken in two by the law, but who, according to [the] law, cannot be thus broken. Paul is thrust into a dualism which contradicts itself. He is shattered on God, without the possibility of forgetting him.²¹⁶

A number of those who adopt this broader description of Paul's own experience, or at least his potential experience, then expand the description of the "I" in verses 14-25 to represent any Christian who has "lapsed" from Christ. Alfred Garvie concludes that the experience of Romans 7 can be that of any Christian "in so far as he falls short of claiming and using the grace offered to him in Christ."²¹⁷ In addition, the "I" is also said to portray the struggles of any unconverted person. In Emil Brunner's words,

Whether he feels it more deeply or less, this misery, truly considered, is the condition of man outside of Christ and that of the Christian always in so far as he places himself outside Christ, in so far as he lapses.²¹⁸

The "I" is then identified both with unbelievers and with

KRISIS of culture and of barbarism. Apart from God, it is the most dangerous enemy a man has on this side of the grave. For religion is the human possibility of remembering that we must die."

²¹⁶Ibid., 270.

²¹⁷Garvie, 174. So also Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 145, "The inability persists only so long as I fight the battle in my own strength." S. Odland, further enunciates this position, "The apostle here does not go beyond what the Christian is and is capable of, when standing, as it were, on his own legs, with his new will, but isolated from the influence of the Spirit and confronted with the demand of the law." Cited from Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 295, without documentation; also cited by Mitton, 133.

²¹⁸Brunner, 66.

Christians who are relying upon themselves or the Law for sanctification. Mitton states,

The description [is] of a man who is trying to live the good life, but doing it in his own strength, relying on his own resources, whether the period in his life be before his conversion to Christ or after it, in a later period of "back-sliding," when through carelessness the absolutely essential "injection" of Divine power has been neglected.²¹⁹

Those who support this line of interpretation translate the ἐγὼ εἰμι of Romans 7:25 as "I left by myself" or "entirely on my own."²²⁰ Robinson interprets the phrase as "Paul simply *qua* man, the self in its own unaided human nature. . . . a mere man (ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος) facing the law by himself."²²¹ Romans 8 then proceeds to describe the mature Christian who is truly under the influence of the Spirit. There the "I" has "passed out of the storm and cloud of [Romans] 7" and left behind his earlier life or a lower stage of

²¹⁹Mitton, 135. The latter analogy is due to his description of man as a "moral diabetic" who, 134, needs to receive "into his ailing nature Divine reinforcement, which establishes a 'control' over his sinful nature. . . . He is never wholly cured, . . . His illness is only controlled."

²²⁰Ibid., 133-34. See also Bandstra, 147, who translates, "I on my own"; Moffatt's translation, 194, "I left to myself"; J. B. Phillips, Letters to Young Churches (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 16, who translates, "I in my own nature"; and the Revised Standard Version, The Oxford Annotated Bible, eds. H. May and B. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 1369, which gives "I of myself."

²²¹Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 89-90; it speaks of man as σάρξ. He contends that 1 Cor. 3:1-3 proves that believers can also be described as "fleshly," that is, as babes or immature Christians.

his Christian life which was isolated from the Spirit.²²²

While this latter approach at identifying the "I" may look attractive to some,²²³ those who oppose it argue that it creates more problems than it solves. First, the order of verses 24-25 speaks against it. If the desired deliverance or a higher stage of Christian living has been reached in 7:25a, how is the continued state of 25b explained? Dunn also notes that it relies rather heavily upon "forcing the αὐτὸς ἐγώ [in verse 25] into the unparalleled sense, 'I left to myself.'"²²⁴

Second, this line of interpretation contends "that Paul could conceive of Christian experience apart from Christ or apart from the Spirit."²²⁵ The objection to this is the assertion that for Paul "the characteristic fact of the Christian is just this, that he is never left to himself. He lives his life 'in Christ.'"²²⁶

Finally, it maintains that a Christian must rely on his own strength to persevere in the Christian life with the

²²²Mitton, 134. As evidence for this he points out that ἐγώ occurs six times in 7:14-25, but never in 8:1-39.

²²³See, for instance, Bruce's wording, The Letter to the Romans, 150.

²²⁴Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 263, n. 32.

²²⁵Stephen Westerholm, Israel's Law and the Church's Faith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 61. He evaluates this conclusion as "incredible."

²²⁶Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 302.

aid of injections of "Divine reinforcement."²²⁷ This stands in contrast to the foundation of Christian hope which is laid by Paul in Romans 5:1-5 and 8:23-27, for example.

This last approach at interpreting Romans 7:14-25 illustrates the muddling which results from each of the "combined" interpretations mentioned above. Within it the "I" can ultimately be identified *as in each and every one of the disparate interpretations noted above!* In fact, these "combined" proposals are all left to face the objections levied against every one of the interpretations they bring together.

Conclusions

This survey has illustrated the general disagreement which continues to surround Romans 7. It has also revealed some of the difficulties involved in each of the widely varied identifications which have been made of the "I" in verses 7-25. Attempts at resolving these problems have resulted in a number of combined interpretations which have only served to make matters more complex.

There are two key factors which have yet to be satisfactorily resolved. First, who is the "I" in Romans 7:7-25? Any attempt to identify the "I" should grapple with the issues involved in determining why and with what force Paul employs the first person singular so extensively here. An investigation of the various ways in which Paul employs the first

²²⁷See Mitton, 135; cited above, p. 64, n. 219.

person singular throughout his letters should shed some light on this issue. The second unresolved factor concerns the spiritual state of the "I" in verses 14-25. Paul's description in these verses may be unique as is evidenced by the claims that he "nowhere else" speaks of believers or unbelievers as he does here.²²⁸ However, the solution to this controversy can be found by taking cognizance of what Paul says about himself before and after his conversion and by examining the more general descriptions of unbelievers and the Christian life throughout the Pauline corpus. Both of these aspects will be addressed more thoroughly in chapters three and four of this thesis. If these issues are properly appraised and then integrated into the interpretation of Romans 7, a correct understanding of Paul's meaning and of his purpose in writing this chapter can be more readily perceived.

In dealing with these contested issues, the constant temptation is to allow one's theological presuppositions to determine the solution which is adopted, rather than the words of Paul himself.²²⁹ With this in mind, this study now turns to examine the text of Romans 7. For Paul's own words must be allowed to direct us toward a resolution of the disputed questions surrounding that chapter.

²²⁸ See above, pp. 32-33, 47-48, 56.

²²⁹ Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 84, in speaking of the varied answers which have been given to the question, "Could Paul have said this or that as a Christian?" charges, "In each case the judgment is made as much for subjective theological reasons as by any objective canon of exegesis."

CHAPTER II
AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF ROMANS 7
WITHIN ITS CONTEXT

It has been suggested that the text of Paul's letters is not the place to begin an attempt to answer questions about his theology.¹ However, if the purpose is, indeed, to determine *Paul's view* on a given subject, the content of his own words certainly is the proper starting point. This chapter, then, begins to seek solutions to the disputed issues surrounding Romans 7 by investigating the sense, meaning, or content of the signs present in the text of Romans 7 within their context. This is the field of semantics.

"Semantics" describes the relationship between the form of signs and their content (meaning). Here the question is addressed: How should/must what is said to be understood? What is that which is meant?²

¹For example, F. J. Bottorff, "The Relation of Justification and Ethics in Pauline Epistles," Scottish Journal of Theology 26 (1973):421, contends: "Any theologian who deludes himself into believing that he may begin studying a topic purely on the basis of the Greek text is almost surely doomed to repetition of past theological mistakes."

²Wolfgang Schenk, Die Philipperbriefe des Paulus (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1984), 19, "Semantik beschreibt die Relation zwischen Zeichengestalt und Zeichengehalt (Bedeutung): R(Z,B). Hier wird auf die Frage geantwortet: Wie sollte/müßte das Gesagte verstanden werden? Was ist das Gemeinte?" The foundational study in the field of semantics is James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); see also Anthony Thiselton,

Romans 1-4

After an extended address (1:1-7) and a description of his relationship with the Christians in Rome (1:8-11), Paul states the theme of his letter in 1:16-17. He proceeds to expound these verses not by focusing upon the *δικαιοσύνη* *θεοῦ* revealed in the Gospel (1:17), but by declaring that the wrath of God is "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteous men" (1:18). Paul's goal in 1:18-3:20 is to validate his charge that "Jews and Greeks are all under sin" (3:9).³ He primarily deals with the condemnation of the Gentiles in 1:18-32 and, after a section applicable to both (2:1-16), turns to direct his attack specifically at the Jews who "rely on the Law and boast in God" (2:17).

In 1:18-3:20 Paul makes a number of statements regarding the Law which have important implications in chapter 7. His description of the Jews as those who have "the form

"Semantics and New Testament Interpretation," chap. four in New Testament Interpretation, ed. I. Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1977), 75-104.

³Heikki Räisänen, Paul and the Law, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, no. 29 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983), 97-109; and E. P. Sanders, Paul, the Law and the Jewish People (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 123-136, dispute this by asserting: 1) *ἀμαρτία* does not appear until 3:9, 2) Paul does not accuse the Jew of transgression but rather asks if he has practiced what he has taught, and 3) Paul's focus is upon the righteousness of God. Klyne Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace -- to the Doers," New Testament Studies 32 (1986):76, similarly contends that Paul's major concern in this section is the vindication of God; see also Leon Morris, "The Theme of Romans," in Apostolic History and the Gospel, eds. W. Gasque and R. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1970), 263, who notes "the dominance of the God-theme. . . . Romans is a book about God."

(μόρφωσιν) of the knowledge and the truth ἐν τῷ νόμῳ" (2:20) at the same time conveys Paul's definition of the Mosaic Torah.⁴ He charges that those who possess the revealed Torah will be judged διὰ νόμου (2:12). Therefore, throughout chapter 2 Paul bases the guilt of the Jews before God upon their transgression of the Law (διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου in 2:23; see also vv.25,27).⁵ He even concludes that one of the Law's effects is to bring forth the knowledge or recogni-

⁴"The conventional translation of 'Torah' with 'Law' is most lamentable" according to Horace Hummel, The Word Becoming Flesh (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 62. In the total Old Testament context, the reference is assuredly to "the Word of God." The translation "Law" has come through the Greek use of νόμος to translate the Hebrew תּוֹרָה. As a result, the term "Law," when it refers to all or part of the Torah, will be capitalized throughout this thesis except when it occurs otherwise in quotations from other sources. Hummel, 62, recognizes that since it is not possible to "turn back the clock," we are left with the translation "Law." However, in view of the more narrow sense of the "Torah" Paul speaks about in Romans 7, the translation "Law" serves quite adequately; see below, pp. 114-15,132-33,149-50.

⁵Douglas Moo, "Israel and Paul in Romans 7.7-12," New Testament Studies 32 (1986):126, asserts, "Paul carefully distinguishes παράβασις and ἁμαρτία, using παράβασις only of the failure to meet a specific expressed requirement." While Paul does not make as sharp a distinction between "transgression" and "sin" as Moo contends, Paul does generally use παράβασις for breaking the revealed Law. See especially 4:15; 5:14; Gal. 3:19; also Werner Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929); reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament, Theologische Bucherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 48 [Hereafter, Römer 7]; Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., eds. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, tr. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1973), s.v. "παράβασις," by Johannes Schneider, 5:739-40. [Hereafter, TDNT].

tion of sin (3:20).⁶

Yet those who do not possess the revealed Law are not in any way excused from God's condemnation (1:20,28).⁷ While Paul does not base his accusations against the Gentiles on the Torah, he does state, "For those who sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law" (2:12). Paul explains the reason for this. The fact that those without the Law "by nature do the things of the Law" (2:14) shows that τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου is written in their hearts and on their conscience (2:15).⁸ These will accuse them on the day of judgment (2:16).

Having demonstrated that all the world is accountable to God (3:19), Paul gives a concise, yet also profound and

⁶For ἐπιγνωσις, see Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2nd ed., tr. W. Arndt and F. Gingrich, rev. and augmented from Baur's 5th ed., 1958, by F. Gingrich and F. Danker, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 291. Hereafter, BAGD].

⁷Possibly also 2:1; Paul makes the reason clear in 3:23, "For all have sinned."

C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32, 6th ed., 2 vols. (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1975,1979), 1:155-57, disputes the application of 2:12-16 to unbelieving Gentiles by taking the ἔθνη (v. 14) as a reference to Gentile Christians who did not, by nature, have the Law. He argues this because unbelieving Gentiles would not be able to fulfill the Law on the basis of 3:9,20,23. However, the application of 2:12-16 must be to all Gentile *non-Christians*. Paul here states that the ἔθνη are τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα. The φύσει should be linked with ποιῶσιν ("by nature they do the things of the Law"). This is made clear by the use of φύσει later in verse 14 when Paul again speaks of οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες.

⁸Notice that Paul does not say that the entire Law is written on the heart of those who do not know the revealed Torah. Only a portion of the Law, its "work," is there.

complete, statement of the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* (3:21-26). The righteousness of God is given freely through faith in "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (3:24). This righteousness excludes any boasting in one's own works of the Law, but it does not thereby negate the Law. On the contrary, it firmly establishes the Law (3:27-31).⁹

Paul validates his teaching of the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως* in chapter 4 by appealing to Scripture's account of Abraham and the testimony of David (Gen. 15-22; Ps. 32:1-2). Regarding the promise to Abraham and his descendants, Paul asserts,

For if the heirs are from the Law, then faith has been made empty and the promise has been rendered invalid. For the Law accomplishes wrath. But where there is no Law, neither is there transgression (*παράβασις*; 4:14-15).

Paul does not say there is no sin without the Law (2:12-16; 3:19-20,23), but that without the revealed Law there can be no transgression of the specific commands it lays upon man.¹⁰ His point is that once the Law comes, the wrath of God abounds all the more.

Many commentators then see chapters 5-8 as comprising

⁹Paul's use(s) of *νόμος* in 3:27 become(s) a crucial point which will be discussed in detail under 7:23 and 8:2. However, 3:21 has unquestionably shown that *νόμος* can have different nuances of meaning for Paul. See below, pp. 173-81,198-203.

¹⁰Moo states, 127, that there is nothing which makes a person "individually responsible for a specific set of commandments." See also above on 2:12-16, p. 71.

the next major section of Romans.¹¹ For example, Anders Nygren views them as an exposition of the manner in which "He Who Through Faith is Righteous Shall Live."¹² According to C. E. B. Cranfield, this life is characterized by peace with God (ch. 5), by sanctification (ch. 6), by freedom from the Law's condemnation (ch. 7), and by the indwelling of God's Spirit (ch. 8).¹³ Others include chapter 5 along with 3:21-4:25.¹⁴ While either division may allude to one's interpretation of the section, neither is determinative of it. In chapter five the connections with Romans 7 become more direct and by chapter six the parallels are inescapable. As a result, these two chapters need to be presented in greater detail.

Romans 5

The first verse of chapter 5 marks a transition in Paul's thought which is now directed toward the present state

¹¹Cranfield, 1:28, entitles chapters 5-8 "The Life Promised for Those Who Are Righteous by Faith." Similarly C. H. Dodd, The Epistle to the Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Fontana Books, 1959), vii-viii.

¹²Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, tr. D. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 187.

¹³Cranfield, 1:28. Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 188, summarizes the message of chapters 5-8 as expressing the Christian's freedom from the wrath of God, from sin, from the Law, and from death.

¹⁴As such it comprises the conclusion of Paul's exposition of "The Way of Righteousness" according to Frederick F. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, rev. ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1977), 64; see also Kümmel, Römer 7, 7; Martin Franzmann, Concordia Commentary: Romans (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 19.

of the justified (δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν; 5:1).¹⁵ Paul declares that as Christians we now have peace with God and access to him through Christ (5:1-2). Yet due to the believer's continued presence in this world we also endure afflictions (ταῖς θλίψεσιν; v. 3). But these tribulations do not raise doubts about our peace with God. Rather, they serve to strengthen the perseverance and character of believers as we await the glory of God with renewed hope (vv. 2-4). This hope "is not put to shame because the love of God has been poured into and remains in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us" (v. 5).

In verses 6-11 Paul contrasts the "then" and the "now" of the believer. While we were still incurably sick sinners and enemies of God, "we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son" (v. 10).¹⁶ The fact that individual believers have received this reconciliation (ἐλάβομεν; v. 11) assures us that "we will be saved from the wrath" of God (σωθησόμεθα; vv. 9,10).

The argument in verses 12-21 begins to explain the previously alluded to interrelationship between sin, death,

¹⁵Here the subjunctive form, ἔχωμεν, "has far better external support than the indicative ἔχομεν" according to Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 511. Nevertheless, Metzger contends, "Only the indicative is consonant with the apostle's argument." He suggests that an error in dictation is the source of the variant.

¹⁶This is best understood in a subjective sense. Paul is talking to and about the experience of believers without saying anything in particular about the state of unbelievers.

and the Law in more detail (3:20; 4:15). One cannot deal with all of the exegetical issues here, but a number of statements are significant for Romans 7. It was sin that brought death into the world through the sin of the one man, Adam. Death then spread to all people ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον (v. 12).¹⁷ Paul has earlier held the whole world accountable to God because all have sinned (2:12-16; 3:19-20,23). In verse 18 he explicitly states another dimension: "Through one transgression there resulted condemnation for all men." Judgment comes upon all people as a result of Adam's transgression, as well as because of each person's own sin.

Paul explains that in the period before the Torah was given through Moses, "sin was in the world but sin is not accounted where there is no Law" (v. 13). In this context

¹⁷This is a difficult phrase. According to A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 833, the aorist tense is a striking example of the constative use. How the ἐφ' ᾧ should be interpreted is a matter of great debate. J. H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), 132, states that it almost certainly means "inasmuch as" and is not to be seen as a proof-text for Original Sin. Nigel Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), 116, contends that the phrase does not mean "because" since ᾧ is a relative pronoun referring back to Adam by whom sin entered the world. However, ᾧ is probably neuter and, therefore, not a reference specifically to Adam. Louis Brighton, in EN-420 "Romans," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, Fall, 1989, reads it as ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὅτι and translates, "on the basis of which." It seems to contain both the thought that Adam's sin led to the death of all and also that their own sin resulted in the same consequence. This is supported in the verses to follow.

ἐλλογέω (to "charge to someone's account")¹⁸ means that the sins committed between Adam and the giving of the Law at Sinai could not be charged against a person as a παράβασις of the revealed Law of God. The following verse makes this clear when Paul points out that the sins of those ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως (v. 14) were unlike Adam's sin. Since Adam knew the command of God (Gen. 2:16-17), his sin was a παράβασις of the Law.¹⁹ This does not, however, excuse those who lived in the era between Adam and Moses from condemnation (vv. 15,18). Rather, Paul places them in a situation analogous to that of the Gentiles who do not know the Torah (2:12-16). Even apart from the revealed Law, God's condemnation of all people of all times is just. This is proven by the fact that even when the Law was not yet present, death still reigned over all people because of sin (βασίλευω; v. 14).²⁰ Paul's

¹⁸ ἐλλογέω occurs in the New Testament only here and in Philemon 18; however it is comparable to the sense of λογιζομαι in Rom. 4:3,9,11,22; see BAGD, 252.

¹⁹ Gerd Theissen, Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology, tr. J. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 203, summarizes this as follows: "But if the law was lacking in the interim between Adam and Moses, then it follows that Adam's sin, in contrast to the sins of the lawless interim, was related to a 'law' or to something similar. In other words, if, first, people in the interim period between Adam and Moses did not sin like Adam and if, second, they sinned without the law, then the sin of Adam and the sin under the law must be comparable."

²⁰ Death reigned over those who sinned without the knowledge which was revealed to Adam and again made known through Moses in the Law. According to Robertson, 833, the aorist tense of βασίλευω is again constative, summing up a period of time. However, the aorist tense here and in general is "non-connective or neutral (not anti-connective): its occur-

point is that Adam is the father of all those who sin and all those who, therefore, die. His reference to the Law is not to excuse those who sinned without the Law, but to emphasize that the giving of the Law only served to enhance the reign of sin and death.²¹ Paul concludes the negative side of his argument by stating, "The Law entered in order to make transgression increase" (v. 20).

Yet Adam is also a *τύπος* of the one who was about to come (v. 14). Paul contrasts the tragic results of Adam's transgression with the gift of grace which has abounded to the many through Jesus Christ (v. 15). Through the instrumentality of Adam's transgression, condemnation and judgment fell upon all people²² and all were placed under the reign of death (vv. 14-16,18). But "how much more did the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound for the many" (v. 15). Those who receive "the gift

rence concentrates attention upon the act itself" according to James Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," in Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase, vol. 2, part 25.2 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 967. In contrast, *ibid.*, the present tense is "essentially connective: . . . it connects the verbal action to the person doing the thing."

²¹According to Andrew Bandstra, The Law and the Elements of the World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, n.d.), 134, "This situation is universally true of all men, but the Mosaic law accentuated that situation. The law holds all men accountable before God (3:10,21; 4:15); the special revelation of the Mosaic law to the Jews holds them all the more accountable (2:12ff.)."

²²For οἱ πολλοί as "all," see Joachim Jeremias, in TDNT, s.v. "πολλοί," 6:536-545. This is clearly indicated by the parallel in verse 12; see also 1 Cor. 15:22.

of righteousness will reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ" (v. 17).²³

Two observations emerge: 1) For Paul it is a matter of reigning (*βασιλεύω*). Either sin will reign, the end of which is death, or grace will rule through righteousness in Christ whose end is eternal life. 2) The major contrast in this chapter is between the "then" and the "now" of the Christian. Yet Paul has also indicated that there are elements which have yet to be removed from this present existence before the believer's reigning with Christ will be fully realized. Both of these aspects are present in the last verses of chapter 5:

But where²⁴ sin increased [through the Law!], grace increased all the more, in order that as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to the end of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (20b-21).

Romans 6

A rhetorical question prompts the discussion which begins chapter six (*τι οὖν*; 6:1). The Law entered in order to increase transgression, thereby causing sin to abound all the more. Yet this abounding sin was "over-abounded" by grace (*ὑπερπλονάζω*; 5:20). One might infer that our continuing

²³Note the future tense of *βασιλεύω* here and also the future of *καθίστημι* in verse 19b.

²⁴Robertson, 722, notes that the pronoun *οὗ* has no antecedent here. Nigel Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 344, suggests that it has the local sense of "where" as translated here.

to remain in sin would cause grace to abound still more. Paul responds to any such suggestion with *μὴ γένοιτο*.²⁵ "We who have died to sin, how can we still live in it?" (v. 2).²⁶

"We died to sin" by being baptized into Jesus Christ (v. 3)²⁷ whereby we were dead and buried into Christ's death.²⁸ The purpose of this was "so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk²⁹ in newness (*καινότητι*) of life" (v. 4b). *παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος*³⁰ was crucified together with Christ in order that *τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας*³¹ might be done away with (v. 6). Paul further explains what he means by referring to the de-

²⁵This is not quite as emphatic as *ἀνάθεμα* (Gal. 1:8-9), but the equivalent of something like "Of course not!" or "Heck, no!"; see BAGD, 158 [I3a] and 516[A,III,2]. Robertson, 940, points out that the negation of the optative of wish does strongly deprecate the thing suggested (as in 3:4).

²⁶Verse 2 implies an answer which is at first glance difficult to square with the picture to be presented in Romans 7:14-25.

²⁷Robertson, 592, states that *εἰς* is used here like *ἐν* with the notion of sphere.

²⁸Note the four aorist passives in verses 3-4. They signify that this event was a one-time completed action effected by God (divine passives).

²⁹The aorist tense of the subjunctive "concentrates attention upon the act itself"; see Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 967-68, and above, n. 20, pp. 76-77.

³⁰Since "sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin" (5:12) to term what is put to death here "the Old Adam" is indeed appropriate.

³¹Moulton, 38, states that the genitive *τῆς ἁμαρτίας* is one of definition, meaning "the sin-possessed body."

struction of "the body of sin."³² It entails that "we are no longer enslaved to sin" (v. 6).³³ Paul concludes, "For the one who has died has been and stands justified [or acquitted] from sin" (δεδικαιωται; v. 7).³⁴ But does this mean that the Christian no longer sins or that sin no longer has any effect upon the Christian?

Paul makes an interesting contrast in verses 5 and 8. Though our identification with the death of Christ is now complete and enduring (perfect tense of γεγωναμεν; v. 5), our complete likeness in regard to his resurrection is spoken of in the future tense (εσομεθα; v. 5). At the present time, the Christian believes (πιστευομεν) that we shall in the future live together with Christ (συζησομεν; v. 8). This does not detract from the fact that the believer now lives in Christ, but it acknowledges that our complete likeness in regard to his resurrection is not yet fulfilled. Since Jesus has already been raised from the dead, "death no longer

³²The infinitive is epexegetical which comprises both purpose and result. Robertson, 990, states that the force here is purpose. However, he, 1088, along with Moulton, 217, note that Paul does not generally use this construction to express purpose. Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 141, states that it is used as a weak consecutive.

³³Notice that Paul does *not* say that Christians no longer sin, but that they are no longer in slavery to it.

³⁴Here the Revised Standard Version, The New Oxford Annotated Bible, eds. H. May and B. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 1367, translates, "For he who has died is freed from sin." This is certainly not what Paul says. His sense is closer to "having been forgiven" or "acquitted"; see BAGD, 197[3a].

exercises lordship over him" (v. 9). Christians, on the other hand, are still subject to physical death.

Paul concludes this thought in verses 10-11. Christ has died to sin and, having risen from the dead, now lives to God. So we should consider ourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Paul does not simply state that we are free from death or sin. He rather points out that in view of our past death with Christ through Baptism we should *reckon ourselves* to be dead to sin and alive to God. Paul's use of λογίζομαι³⁵ indicates that if we examine our existence from a human point of view, we may not yet appear to be dead to sin or fully alive to God. But in the same manner in which God accounted the faith of "ungodly" Abraham as righteousness (4:3,5; Gen. 15:6), we can confidently reckon our death to sin and our life to God as real in spite of the possibility that present experience appears to contradict this. The certain promise of our future likeness with Christ in his resurrection guarantees it (5:5; 6:5).

This tension leads into a section of exhortation within which its paradoxical nature is exhibited even more clearly. "Do not continue to allow sin to rule (βασιλευέτω)³⁶ in your

³⁵ λογίζομαι is the same verb used to express that God counted Abraham righteous (Gen. 15:6 cited in Rom. 4:4; see BAGD, 476[b]). In 4:5 Paul concludes that "to the one who does not work but believes in the One who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

³⁶ Moulton, 139, stresses that a marked antithesis is present here, that of not continuing to allow sin to rule, but to now start yielding oneself to God. See also Turner,

mortal body (ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι)³⁷ so that you obey its desires" (ἐπιθυμίαις; 6:12).³⁸ In view of the preceding, this transition is very significant. Even though we Christians have died to sin and "our body of sin" has been done away with (vv. 2,6), ἐπιθυμίαι are still present in our "mortal bodies" and sin continues to pose a force which must constantly be battled. Paul urges his fellow Christians to avoid putting these desires into action. They are to fight against sin as it strives to "rule" once again. Verse 13 adds the positive side. Paul implores his readers to yield³⁹ their "members" to God. τὰ μέλη are introduced here and depicted as the "members" of a Christian which can either be used by sin as weapons or tools (ὄπλα) of unrighteousness or presented to God as tools of righteousness (see 7:23).

Paul's basis for his entire exhortation is given in verse 14: "Sin⁴⁰ will not be lord over you, for you are not

A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 76.

³⁷According to Robertson, 1097, θνητός means a body "liable to death."

³⁸The infinitive is expegetical explaining what allowing sin to rule entails.

³⁹For the verb tense, see above, n. 18, pp. 76-77.

⁴⁰Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 177, very significantly points out that ἁμαρτία here does not carry the idea of "no sin," but speaks of the power of sin to rule. See also F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, tr. and rev. by R. Funk (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 258[2]. This is implied in verses 18 and 22 as well.

under the Law⁴¹ but under grace." In this verse Paul gives us another glimpse into the relationship between sin and the Law.⁴² He implies that there are two powers under which the Christian once lived and under whose domination he might again fall. However, the contrast Paul sets up is not between grace and sin but stated in terms of grace and the Law. Paul thereby equates being "under the Law" with remaining under the lordship of Master Sin!

The hypothetical question of verse 15 is posed in reaction to this and introduces a topic ($\tau\iota\ \omicron\upsilon\nu$) which dominates the discussion until the end of the chapter. The hypothetical questioner of 6:1 wanted to continue in sin since that would lead grace to abound all the more. Now in verse 15 it is suggested,⁴³ "Let us sin because we are not under the Law but under grace." Paul, as in 6:2, sharply responds, " $\mu\eta\ \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$!" He then presents an either/or scenario which is applied to the life of the believer before and after faith.⁴⁴ The contrast between the "then" and the "now" is stated in terms of two kinds of slavery. The person is either a slave

⁴¹As Robertson states, 796, the anarthrous $\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\upsilon$ refers to the Mosaic Law here as in 2:13,17.

⁴²Most commentators identify this as the thought to which Paul returns in 7:1; see below, n. 63, p. 89.

⁴³The $\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\theta\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu$ of 6:1 is implied also here; see Blass and Debrunner, 299[3]; also 7:7.

⁴⁴For example, according to Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 334, the disjunctive particles $\eta\tau\omicron\iota$ and η in verse 16 denote a correlation and here mean "either . . . or."

of sin which leads to death (vv. 16,17, 18,20,22) or to obedience which leads to righteousness (vv.16,18, 22). In essence Paul declares,

You Christians were formerly slaves of sin⁴⁵ who presented your members (μέλη) as slaves⁴⁶ to impurity and into more and more lawlessness (vv. 17,19). The fruit of such a life was things of which⁴⁷ you believers are now ashamed and whose end you now recognize was death (v. 21).

Paul contrasts this with what happened when "you obeyed⁴⁸ from the heart the form of teaching to which you were delivered" (v. 17).⁴⁹ What occurred then is a switch from one slavery to another. "Having been freed from [slavery to] sin,⁵⁰ you were enslaved to righteousness" (v. 18; also v. 22).⁵¹ The result of this "slavery to God" is that Christians

⁴⁵The imperfect tense of ἦτε indicates durative action in past time and stands in sharp contrast to the present; see Blass and Debrunner, 327.

⁴⁶According to Moulton, 97, δοῦλα in verse 19 appears as an adjectival form of δοῦλος in the neuter plural.

⁴⁷According to Robert Hanna, A Grammatical Aid to the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 268, ἐφ' οἷς in verse 21 is the only use of ἐπι and the dative with this verb in the New Testament. Moulton, 132, suggests the meaning "at which things."

⁴⁸BAGD, 837, notes that ὑπακούω followed by the dative indicates "the thing . . . which one embraces in full surrender" (see 10:16). Although the verb is followed by εἰς and the accusative here, this sense is appropriate.

⁴⁹For the order of the sentence, see Robertson, 719; Blass and Debrunner, 294[5].

⁵⁰The "slavery to" sin is clearly implied in both verses 18 and 22; see above, n. 40, p. 82.

⁵¹The dative τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ is difficult. Moulton, 46, suggests the meaning of "with regard to." Hanna, 268, agrees that it is likely a dative of reference. Turner, A Grammar

have fruit which is directed toward sanctification and ends with the goal of eternal life (v. 22). Verse 23 succinctly sets forth this contrast in a summarizing statement: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 7

Werner Kümmel, along with many other scholars, contends that Paul's main purpose in Romans 7 is to defend the Law.⁵² Since Paul's over-arching topic of concern throughout Romans of New Testament Greek, 238, suggests a dative of advantage; Robertson, 253, a locative dative.

⁵²"Die Apologie des Gesetzes" according to Kümmel, Römer 7, 56; see also 9,10,11. He concludes that this is especially the case after verse 7, but senses a somewhat altered focus beginning in verse 18. In regard to the general view, see also, for example, J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 83,105; Rudolf Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," chap. in The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, tr. K. Crim (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967), 41; James Dunn, Romans 1-8, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a, eds. R. Martin, D. Hubbard, and G. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 377; Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," Harvard Theological Review 56 (1963):211-12. Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, tr. and ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 192, considers this "a common German view" and he further proposes, 195, that these verses attempt to distinguish the intention and the function of the Law. Yet, in a manner somewhat similar to Kümmel, Käsemann contends that after 14a, "the Torah recedes completely into the background." He concludes, *ibid.*, 192, that "the effectiveness of sin is more strongly emphasized" in the remainder chapter 7.

Reflecting a slightly different interpretation, Barclay Newman, "Once Again - The Question of 'I' in Romans 7:7-25," The Bible Translator 34 (1983):133, goes on to state that Paul's "*primary goal in the chapter is that of defining the role of the Law in the history of salvation.*" On this approach, see also Ethelbert Stauffer, in TDNT, s.v. "ἐγώ," 2:358-62.

5-8 is the Christian life,⁵³ Anders Nygren more specifically concludes that chapter 7 discusses the "*Christian's freedom from the law.*"⁵⁴ It would appear then that Romans 7 focuses our attention upon the Law and its function(s), possibly both before and also within the Christian life.

The significance of Romans 7 for Pauline theology cannot be over-exaggerated.⁵⁵ For "when the issue is freedom from the law, Paul's doctrine of justification is under debate at

⁵³ Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 287-88, concludes that on the question of the nature of the Christian life, Paul's "answer is fourfold: it means to be free from Wrath, Sin, the Law, and Death." A further distinction has been pointed out by Nils A. Dahl, "Two Notes on Romans 5," Studia Theologica 5 (1951):40, points out that chapters 5 and 8 speak of the final eschatological deliverance from wrath and death, while chapters 6-7 deal with the present forces of sin and the Law. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 260, affirms that 7:7-25 speaks of the same condition as both 6:1-7:6 and chapter 8, but from a different aspect. See also John Espy, "Paul's 'Robust Conscience' Re-examined," New Testament Studies 31 (1985):169,181.

⁵⁴ Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 288. Cranfield, 1:28, similarly points out that chapters 5 and 6 describe "A life characterized by peace with God" and "by sanctification." Ibid., 1:330, introduces chapter 7 as follows: "The life promised for the man who is righteous by faith is, in the third place, described as a life characterized by freedom from the law, that is, from the law in the limited sense of the-law-as-condemning or the law's condemnation." Similarly also Günther Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," in Early Christian Experience, The New Testament Library, 87-104, tr. P. Hammer (London: SCM Press, 1969), 87-88.

⁵⁵ See, for example, James Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," Theologische Zeitschrift 31 (1975):257, who believes that "dispute about a tense, a phrase, a half-verse in Rom. 7 means in fact dispute about the whole character of Paul's gospel."

its most offensive point."⁵⁶ As a result, while Paul strives to defend the Law in this chapter, he also "brings out the essential point that the law . . . has no saving power."⁵⁷

However, even if there was general agreement concerning these points, controversy continues to surround the fact that in Romans 7 Paul employs "a form of words that inevitably arouses interest about the deeper background of his thought."⁵⁸ The specific "form of words" which has been the focus of so much attention is Paul's use of the first person singular.⁵⁹ How this "I" is to be identified remains a matter of great dispute. A full discussion of this issue will be reserved for the third and fourth chapters of this

⁵⁶ Käsemann, 210; Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 266, agrees that within chapters 5-8, the topic of chapter 7 represents "the most important and hardest point."

⁵⁷ R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Commentaries on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 450; he also concludes that Paul shows that the Law cannot be relied upon "as a producer of good works." See below on 8:3, pp. 204-7.

⁵⁸ Douglas Milne, "Romans 7:7-12, Paul's Pre-Conversion Experience," The Reformed Theological Review 43 (1984):9. Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 269, properly keeps both of these in focus in stating that other "questions" which have arisen concerning this chapter "are not unimportant, but we should be clear that it is the place of the law that Paul is discussing. . . . The 'I' . . . is only of secondary interest."

⁵⁹ The first person singular occurs in a verb form or as a pronoun 48 times in verses 7-25. In contrast, there are two references to the first person plural (vv. 7,14), one in the second person singular (the commandment of v. 7), and none in the second person plural in those same verses. The emphatic ἐγώ occurs first in verse 9 and is used 7 or 8 times through verse 25, depending on the variant in v. 20a.

thesis.

The language and structure of the first six verses of Romans 7 closely parallel the discussion regarding the Christian's relationship to sin and death in chapter 6.⁶⁰ For example,

<u>Chapter 6</u>	<u>Chapter 7</u>
ἡ ἁμαρτία (v. 1)	ὁ νόμος (v. 1)
ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ (v. 2)	ἐθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ (v. 4)
ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπα- τήσωμεν (v. 4)	ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος δουλεύειν (v. 6)
Χριστὸς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν (v. 9)	τῷ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι (v. 4)
ὁ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (v. 7)	κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα (v. 6)
ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (v. 18)	ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (v. 3)

While 6:1-11 had stressed the Christian's discontinuity with the present age of sin and death, the exhortation of 6:12-23

⁶⁰Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 268; see also the similarities noted by Franz Leenhardt, The Epistle to the Romans, tr. H. Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 177; Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Römer, Kritischer-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 13th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966), 166; Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 270; Barclay Newman and Eugene Nida, A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans, Helps for Translators, vol. 14 (London: United Bible Societies, 1973), 127; Theissen, 181. As a result, it is improper for Käsemann, 187, to conclude that verses 1-6 "do not refer back to ch. 6. . . . They represent a fresh start."

emphasized the believer's continuing existence within it.⁶¹ In view of the above parallels, one would expect the same pattern to begin again in Romans 7.⁶²

A number of previous passages have provoked the discussion in chapter 7, but Paul returns most directly to his statement in 6:14⁶³ as he begins: "Or are you ignorant, brothers, for I am speaking to [ones] knowing the Law, that the Law exercises lordship over a man as long as he lives?" (v. 1). For the first time since 1:13, Paul addresses his hearers as ἀδελφοί (also v. 4).⁶⁴ He further identifies them as "those who know the Law" (γινώσκουσιν νόμον). This

⁶¹Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 269, states, "The same categories are used, being simply applied to a different matter." Kümmel, Römer 7, 11, agrees that the partly indicative, partly imperative structure is maintained.

⁶²One could see the exhortation of 6:12-23 as beginning to be paralleled in 8:5 or 12. But does 7:14-25 depict the believer's continuing existence? See chapter four.

⁶³"For sin will not exercise lordship over you, for you are not ὑπὸ νόμου, but under grace" (6:14). John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1959 and 1965), 1:239, proposes that an elaboration of 6:14 is necessary since there is "at that point no expansion or validation." Others who support a link with 6:14 include Henry Alford, The Greek New Testament, 4 vols., 5th ed. (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1865), 2:374; Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 135; William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 171, who contend it is "the text of this section." Leenhardt, 183, counters that chapter 7 "is incompatible with" 6:14! Newman and Nida, 127, and Kasemann, 187, stress a more immediate link with 6:23.

⁶⁴As Newman and Nida, 127, point out, this is "not without significance." The intimate form of address may emphasize the sensitivity of the subject now being addressed.

phrase is not "in any way restrictive," but includes all of the letter's recipients.⁶⁵ While Paul had previously treated the lordship of sin and death,⁶⁶ he now adds, "ὁ νόμος κυριεύει."⁶⁷ He has also alluded to a connection between the Law, sin, and death (for example, 3:20; 4:15; 5:13,20), and he now turns to spell out the relationship which exists between them.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Murray, 1:240, states, "All are credited with this knowledge. . . . Gentiles as well as Jews in the church at Rome could be credited with the knowledge of the Old Testament." According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 359, this passage, along with the illustration to follow, which "presupposes the legislative position of Judaism," indicates that Paul assumes a familiarity with the Old Testament on the part of his readers. This "strengthens the likelihood that the bulk of the gentile converts had previously been adherents to the Jewish synagogues." See also Lenski, 442.

This expression does not imply with Alan Segal, "Romans 7 and Jewish Dietary Law," Studies in Religion 15 (1986): 362, that "Paul addresses himself primarily to the Jewish Christians"; neither does it mean with Leenhardt, 177, that these Romans "were eminent jurists."

⁶⁶See especially 5:14,17,21; 6:6,9,12,14,16,22.

⁶⁷Dunn, Romans 1-8, 358, describes the law as "the third member of the fearful triumvirate which strengthens the lordship of the other two." He suggests, 367, that in the previous two chapters Paul had developed the "sin/grace, death/life antitheses as far as possible without reference to the law . . . [or] with as little reference to the law as possible."

⁶⁸John A. T. Robinson, Wrestling with Romans (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 80, concludes that Paul "can postpone a thorough reckoning with the law and its status no longer." See also Kümmel, Römer 7, 7-8,36; and Beker, Paul the Apostle, 83, who contends that these previous references "compel Paul to a fuller discussion. And yet that discussion cannot occur until 5:12-21 and 6:1-15 have laid the foundations. Thus Rom. 7:1-25 functions as a necessary excursus." However, the tension between these passages does not present a "confused" approach to the Law as Dunn, Romans 1-8, 367, suggests; see also below, pp. 139-40.

Paul proceeds by presenting this illustration: "For example,⁶⁹ a married woman⁷⁰ has been and remains bound by the Law to the living husband. But if the husband dies, she is completely absolved from the Law of the husband.⁷¹ So then, as long as the husband is living, she would be called⁷² an adulteress⁷³ if she marries another man.⁷⁴ But if the

⁶⁹Newman and Nida, 128; Robertson, 1190, states that γάρ here introduces an explanation as an appendix to the train of thought; so also Lenski, 443.

⁷⁰Literally, "a woman under a man." According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 360, Paul use of ὑπανδρος supports a link with Old Testament Law. It occurs six times in the Septuagint (Num. 5:20,29; Prov. 6:24,29; Sir. 9:9; 41:21), but rarely elsewhere.

⁷¹The genitive τοῦ ἀνδρός is an objective genitive according to Robertson, 500. For Dunn, Romans 1-8, 360, it denotes the Law which binds the woman to her husband or "the law which gives the husband such authority over his wife." See also Cranfield, 1:333; Michel, 165. It does not mean that the Law "becomes a dead letter," as Sanday and Headlam, 171, contend, but, rather, that this law is no longer applicable to the woman.

⁷²For the interesting development of χρηματίζω from its original meaning of "transacting business," see Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 272, note 11. Here it has the sense of "bear a name, be called or name" as in Acts 11:26; see BAGD, 885[2].

⁷³According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 360, μοιχαλις does not occur outside of Jewish or Christian sources prior to this time. However, it is used in the Septuagint (Prov. 18:22a; 24:55; Ez. 16:38; 23:45; Hos. 3:1; Mal. 3:5) and elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt. 12:39; 16:4; James 4:4) with a "strong note of shame and guilt."

⁷⁴Literally, "becomes to another man." γινομαι followed by the dative expresses the idea of belonging to someone. The expression γίνεσθαι ἀνδρὶ is drawn from the Hebrew וְיָבִיט לְאִתּוֹ and into Greek through the Septuagint (for example, Numb. 36:11; Deut. 24:2; Ruth 1:12-13; Hos. 3:3). Paul's wording here is similar to Deut. 24:2.

Newman and Nida, 129, point out that "in light of what

husband dies, she is free from the Law, so that she would not be an adulteress if she marries another man"⁷⁵ (vv. 2-3).

Legal pronouncements similar to those present here could certainly have been drawn from other systems of law or even "the idea of law in general."⁷⁶ Yet Paul's authoritative source is clearly the Mosaic Torah.⁷⁷ Particularly in contrast

Paul is going to say in verse 4, it is important that he brings in the idea of another man in verse 3."

⁷⁵For the latter expression, see n. 74, pp. 91-92.

⁷⁶Newman and Nida, 128; Käsemann, 187, similarly refers to "the legal order." Sanday and Headlam, 172, attribute this to law in general since what follows is based upon "an obvious axiom of political justice -- that death clears all scores."

Lenski, 441,444,451, follows this interpretation and attempts to support it by pointing to a distinction between Paul's use of νόμος with and without the article, the former denoting the Torah. Whether a distinction between the arthrous and the anarthrous use can or should be made has been debated. Questions mainly center on whether νόμος, without the article as in 7:2, can refer to the Mosaic Law. Following Origen, Sanday and Headlam, 58, set up general categories where νόμος with the article conveys the Law of Moses or a Law familiar to the readers, and the anarthrous use specifies "law in general." Yet they admit many difficulties. It is not possible to establish and maintain any such distinction. The foundational study here is Eduard Grafe, Die paulinische Lehre vom Gesetz nach den vier Hauptbriefen (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1884), see especially 5-8. See also Kümmel, Römer 7, 55, who concludes that in this context νόμος with or without the article means the same thing, "namely the Mosaic Law." BAGD, 542, defines νόμος "especially as the Law of Moses" and includes the meaning of "νόμος without the article in the same sense" (citing Rom. 2:13a,b,17,25a; 3:31a,b; 5:13,20; 7:1a; also Gal. 2:19b; 5:23). W. Gutbrod, in TDNT, s.v. "νόμος," 4:1074, states, "It is certainly not true that νόμος is 'a' law as distinct from ὁ νόμος, 'the' Law."

⁷⁷So C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Black's New Testament commentaries (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962), 135-36; Leenhardt, 177; Cranfield,

to Roman law, the Old Testament Law provided the right of divorce only to the husband (Deut. 24:1-4) and freed the wife immediately at her husband's death.⁷⁸

The propriety of Paul's analogy has been much assailed.⁷⁹ However, the negative critiques largely stem from

1:332-33. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 138, points out that in light of what follows in chapter 7, this is not an "immaterial" point. However, the Torah should not be understood as totally contradictory to other systems of law since, as Newman and Nida, 128, point out, "For Paul the Mosaic Law represents a specific expression of what is right for human conduct in general (2:12-16)."

⁷⁸According to Roman law, either partner could end the marriage. In addition, when a husband died, the wife was obligated to mourn and remain unmarried for 12 months or forfeit anything which was supposed to come to her from her deceased husband. See P. E. Corbett, The Roman Law of Marriage (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930, reprint 1969), 249, as cited by Dunn, Romans 1-8, 359-60; see also Barrett, 135-36.

⁷⁹Joyce Little, "Paul's Use of Analogy: A Structural Analysis of Romans 7:1-6," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 46 (1984):87, concludes that "viewed as analogy or allegory, this section, if not a failure, certainly limps very badly." The most extreme criticism comes from Dodd, 120, who wonders how it can be that "the whole story is an example of the working of the Law, and, at the same time, 'Law' is a character in the story!" He concludes, 119-20, that Paul's illustration "is confused from the outset . . . [and] goes hopelessly astray. . . . We do best to ignore the illustration, as far as may be, and ask what it is that Paul is really talking about." He later adds, 121, Paul "lacks the gift for sustained illustration of ideas through concrete images (though he is capable of a brief, illuminating metaphor). It is probably a defect of imagination. We cannot help contrasting his laboured and blundering allegories with the masterly parables of Jesus." Somewhat more mildly, Newman and Nida, 129, state, "Paul's analogy . . . is not perfect." Murray, 1:242-43, attempts to explain Paul's intention in allowing the apparent discrepancies.

attempts at an allegorical interpretation.⁸⁰ "But all these difficulties fall away as soon as one gives up the thought of an allegorical connection between 7:2-3 and 7:4."⁸¹ Since "there is nothing in the text to suggest allegorical intent,"⁸² it is more proper to understand these verses as something of

⁸⁰For a complete survey, see Kümmel, Römer 7, 39-40; Little, 86; J. C. O'Neill, Paul's Letter to the Romans (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1975), 120-24. Origen, Chrysostom, Erasmus, Grotius and Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 137, for example, understand the wife as representative of the church or all believers who have died to the Law, represented by the husband. Alford, 2:374, points out that this would introduce the question of the abrogation of the law in the death of the husband. Yet Paul does not say that the Law has died in verse 4 but, rather, the Christian. Charles Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, new rev. ed. (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1906), 335, believes that "the apostle, out of respect probably to the feelings of his readers, avoids saying the law is dead." Indeed, such an assertion would have been a shocking for former Jews and proselytes to hear; Kümmel, Römer 7, 39-40. Yet Paul has already explicitly denied that the righteousness of faith in any way abrogates the Law (3:31).

For Augustine, the wife is symbolic of the soul and the husband the corrupt nature. Sanday and Headlam, 172, view the wife as symbolic of the true self and the husband as the old state before conversion. O'Neill, 103, regards the wife as the believer and the husband as the body. Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, 6th ed., tr. E. Hoskyns (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), 232-33, sees the husband as standing for the Christian's old self (6:6).

Little, 87, concludes that the allegorical approach is "unsatisfactory" and Kümmel, Römer 7, 40, terms it a "guessing game" ("Ratespiel"). Newman and Nida go about as far as is possible with an allegorical view in stating, 130, Paul "has compared the believer to a married woman."

⁸¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 41, "Aber alle diese Schwierigkeiten fallen, sobald man den Gedanken an die allegorische Beziehung von 7, 2.3 und 7, 4 aufgibt."

⁸²Murray, 1:240; Käsemann, 187, similarly concludes, "There is not the slightest basis for the common practice . . . of allegorically importing the subject matter of vv. 4-6 already here." So also Lenski, 445.

an illustration or parable with one tertium comparationis.⁸³

In this way, Paul's point is readily understood: "The occurrence of a death effects a decisive change in respect of relationship to the law."⁸⁴

The application Paul makes from his statement in verse 1, as illustrated in verses 2-3, is this: "So,⁸⁵ my brothers,

⁸³Lenski, 444, 447, uses this term and concludes, 447, that the illustration is "perfectly chosen." Käsemann, 187 words it this way: "The only point of comparison is that death dissolves obligations valid throughout life." So also Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 270, "Paul is affirming *only one thing*, just what verse 1 says."

⁸⁴Cranfield, 1:334-35. He believes, 1:335, that "this is confirmed by the fact that verse 4 is introduced by ὥστε." Dunn, Romans 1-8, 369, observes that "the illustration is not one of the believer's transition from one state to another, but of the basic principle that death liberates from the law." Alford, 2:375, similarly concludes "that the Apostle is insisting on the fact, that DEATH DISSOLVES LEGAL OBLIGATION: but he is not drawing an exact parallel." See also Kümmel, Römer 7, 39. Dodd, 101, apparently agrees with this, though he evaluates it as a "bare fact."

Little, 87, counters that this interpretation "is unsatisfactory because it concludes that the analogy is simply a restatement of v. 1." But Paul may have wished to do just that by way of illustration. As Dunn, Romans 1-8, 369, points out, Paul is conscious "that the reality is much more complex."

While this is Paul's main point, there may be more here. Little's goal, 90, is to study the "underlying structure" in order to draw out "the full use Paul has made of these verses." In a manner comparable to that in 6:3-11, she convincingly argues that Paul here engages in a complex analogy which adds a new element in each section, whereby, 87, "each element in the pattern becomes the stepping-stone to a new element." Little concludes, 90, that Paul here employs a "threefold use of analogy": 1) The Law served a necessary role before Christ, 2) death can change one's relationship with the Law, and 3) the Christian's death takes place for a specific purpose.

⁸⁵ὥστε introduces an independent sentence here rather than a subordinate clause; Blass and Debrunner, 391; BAGD, 899[1a]. Newman and Nida, 129, suggest the translation, "That is the way it is with you, my brothers."

you were also made to die⁸⁶ to the Law through the body of Christ, so as to⁸⁷ belong to another,⁸⁸ to the one who has been raised from the dead, so that we might bear fruit for God⁸⁹" (v. 4). To those who had been under the lordship of the Law which confirmed and sealed their bondage to sin,⁹⁰ Paul states, "ὁμοίως ἐθανατώθητε."⁹¹ He asserts that just as

⁸⁶ θανατώω, "to put to death," is stronger than ἀποθνήσκω, the more common Pauline word for "to die"; see Dunn, Romans 1-8, 361.

⁸⁷ εἰς τὸ with the infinitive expresses both the purpose and the result of the Christian's death. Robertson, 1071, identifies the purpose aspect; Lenski, 449, the actual result.

⁸⁸ The metaphor for marriage used in the illustration in verse 3 occurs here; see above, n. 74, pp. 91-92. Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 273, points out that these words "take on a certain coloring from the illustration." Indeed, they convey the idea of an intimate relationship (1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 5:25-33). According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 368-89, Paul "does not let the illustration [of marriage] go completely. . . . However, it is not necessary to push for further points of contact."

⁸⁹ Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 274, states, "As long as man stands under the law, there is no 'fruit for God.'" The phrase expresses purpose; see Lenski, 450. According to Robertson, 539, τῷ θεῷ is used as a dative of advantage. While this phrase can be read in light of the earlier reference to marriage, it must not be pressed to the point of literally bearing children for God as by Barrett, 137; see also Matthew Black, Romans, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1973), 100. In view of the use of καρποφορέω in verse 5 the dative of θάνατος, the sense here is similar to that of δουλεύειν in verse 6. Newman and Nida conclude, 130, that the idea is more "simply living a life that is useful to God"; so Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 138; Cranfield, 1:336; Lenski, 449-50; Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 273.

⁹⁰ Murray, 1:243; Cranfield, 1:330.

⁹¹ The aorist passive tense of θανατώω emphasizes that the past death of the Christian is God's doing and not an act of the natural course of nature. Both "our passivity and the effectiveness of the action are clearly indicated"; Murray,

"there is a death which liberates from the lordship of sin (6:9-10,18); so there is a death which liberates from the lordship of the law."⁹² In light of 6:2-11, the manner in which Paul draws this conclusion points "unmistakably" to Baptism⁹³ where the Christian has been made to die "διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ" (7:4; see 6:3-4a).⁹⁴

1:243. Here θανατώω must be interpreted in light of being crucified and buried with Christ in 6:2-4; see also 8:13; Cranfield, 1:336; Lenski, 448-49. The "putting to death" of Christ on the cross is certainly in the background; see Alford, 375; Murray, 1:243; Gal. 2:19-20. Sanday and Headlam, 172, contend that this phrase is determinative for one's interpretation of this entire section.

⁹²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 368; Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 271, "a death has intervened"; see also 6:11,22; Gal. 2:19-20. Newman and Nida, 129, conclude that the use of νόμος in this verse is "ambiguous." Surely Paul refers to the Law of God revealed in the Torah.

⁹³Käsemann, 188; he cites "the aorist tense and the total context" as evidence for the fact that in Baptism, 189, "incorporation into the rule of Christ and total separation from the law coincide." Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 274, agrees citing chapter 6 and 1 Cor. 12:23; also Kümmel, Römer 7, 37.

⁹⁴Dodd, 120; and John A. T. Robinson, The Body, (London: SCM Press, 1952; reprint Bristol, IN: Wyndam Hall Press, The Graduate Theological Foundation, 1988), 47, make reference to one's incorporation into the Church in interpreting this phrase. Ulrich Wilckens, Der Brief and die Römer, Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar, 3 vols. (Cologne: Benziger and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978-82), 2:65, cites 1 Cor. 10:16 as evidence for a Eucharistic connection. However, it seems best to regard this entire phrase with Dunn, Romans 1-8, 369, as a reference "to the exposition two or three paragraphs earlier (6:3-6). 'The body of Christ' is clearly Christ in his bodily crucifixion" into which we are baptized. Compare Col. 1:22; see also Heb. 10:5,10; 1 Pet. 2:24; Käsemann, 189; Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 273; Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 274.

Dunn, Romans 1-8, 369, points out that here, as in 6:4, "there is no reference to the believer as having already risen with Christ" (but see Eph. 2:1-6; Col. 3:1-3). He concludes, 369-70, that believers are "suspended. . . . Union

What does the resulting freedom from the Law entail? Certainly not the abrogation of the Law (3:31).⁹⁵ Paul does not say the Law has died, rather, the Christian has.⁹⁶ As a result, the Christian is free from the Law's dominion and from the curse which it pronounces upon those who fail to fulfill its demands.⁹⁷ Furthermore, this freedom is directed toward a positive end, service to God (as in 6:22; 7:6).⁹⁸

The interrelationship between the first four verses of

with Christ does not extend to full participation in his resurrection. . . . The harsh reality of their present state is that the rule of death is not yet fully broken. . . . The principle remains firm: Christ's death liberates the believer from sin and law insofar as he is one with Christ in his death -- but only insofar as." While Dunn has a handle on the "not yet" aspect of the Christian life, he fails to take full cognizance of Paul's statements elsewhere regarding the present impact of the Gospel (see below, pp. 347-49). Paul certainly does not view the believer as "suspended."

⁹⁵Käsemann, 189, states, "What is done away with is not just the curse of the law. It is the Torah itself." Though he later qualifies, 190, "The Christian's freedom from the power of the Torah is proclaimed." Kümmel, Römer 7, 7, similarly asserts that the Law possesses only a "temporary condition" ("zeitliche Bedingtheit") which is, 8, now "disposed" ("abgetanen"). As 3:31 and the remainder of this chapter testify, Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 272, properly contends, "To Paul there can be no thought of the law dying."

⁹⁶Espy, 168; he further contends that this point was left incomplete by Paul deliberately in his earlier analogy. He suggests that the husband in verses 2-3 is sin which will only die at the end of the world when "the Christian will be wholly free from it and from its Law."

⁹⁷See v. 6b; Gal. 3:10; see also John Calvin, Commentary upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, tr. C. Rosdell, ed. H. Beveridge (Edinburgh, The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 170; Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 272. Dunn Romans 1-8, 362, similarly states that it is freedom from "the law as wielding authority and domination."

⁹⁸Murray, 1:243.

the chapter is clear:

The steps of the proof are these: *The law binds a man only so long as he lives* (ver. 1): -- e.g. a married woman is only bound to her husband so long as he lives (vv. 2, 3): -- so also the Christian *being dead* with Christ and alive to Him *is freed from the law* (ver. 4).⁹⁹

Verses 5 and 6, respectively, proceed to contrast the "then" and the "now" of the believer in light of verse 4 (compare 6:17-22).¹⁰⁰ "For when we¹⁰¹ were in the sphere of the flesh, the passions of sins¹⁰² which were through the Law were operating¹⁰³ in our members so as to bear fruit to death¹⁰⁴" (v. 5). Before we Christians were put to death to

⁹⁹Alford, 2:374; similarly Kümmel, Römer 7, 41.

¹⁰⁰Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 275; Kümmel, Römer 7, 8; Käsemann, 191, summarizes, "Only after dominion of the Spirit . . . is the dominion of the law broken and vanquished."

¹⁰¹According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 370, the switch to the first person plural indicates that "Paul cannot distance himself . . . it is too much an existential reality for him as well." He further contends, *ibid.*, 361, that those who too readily assume "muddle and confusion" here are "unfair to Paul." Paul often alternates between the first and second persons plural (for example, 6:14-16; 8:11-16; 13:11-14).

¹⁰²Either a genitive of quality ("sinful passions"), content ("passions which are sins"), or an objective genitive indicating direction ("which lead to sins"); see Blass-Debrunner, 166-67; Lenski, 452, takes it as apposition.

¹⁰³ἐνεργέω in the middle always has an impersonal subject according to BAGD, 265[1b], and here has the sense of "operated" or "were active." Note the durative imperfect. See 2 Cor. 1:6; 4:12; Gal. 5:6; Eph. 3:20; Col. 1:29; 1 Thess. 2:24; 2 Thess. 2:7; also Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament, 112; Cranfield, 1:336.

¹⁰⁴Dunn, Romans 1-8, 365, notes how θάνατος serves as both the power ruling over man, as well as the fruit of existence "in the flesh." The εἰς clause expresses both purpose and result; see Newman and Nida, 131, for the purpose aspect.

the Law, we were "in the flesh." It is crucial to allow the context to determine exactly what Paul means by ἐν τῇ σαρκί since he uses σὰρξ a number of times in this chapter and employs it "in a variety of ways" in his letters.¹⁰⁵

In the Septuagint σὰρξ normally translates בָּשָׂר and denotes "the difference between the creating God and the creature."¹⁰⁶ As a result, Paul can use σαρκί in a somewhat neutral manner in order to describe the believer's life in this world¹⁰⁷ and even Jesus' "fleshly" existence.¹⁰⁸ However,

¹⁰⁵Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 274; he summarizes that Paul uses this word 91 times to "refer to the soft constituent of the human body (1 Cor. 15:50), and thus to a human being (1 Cor. 1:29). It may mean human nature (Rom. 9:5), or this earthly life (Phil. 1:24), or human attainment (Phil. 3:3), from which it is not a long step to outward appearance (1 Cor. 1:26). But this body of flesh is weak (Rom. 6:19), and the thought of physical weakness leads on to that of moral weakness. It has this meaning here and very often in Paul."

Thus depending on what σαρκί is associated with in the context, its sense ranges from the merely physical (2 Cor. 4:11; Gal. 4:14; Col. 2:1), to human weakness (7:18; 8:3), to open opposition to God (8:8,9; Philemon 16) It is not, therefore, always "unqualifiedly evil" as Murray, 1:245, suggests or, with Herman Ridderbos, Paul, tr. J. De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 103, a "description of sin itself." Murray, 1:244,259, attempts to make a distinction between a "moral" and "physical" sense.

¹⁰⁶Käsemann, 188. See Friedrich Baumgärtel, Eduard Schweizer, and Rudolf Mayer, in TDNT, s.v. "σὰρξ," 7:98-151, especially 135. Baumgärtel, 108, notes that σὰρξ translates בָּשָׂר 145 times in the Septuagint, nearly twice as often as any other word. Schweizer summarizes, 123, that in the Old Testament "man is seen from the very first in his relation to God. As creature of God he is flesh."

¹⁰⁷According to Schweizer, 7:125-126, it denotes the physical body or life in the earthly sphere. See, for example, 9:3; 2 Cor. 10:3; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:29; 6:5; Phil. 1:22; Col. 2:1,5; see also Kümmel, Römer 7, 42.

in 7:5 Paul clearly employs the phrase ἐν τῇ σαρκί to describe the Christian's past.¹⁰⁹ ἐν τῇ σαρκί here characterizes the time "when we were altogether under the domination of the flesh,"¹¹⁰ when it was our "determining condition."¹¹¹ At that time the παθήματα τῶν αμαρτιῶν were active in our μέλη

¹⁰⁸Rom. 1:3; 9:5; Eph. 2:15; Col. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:16.

¹⁰⁹Murray, 1:244, points out that except for the possible exception of 6:19, "this is the first occurrence in this epistle in which the word 'flesh' is used in its full depreciatory ethical sense," as in 8:4,5,6,7,8,9,12,13; 13:14. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 138, translates the phrase, "when we were unregenerate." However, Dunn, Romans 1-8, 363, warns that ἐν τῇ σαρκί "should not be regarded as a fixed designation of the preconversion state."

¹¹⁰Cranfield, 1:337, who defines this phrase as "having the basic direction of [our] lives determined and controlled by [our] fallen nature." He cites parallels in 8:4,5,12,13, and stresses that even for Christians "σάρξ in the sense of fallen human nature is still an element -- and a far from powerless element -- in their lives (cf., e.g., 7:14,18,25)." According to Käsemann, 189, ἐν τῇ σαρκί in 7:5 "plainly means the nature of the old aeon and is thus identical with what is usually called κατὰ σάρκα"; on the latter phrase, see Schweizer, 7:130-31. Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 274, offers the translation "we were characterized by fleshly desires and outlook." Werner Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1948; reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 193, proposes, "σάρξ denotes the person who allows himself to be determined by his own existence in the world" ("σάρξ bezeichnet also den Menschen, der sich von seinem Sein in der Welt her bestimmen lässt"). Robinson, The Body, 92, similarly contends that σάρξ is not evil in and of itself for Paul, but is susceptible to weakness and denotes man in his mortality. These last two appraisals are too weak compared with Paul's picture of the total and fearful enslavement of the flesh to sin and death (7:4-5; 8:15).

¹¹¹Wilckens, 2:70, uses "Machtphäre." Dunn, Romans 1-8, 364, points out that σάρξ is not personified as a power like sin and death; "Paul never says ὑπὸ σάρκα."

which were exploited for the purpose of evil.¹¹²

The phrase *διὰ τοῦ νόμου* indicates that the Law had an integral connection with the passions of sins and a life lived in the flesh. Such a statement would have shocked those Jews who viewed their performance of *ἔργα τοῦ νόμου* as grounds for boasting (2:17,23; 3:27-28; 9:30-10:5). In contrast to that view of the Law's purpose and function, Paul has already noted that the Law is an active agent in the service of sin and death (2:12; 3:20; 4:15; 5:13,20). He has charged those who "relied upon the Law and boasted in God" (2:17) with misusing His Law (2:12-19; 3:27-31; 4:13-16). In fact, for Paul, his own people's relying on the Law and on circumcision in the flesh exemplifies the existence he here describes as *ἐν τῇ σαρκί* (2:17-29; 7:5; 9:30-10:5)!¹¹³ That life is also determined by the flesh and results in death.¹¹⁴ As Paul reveals in chapter 2, the Law's condemnation

¹¹²*μέλη* here, as in 6:13,19; 7:23, is in itself, a neutral term. However, as Dunn, Romans 1-8, 364, states, "A life ruled by or lived chiefly on the level of the *παθήματα* is almost certain to be a tool manipulated by sin"; compare *ἐπιθυμία* in 1:24 and especially 7:8. While *παθήματα* more often has the sense of suffering and affliction in Paul (see 8:18; Murray, 1:245, n. 9), here and in Gal. 5:24 it has an even more negative sense.

¹¹³Dunn, Romans 1-8, 363-64, emphasizes that in the context of Romans Paul has especially described Jewish piety as putting confidence in circumcision "*ἐν σαρκί*" which is not, after all, the true circumcision (2:25-29; see also Phil. 3:3-4; Gal. 6:13).

¹¹⁴Compare 6:22; see also Lenski, 453. Michel, 168, n. 2; and Black, 100, compare this verse with the sense of delusion over the failure of the Law to prevent sin exhibited in 4 Ezra 3:20-22. However, Paul's conclusion in 7:6 is quite

is never so harsh as when it is utilized as a means toward obtaining righteousness (2:3-9,21-24).

Verse 6 concludes this section with a description of the tremendous liberation from the Law which comes through the Holy Spirit. "But now, as it is, we have been completely discharged from the Law, having died to that¹¹⁵ by which we were confined¹¹⁶ . . ." (v. 6a). The *νυν* moves from the past to the Christian's present.¹¹⁷ Paul declares that we were, and now stand, released from the Law because we have

different from that in 4 Ezra 9:36-37: "For we who have received the law and sinned will perish, as well as our heart which received it; the law, however, does not perish but remains in its glory." See "The Fourth Book of Ezra," in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, 2 vols., ed. J. Charlesworth, tr. Bruce Metzger (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1983, 1985), 1:545.

¹¹⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 42, identifies the Law as the antecedent to ϕ . In the context of this verse, this is the only logical possibility. Sanday and Headlam, 175, point to the flesh of verse 5 which is, however, a feminine noun, and all the way back to the old man of 6:6 which is too far removed. See Cranfield, 1:339, for other possibilities.

¹¹⁶The root meaning of *κατέχω* is to "hold down," but its uses cover a wide range (see BAGD, 422-23). Here in the context of slavery, the sense is of restraint; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 365-66. Newman and Nida, 132, suggest it may be rendered as "caused us to be prisoners," "locked us up," or "tied us up."

¹¹⁷The *νυν* is primarily temporal and used with the aorist to denote the beginning of the present in contrast with the past, as in 3:21; 5:11; 11:30,31; see Cranfield, 1:338; BAGD, 546[*Iay*]. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 365, describes it as "the eschatological and conversion-initiation *νυν*." Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 275, and Barrett, 137, see it as *both* temporal and logical.

died to the Law (as in v. 4).¹¹⁸ This is the point of comparison with the marriage illustration in verses 2-3. The Law exercised lordship over us (v. 1) by holding us in captivity and servitude to sin and death¹¹⁹ until our own death with Christ in Baptism (6:3-4).¹²⁰

The "actual and assured result"¹²¹ of this death is that ". . . we serve in the newness which comes from the Spirit¹²² and not in the oldness which comes from the letter"

¹¹⁸This must not be seen as broadly as Käsemann, 189, who contends that the Torah itself is done away with; compare 3:31. In light of 8:1, Cranfield, 1:338, refers this to "the law's condemnation"; see also Dunn, Romans 1-8, 365.

¹¹⁹Käsemann points out, 190, "The meaning of Gal. 3:23f. is clearly shown herewith."

¹²⁰Although the plural form of the aorist tense is used of a temporally indefinite event in past time, Newman and Nida, 131, observe that in the case of individual believers *καταργέω* "points to a specific event in the past, perhaps to the act of confession at baptism. . . . The understood agent of [its] passive voice is God." This decisive change is due to God's action; see above, n. 28, p. 79. As Käsemann observes, 191, God "does not set up" a new law, statutory commands, a purified law, ethical activity or inner moral power but, rather, "justifies the ungodly" (4:5). Dunn, Romans 1-8, 372, states, "The sting of death has been drawn by having been used on Christ, absorbed by him, its poison exhausted in the death of Christ (1 Cor. 15:56)."

¹²¹Murray, 1:246, n. 11; purpose is implied, but the full sense is that of an actual result; see also 15:19; Phil. 1:13; Blass Debrunner, 391[2]; Cranfield, 1:339; Lenski, 454-55. It is improper to contend with Sanday and Headlam, 175-76; and Dunn, Romans 1-8, 356, that *ὥστε* with the infinitive can only mean a potential result.

¹²²*πνεύματος* must refer to the Holy Spirit and not the human spirit; see 5:5; 8:9-15; Gal. 3:1-14; Sanday and Headlam, 176; Cranfield, 1:339-40. For example, Alford, 2:377, states that it refers to "the Holy Spirit of God who originates and penetrates the Christian life." Thus it is difficult to consider the argument of Robinson, The Body, 84, who contends

(v. 6b).¹²³ Although *παλαιότης* occurs only here in the New Testament,¹²⁴ it is undoubtedly to be linked with *ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος* which was crucified with Christ in 6:6.¹²⁵ The phrase "oldness of the letter" is certainly "a reference to the law; . . . but not the law as such."¹²⁶ As Gottlob Schrenk observes, "When the reference is to *γράμμα*, Paul is always thinking of the legal authority which has been replaced."¹²⁷ Here Paul sets up the same contrast with *πνεῦμα*

that the Spirit is completely absent from Romans 7; see also Leenhardt, 194. Even if this was accurate, *πνεύματος* has not occurred previously in Romans and one could hardly argue that the influence of the Spirit has been absent from the actions described in the previous chapters.

¹²³How to take the parallel genitive construction is a matter of contention; see Murray, 1:247, n. 12. In any event Paul is contrasting pre-Christian and present Christian existence. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 213, suggests they are of quality and translates "in a new spirit and not according to an out-of-date literalness." A better option is apposition, adopted by Sanday and Headlam, 176, which expresses "in newness, that is, in the Spirit and not in the oldness, that is, according to the letter." Reading them as translated above, as genitives of source or origin with Cranfield, 1:346, seems most appropriate. Alford, 2:376, further expands this in suggesting that they express the actual "states in which those genitives are the ruling elements."

¹²⁴Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 275, n. 31.

¹²⁵This is further supported by the appearance of *καινότητι* both here and in 6:4 and the contrast between the "then" and "now" of the believer in both passages.

¹²⁶Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 373; it refers specifically to the Law misunderstood in terms of works (2:27-29; 2 Cor. 3).

¹²⁷Gottlob Schrenk, in *TDNT*, s.v. "*γράμμα*," 1:768; he also points out that "*γράμμα* is not used when [Paul] speaks of the positive and lasting significance of Scripture. This positive task is always stated in terms of *γραφή*."

as in 2:29.¹²⁸ *γράμμα* denotes the condemnatory power of the Law which is the only authority it has over "the old man" (6:6), that is, the person apart from the Spirit.¹²⁹

Although free from the Law's lordship and condemnation, Paul includes himself in the transition to where "we" now serve God as slaves (v. 6; compare 6:15-23). Positively speaking, then, this liberation "is not anarchic or self-chosen freedom, but into a different kind of slavery and service --to God" (as in 6:18,22).¹³⁰ However, it is not legitimate to infer from this that the Christian is now able to refrain from transgressing against the Law completely.¹³¹

¹²⁸Yet Dunn, Romans 1-8, 378, warns "that the parallel between 6:4; 7:6; and 8:4 forbids a [complete] polarizing of law and Spirit."

¹²⁹Schrenk, TDNT, 1:766, states, "Without Christ and the Spirit what is written is absolutely ineffective." Cranfield, 1:346, describes *γράμμα* as "what the legalist is left with as a result of his misunderstanding and misuse of the law . . . in separation from the Spirit." See Dunn, Romans 1-8, 366, who points out a number of parallels with 2 Cor. 3:6-9 and sees Jer. 31:31-34 and Ez. 36:26-27 behind both passages. Circumcision is evaluated by Paul in a similar manner (2:18-29). Apart from the Spirit and when viewed merely as an external act (2:28-29), circumcision avails for nothing. But when combined with the obedience worked by the Spirit, its value is great (3:1; 4:11).

¹³⁰Lenski, 455, states: "The fact that we are still slaving as slaves we have seen in 6:16-22, also that this is a voluntary slavery of emancipated slaves in expectation, not of death, but of life everlasting, thus a joyous, blessed slavery." Dunn, Romans 1-8, 366, states, "Man is always a servant, never more so than when he thinks he is master."

¹³¹So Kümmel, Römer 7, 42, "With that the question in 6:1,15, whether the Christian can or should still sin is . . . settled" ("Damit ist the Frage 6, 1. 15, ob die Christen noch sündigen können oder sollen . . . erledigt"). However, in chapter 6 Paul *exhorts believers* not to remain in

The first six verses of chapter 7 describe how Christians "have been put to death to the Law through the body of Christ" (v. 4). In his discussion Paul has explicitly associated the Law with "the passions of sins" (v. 5) and he proceeds to elaborate upon that thought. In so doing, Paul can apparently

assume a readership in Rome who were sufficiently familiar with the working of the Jewish law . . . to have experienced at least something of the effects of the law for themselves.¹³²

As his use of the first person plural attests (vv. 4-6), this is also something "Paul evidently experienced," a point to be kept in mind as the chapter continues.¹³³

The remainder of Romans 7 "is nearly always regarded as an excursus."¹³⁴ Yet such an evaluation fails to grasp

sin. Neither in chapter 6 nor in this verse does he say that Christians no longer sin or that it is possible for them to refrain from sinning against the Law.

¹³²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 372.

¹³³Ibid., 373; see 8:4,14-15; 2 Cor. 3:3,18; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 3:3.

¹³⁴Käsemann, 192. For example, Emil Brunner, The Letter to the Romans, tr. H. Kennedy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 67, states in his introduction to Romans 8, "The theme, however, is none other than that developed from the fifth chapter, with the interruption, of course, of chapter seven." Barrett, 140, similarly calls it "a digression"; see also Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 88-89; Beker, Paul the Apostle, 83; H. Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, tr. J. Bowden, The New Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1969), 229; C. Leslie Mitton, "Romans 7 Reconsidered," Expository Times 65 (1953-54):101; Stendahl, 211-12. Attempts to interpret these verses in one direction or the other prompt this evaluation. However, what signal would have enabled Paul's hearers to pick up on this new "digression"? It is closer to the truth to conclude with Käsemann,

how verses 7-25 flow from the preceding context. Verses 5 and 6, in particular, provide the framework for the following discussion.¹³⁵ There is also no clear agreement on how to divide verses 7-25.¹³⁶ However, verse 13 is best taken as a hinge verse which concludes the thought of verses 7-12 and also marks a transition into verses 14-25.¹³⁷

Verses 7-13¹³⁸ begin with $\tau\iota\ \omicron\theta\nu$ and, "in diatribe

210, "Paul does not grant himself the luxury of digressions."

¹³⁵Leenhardt, 179, contends that "v. 6 foreshadows ch. 8 as v. 5 has just anticipated the sequel of ch. 7." So also Newman and Nida, 130, "Verse 5 describes the pre-Christian experience, and has its parallel in 7.7-25; verse 6 describes the present life of faith under the leadership of God's Spirit, and has its parallel in 8,1-11." Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 88, suggests that verses 7-25 describe "what 'to serve under the written code' means" (v. 5). Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 41-42, similarly links 7:5 with 7:14-25; and according to Conzelmann, 229, chapter 8 then comments on 7:6. All of these are based upon their interpretation of 7:7-25. However, Dunn, Romans 1-8, 358, who supports a Christian interpretation of verses 14-25, also states: "7:5 in effect traces the course of the discussion in 7:7-25: 7:5a (vv 14-25), 7:5b (vv 7-13), 7:5c (vv 10-11,13,24). Likewise 7:6 foreshadows the course of chap. 8: 7:6a (8:1-3); 7:6b (8:4ff.)."

Nygren's outline, Commentary on Romans, 276, stands in contrast to these: Along with 7:5, 7:7-13 describes "*What the Christian was before.*" Verses 14-25, as 7:6, depict "*What the Christian is now.*" So also Espy, 167.

¹³⁶For example, Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 276; and Wilckens, 2:74-75; divide between vv. 7-12 and 13-25. Michel, 169, similarly separates 7-12, 13-17, and 18-25. However, Käsemann, 192; and Theissen, 230-31; take 7-13 and 14-25. Cranfield, 1:340; and Dunn, Romans 1-8, 376-78; treat the entire section as one unit, though the latter divides as follows: 7-13,14-17,18-20,21-23.

¹³⁷See the discussion below, p. 137.

¹³⁸Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," summarizes, "The emphasis in verses 7-13 is once more on the fact that following the law results in death." Newman and

style," bring up a hypothetical question.¹³⁹ "Therefore what will we say, the Law [is] sin? May it never be!"¹⁴⁰ (v. 7a). What would prompt such an incredible suggestion? Paul realizes that it represents a conclusion which could feasibly have been drawn from what he has said about the relationship between the Law and sin in 7:5, as well as from other passages.¹⁴¹ "Paul is answering the objections to his theology that he himself has anticipated."¹⁴²

While Paul had been using the first person plural (verses 4b-6), in verse 7 he begins to use the first person singular and employs it consistently throughout the rest of the chapter.¹⁴³ At this point it will be helpful to mention that in

Nida, 132, entitle verses 7-13 as "Law and Sin," "The Law Causes Sin," or "The Law Induces People to Sin." Lenski, 463, concludes that in verses 7-11 Paul describes how "I" "was brought to the realization of the power of sin by means of the law."

¹³⁹As also in 3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 9:14. Kümmel, Römer 7, 43, points out that this device is used by Paul to introduce or summarize his argument.

¹⁴⁰Paul responds again with *μη γένοιτο*; see above, p. 79 and n. 25. In 3:31 he similarly denounced the suggestion that the righteousness of faith nullified the Law or rendered it inoperative.

¹⁴¹For example, 4:15; 5:20; 6:14; see also Murray, 1:253. Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 88, suggests a series of questions which may have been asked and need further clarification.

¹⁴²Theissen, 181.

¹⁴³Ibid., 179, notes that Paul here uses the first person singular "for the first time after the beginning of the letter [1:13] and an isolated passage in 3:7." Leenhardt, 182, improperly attempts to drive a wedge between Paul's statements in the first person singular and the first person plural by

addition to or in place of the natural reading of the "I" as representing the author himself, in verses 7-11 it is quite typical to see Paul

making increasingly explicit uses of the Adam narratives of Gen 2 and 3: 'I' = typical man (*homo sapiens*), אָדָם = 'adam = Adam; that is, Adam is the one whose experience of sin typifies and stamps its character on everyone's experience of sin.¹⁴⁴

Paul writes, "But I would not have come to know¹⁴⁵ sin except through the Law" (7:7b). ἀλλά implies that in spite of Paul's emphatic denial in 7a, there is, nevertheless, a connection between the Law and sin.¹⁴⁶ He proceeds by offering a particular example which explains this:¹⁴⁷ "For I also had not known¹⁴⁸ desire except the Law was saying, 'You shall

stating, "These affirmations are mutually exclusive."

¹⁴⁴Dunn, Romans 1-8, 378; he evaluates this connection, 399, as "the vital clue." See chapter three.

¹⁴⁵γινώσκω "denotes a knowing through experience"; Espy, 169.

¹⁴⁶Kümmel, Römer 7, 43; he concludes that ἀλλά is used to express "eine Einschränkung" ("a limitation") rather than "eine Bekräftigung" ("strengthening") of the μή γένοιτο. It points ahead toward and affirms what is going to be detailed in the verses to follow, that is, how sin has been able to utilize the Law; see Rudolf Schnackenburg, "Römer 7 in Zusammenhang des Römerbriefes," Jesus und Paulus, ed. E. Ellis and E. Grasser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1975), 292. The sense is, "No, but it is true that . . ."

¹⁴⁷Alford, 2:378, notes that τε attaches things subordinate to a former clause. Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 279, note 44, citing Parry's statement, "The isolated τε introduces a particular example of the effect of law from the 10th Commandment: almost = even, or in particular."

¹⁴⁸According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 378, γινώσκω may denote more of a personal, experiential knowledge in contrast with the more rational nuance of οἶδα here. Ibid., 405, suggests

not desire'" (7:7c).¹⁴⁹ Part of what Paul says in 7:7 he has already concluded in 3:20: "For through the Law [comes] full knowledge of sin."¹⁵⁰ In addition, the last phrase of verse 7 points out that the Law specifically tells the "I" that his "desires" are directed toward what is contrary to the Law.¹⁵¹ Together, οἶδα and γινώσκω describe concrete experiential involvement in sin, as well as the recognition of one's own sinfulness.¹⁵²

that the pluperfect tense of οἶδα reflects Paul's awareness that "coveting was not something confined to his pre-Christian period." This is unlikely; see Barrett, 142.

¹⁴⁹Both phrases would be contrary to fact conditionals except that no ἄν is present in either apodosis. As it stands the sentences convey that "the Law did say, therefore I did come to know." Käsemann notes, 193, that the verbs "point to knowledge really attained." It does not imply that this knowledge would not have come without the Law. Blass and Debrunner, 360[1], offer this verse as an example where the particle is omitted and note, 428[2], that μή is the negative with the unreal indicative; so Cranfield, 1:348; Kümmel, Römer 7, 46-47 ("Irrealis"); Lenski, 460. Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 278, note 43, states that "the usual translation assumes that in his onward rush Paul has omitted ἄν." This is certainly not the best explanation.

¹⁵⁰There he stressed that point for the whole world (πᾶς ὁ κόσμος; 3:19), now he reveals it as a fact of the "I"'s personal experience. For ἐπιγνώσις in 3:20, BAGD, 291, suggests "unmistakable recognition" or "full realization." Black, 102, asserts, "This idea that man came to know sin through the Law appears to be a distinctively Pauline thought."

¹⁵¹Barth, 242, states, "The law is quite obviously the point at which sin becomes an observable fact of experience."

¹⁵²Ibid. So Murray, 1:249, states that the verbs in 7b and c express "the practical experiential conviction"; also Lenski, 461, "full realization." Kümmel, Römer 7, 45, similarly translates "das praktische Kennen." Dunn, Romans 1-8, 378, further states that the nuance present in Paul's use of γινώσκω is the concrete experience or knowledge of sin "in the sense of practice as a conscious and all-too-deliberate

With οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις,¹⁵³ Paul cites a portion of the last commandment of the Decalogue (as in 13:9; from the Septuagint of Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).¹⁵⁴ Although ἐπιθυμέω need not necessarily denote something wrong (Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:17; 1 Tim. 3:1), it normally expresses an inclination toward evil as its use to translate this commandment indicates (see also Rom. 1:24). The sense of ἐπιθυμέω is certainly broader than a mere reference to "sexual lust";¹⁵⁵ neither can it be limited to the desire to attain life through the Law.¹⁵⁶

action." This refers then to one's own subjective cognizance of sin. Paul is not saying that prior to this time sin did not exist or was not deserving of guilt before God; see the discussion of νεκρά below, pp. 118-21. As Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 35-36, concludes, "The knowledge of sin which comes through the law . . . shows that man sins because he is a sinner. The opposite is not true -- that he becomes a sinner only because he sins."

¹⁵³Robertson, 874, lists this as a "volitive future." For ἐπιθυμέω, see BAGD, 293[3]; F. Büchsel, in TDNT, s.v. "ἐπιθυμία, ἐπιθυμέω," 3:168-72; Stanislas Lyonnet, "'Tu ne convoiteras pas' (Rom. vii 7)," in Neotestamentica et Patristica, Novum Testamentum Supplements, vol. 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 157-65.

¹⁵⁴Romans 13:9 indicates that Paul has the tenth commandment in mind here, see below, pp. 214-15; also Dunn, Romans 1-8, 379; Moo, 123, an "unmistakable reference"; Bornkamm, 102, n. 7. Barrett, 141, states, "The inexactness of Paul's quotation is not due to carelessness or to the wish to abbreviate, but is significant." Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 141, concludes that it is "an echo" of the commandment. It is certainly more than this. Paul may also intend the ἐντολή in verses 10-11 to be identified with the tenth commandment.

¹⁵⁵As Gundry, 232, suggests. Black, 102, responds, "epithymia is never purely sexual"; see 1 Cor. 10:6; also Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 102, n. 7; Espy, 169.

¹⁵⁶As Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 45, suggests. Against this see Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 90; Käsemann, 194.

The abbreviated form of Paul's citation from the Decalogue indicates that he is not referring to this commandment as one among many sins; rather, it "is chosen as [an] example for the entire Law as the alternation of νόμος and ἐντολή in 7:9 shows."¹⁵⁷ Perhaps Paul has selected the tenth commandment in order to speak more generally "of the intention" behind every transgression as shown by his use of πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν in verse 8.¹⁵⁸ This is not without precedent as James 1:15 indicates.¹⁵⁹ All of these sins of desire can then be placed into the context of the relationship between this commandment and the first.¹⁶⁰ C. K. Barrett states, "Desire means

¹⁵⁷Kümmel, Römer 7, 56, "und dieses Gebot ist alt Beispiel gewählt für das ganze Gesetz, wie der Wechsel von νόμος und ἐντολή in 7. 9 zeigt." Leenhardt, 185, identifies this prohibition "as the very essence of the law"; so Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 90.

¹⁵⁸Käsemann, 194.

¹⁵⁹4 Maccabees 2:6 similarly states, "μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν εἰρηκεν ἡμᾶς ὁ νόμος." See also Philo, The Decalogue, 142,150,173 in Philo: VII, tr. F. H. Colson, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 76-79,80-81,90-93; idem., De Opificio Mundi, 152 in Philo: I, tr. H. Colson and G. Whitaker (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1949), 120-21; "The Apocalypse of Moses" 19:3, in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, 2 vols., ed. R. Charles, tr. L. Wells (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:146. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 140, notes that this commandment is especially a problem for the pharisaic mind because it deals with the inner attitude and not merely outward words and actions.

¹⁶⁰The connection between ἐπιθυμία and the first commandment's prohibition against idolatry is clearly enunciated in Col. 3:5. Cranfield, 1:349, similarly concludes that Paul describes "the sinfulness of all inordinate desires as the expression of man's self-centeredness and self-assertion over against God."

precisely the exaltation of the *ego* which we have seen to be the essence of sin."¹⁶¹

This citation from the Decalogue, as well as the fact that νόμος interchanges freely with ἐντολή in verses 7-13, is a clear indication of the sense in which Paul is using νόμος in this context.¹⁶² While νόμος in and of itself refers to the entire Mosaic Torah, here it is being utilized in a narrower sense to denote the Mosaic Law as "exemplified by the ten commandments."¹⁶³ νόμος here, along with ἐντολή,

¹⁶¹Barrett, 141.

¹⁶²See also below on 8:3, pp. 204-7. There is certainly no qualitative distinction to be drawn from the interchange between ἐντολή and νόμος here. Newman and Nida, 136, point out: "Technically, law consists of a body of regulations which are enforced by society, while a commandment is a specific order which is enforced by the individual who gives it. However, in speaking . . . of the Old Testament, this distinction does not strictly apply." Gottlob Schrenk, in TDNT, s.v. "ἐντολή," 2:552, states that ἐντολή denotes "both the concrete Mosaic Law and the characteristic mark of the Law, i.e. its character as command." They are "virtual synonyms" according to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 380. One may, with Käsemann, 194, legitimately see in ἐντολή a specific reference back to the specific commandment just cited.

¹⁶³Murray, 1:249-250; see the discussion below under 7:23 (pp. 173-81) and the discussion of Paul's conclusions regarding the Law in 8:2 (pp. 198-203). Olaf Moe, The Apostle Paul: His Message and Doctrine, trans. L. Vigness (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954), 168, contends that νόμος denotes the Law of Moses "with the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments as its basic code"; as is clearly the emphasis in 2:22-27; 7:7; 13:8-10. Gutbrod, in TDNT, s.v. "νόμος," 4:1069, stresses, however, that no basic distinction should be "made between the Decalogue and the rest of the legal material in the OT." Newman and Nida conclude, 133, "Throughout this passage Paul uses the term Law primarily in the sense of the Jewish Law, though he would probably intend a wider application." Moo, 123, pushes the fact that this is "Israel's peculiar possession" to its extreme. This may be so in form, but certainly not in content as 2:12-16, 26-27

represents those portions of the Torah which make demands upon man's conduct.¹⁶⁴

In verse 7 Paul reveals how the Law's commandments led the "I" to identify and acknowledge his own impulse toward evil. As illustrated by the structure of verses 7-10,¹⁶⁵ Paul proceeds to assert that the Law does even more. Although he refuses to allow any identification of the Law with sin (v. 7; also v. 12),¹⁶⁶ Paul describes very graphically how sin, with the help of the commandment, awakens desires which are contrary to the Law,¹⁶⁷ then provokes the "I" to enact his desires, and, finally, drives home an awareness of that transgression¹⁶⁸ and its results.

In verse 8 Paul clarifies and expands upon the activity

illustrate.

¹⁶⁴Gutbrod, TDNT, 4:1070, states, "In Paul νόμος is supremely that which demands action from man." It is in this sense that one can attempt to "do" the Law (2:13,14,25; compare 10:5). The effects of these demands upon sinful man are presented in the remainder of chapter 7.

¹⁶⁵First the commandment works a recognition of sin (v. 7), then spurns more sin (v. 8), and finally accomplishes death (v. 10); see Packer, 621.

¹⁶⁶According to Newman and Nida, 134, "Paul clearly distinguishes between law and sin. . . . Law was not intended to be the means by which sin would launch its attack, but sin took advantage of the opportunity to attack man." Dunn, Romans 1-8, 381, contends that Paul's purpose here is to stress the distinction between "sin" and the "I," a distinction which becomes even more crucial in verses 14-25.

¹⁶⁷Kümmel, Römer 7, 45.

¹⁶⁸Dunn, Romans 1-8, 400, states, "The law both provokes the actual experience of sin and makes the coveter aware that his desire is illicit."

of verse 7:¹⁶⁹ "But sin, seizing the opportunity,¹⁷⁰ through the commandment¹⁷¹ worked out¹⁷² every desire in me" (v. 8a). The "I" recognizes that every sinful passion¹⁷³ is "actually inflamed even by the Law of God. The very law that prohibits them encourages [the "I"] to do them."¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 45. In so doing, Dunn, Romans 1-8, 380, points out that Paul makes "one of the most vigorous of the personifications of sin." Murray, 1:250, refers to this as "the active agency of sin."

¹⁷⁰ἀφορμή denotes a starting point and is used in military contexts for a base of operations or place from which an attack is launched. Newman and Nida, 134, point out, "In New Testament times the word was used frequently in a metaphorical sense with the meaning of 'opportunity (to do something).'

Its use with λαμβάνω, both actively and passively, is common in Hellenistic Greek. Kümmel, Römer 7, 44, concludes that here sin is actively seizing an "occasion" or "opportunity"; see also Cranfield 1:349-50; BAGD, 127. Black, 103, defines it as "a kind of bridgehead into human nature for the invading forces of Sin."

Leenhardt, 183, points out that ἀφορμή is used in Paul with this verb only here and in 7:11. He combines this with six other words unique to Paul in verses 9-24 and concludes, "This may suggest borrowing." However, see ἀφορμή especially in Gal. 5:13; also 2 Cor. 5:12; 11:12; 1 Tim. 5:14.

¹⁷¹διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς can be taken directly with the verb as suggested by Cranfield, 1:350; Alford, 2:379; Lenski, 464; or with ἡ ἁμαρτία as Kümmel, Römer 7, 44; Barrett, 142; Theissen, 225. The best evidence for the latter is the repetitive δι' αὐτῆς in verse 11 and also vv. 5,13, but the meaning is not significantly altered in either case.

¹⁷²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 380, identifies κατεργάζομαι as "a thematic word in ch 7." It occurs in verses 8,13,15,17,18,20.

¹⁷³πάντα denotes both "all and every" here; see Robertson, 772. Compare Paul's use of ἐπιθυμία here with 6:12 and, especially, with πάθημα in 7:5.

¹⁷⁴David M. Lloyd-Jones, Romans: An Exposition of Chapters 7:1-8:4 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1973), 80; he concludes this is so "because we are impure."

Many parallels to this expression have been cited.¹⁷⁵ Yet Paul's thought is certainly deeper than any comparable statement from secular sources. He is dealing with the dominion and activity of sin (for example, 6:12-16; 7:5,7). Verse 8a, as well as the similar assertion in verse 5,¹⁷⁶ must be read in light of Paul's portrayal of sin as an active and evil power which reigns through death and completely separates man from God (5:12-14). Additionally, in chapter seven Paul is discussing the lordship of *the revealed Law* in its connection with sin and death, and its impact upon a person's relationship to God (7:1,4-6,7). As a result, his theological presuppositions defy a merely psychological explanation.

Verse 8 concludes with this terse, but striking state-

¹⁷⁵Theissen states, 224, "Paul here picks up an insight that is also attested elsewhere in antiquity." Ovid's line from The Amores, 3.4.17, is often cited: "Nititur in vetitum semper cupimusque negata" ("We ever strive for what is forbid, and ever covet what is denied"; see also 2.19.3; cited from Ovid: Heroides and Amores, tr. G. Showerman, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), 460-61. Compare Ovid's Metamorphoses, 3.566 in Ovid: Metamorphoses, tr. F. Miller, 2 vols., The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933), 1:164-65. Within Judaism, see 4 Macc. 1:33-34. In Christian literature, Augustine states, "Forbidden fruits are sweet" (cited from Lenski, 468). Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 280, compares this with Augustine's comments in his Confessions about the needless stealing of pears and Mark Twain's comments about a mule! Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 140, refers to "No Smoking" signs!

¹⁷⁶The significant parallel with verse 5 is recognized by Murray, 1:255; Lenski, 462. This relationship is very helpful for identifying the spiritual condition of the "I" in these verses; see chapter three, pp. 264-65.

ment: "For without the Law¹⁷⁷ sin was¹⁷⁸ dead" (v. 8b). If one takes νεκρά in the full sense of "dead," then an application to the period prior to Genesis 3 when "sin entered the world through one man" (5:12) is plausible.¹⁷⁹ However, prior to the fall there was not only no sin, there was also no death! It is also noteworthy that Paul uses θάνατος to refer to death in 7:5,10,13.¹⁸⁰ The presence of νεκρά here may suggest a different nuance.

Unless Paul's reference is to the period before the fall when sin was "completely inactive,"¹⁸¹ νεκρά cannot be describing a time when any "I" did not sin and was not, therefore, guilty before God.¹⁸² Paul has used 1:18-3:20 to con-

¹⁷⁷In light of 3:21,28; 4:6; the presence of χωρὶς νόμου is quite striking.

¹⁷⁸Murray, 1:250, argues effectively that the assumed form of εἰμι here should be in the past tense.

¹⁷⁹The link with Genesis here is that before God gave the command which forced Adam and Eve to exercise their free will, there was no opportunity for sin; see Dunn, Romans 1-8, 381, who then cautions that "the dramatic pictorial language should not be taken too literally." For example, Leenhardt, 186, identifies the serpent as "personified sin" in 7:8 and states, "Nothing resembles a dead serpent more than a living serpent so long as it does not move!" Dunn, Romans 1-8, 400, himself even adds, "v 8 amounts in effect to a description of the tactics of the serpent here personified as 'sin.'"

¹⁸⁰As well as the related verbal form in 7:6,10.

¹⁸¹As Newman and Nida, 134; though they add, "sin is inactive, that is, powerless."

¹⁸²Kümmel interprets it in this manner. He, Römer 7, 46-47, asserts, "The 'I' came into a practical relationship with sin and passion first 'through the commandment'" ("daß das Ich zu Sünde und Begierde erst 'durch das Gesetz' in praktische Beziehung kam"). Without this forbidding command-

clude just the opposite. All the world is held accountable to God, "for all have sinned . . ." (3:19,23).¹⁸³ Neither can Paul mean that those who do not know the revealed commandments of the Torah are in some way not guilty of sin.¹⁸⁴ If Paul had been asked about them, he would have responded, as in 2:12-16, that no one is in reality outside of the realm of the Law. They will be judged by "the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them" (2:15).¹⁸⁵ Because of their sin, they too will perish (2:12). Furthermore, Paul affirms that sin was in the world and active even before the Law was given through Moses (5:13).

ment, such passions "remained foreign" ("fremd geblieben") to the "I." Kümmel proposes, *ibid.*, 49, that νεκρά is used to denote the condition "where sin is not able to work the death of man" ("wo die Sünde den Tod des Menschen nicht bewirken kann"). He further contends, *ibid.*, 132, "Without the law sin has no working power" ("Ohne Gesetz hat die Sünde keine Wirkungskraft"). Therefore, *ibid.*, 48, "An existence of sin apart from the Law is here denied" ("hier ein vorhandensein der Sünde ohne Gesetz geleugnet wird").

¹⁸³See 5:12; Gal. 3:22; also above, pp. 69-72.

¹⁸⁴Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 51, proposes, "Without the law, sin is not able to make one guilty and through that is not able to bring [him] to death" ("ohne Gesetz die Sünde den Menschen nicht schuldig machen and dadurch auch nicht zum Tode bringen konnte"). This leads him to assert, *ibid.*, 50, "Only when the person knows the divine command and still transgresses is the sin guilt for him" ("nur wenn der Mensch das göttliche Gesetz kennt und doch übertritt, is die ἀμαρτία für ihn Schuld." Espy, 169-70, similarly states, "It is only through the Law that one becomes culpable as an individual."

¹⁸⁵See the discussion of 2:12-16 above, p. 71. The fact that the uncircumcised Gentiles can keep at least some of the requirements of the Law is proof of this (2:27).

To be sure, sins committed during that period could not be charged against a person as a transgression of *God's Law* (*παράβασις*; 4:15) or make him accountable for breaking a specific revealed commandment. However, this sin did make the person guilty before God and deserving of his condemnation (2:12,14-16).¹⁸⁶ Paul affirms this by stating that the consequence of sin, which is death, reigned from Adam until Moses (5:14; see also 6:23).

For the introduction of the law is not said to make death more comprehensive and more total, but only to increase the trespass (v. 20) and to make men more aware of the consequence of sin (v. 14).¹⁸⁷

The coming of the Law does not, for the first time, activate sin; rather it "turns sin into transgression" of God's revealed will.¹⁸⁸

What, then, is the significance of *νεκρά*? Paul uses it in verse 8 to describe sin as "ineffective" or "powerless" in regard to its ability to provoke transgression of the Law through its commandment.¹⁸⁹ Though sin is "already lying

¹⁸⁶Moo, 127, concludes, "Certainly Paul viewed all men, Jews and Gentiles, as standing under God's condemnation before the giving of the law."

¹⁸⁷Bandstra, 137, citing 5:12-21.

¹⁸⁸See Barrett, 141; Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 278, 279; Espy, 170.

¹⁸⁹As in James 2:26 where "*ἡ πίστις χωρὶς ἔργων νεκρά ἐστίν*," see also v. 17; but compare Rom. 6:11. For the meaning "ineffective," see Cranfield, 1:351; Michel, 173; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 400. It is not that "sin is not perceptible" as BAGD, 535[1bβ].

in ambush *and present*,"¹⁹⁰ sin cannot yet incite man into open violation of God's Law as it does in verse 8a. A very helpful parallel to this verse is 1 Corinthians 15:56 which explains the interaction between death, sin, and the Law as follows: τὸ δὲ κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἡ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ νόμος.¹⁹¹

The description in verses 9-10a concisely draws together the experience of the "I" throughout verses 7-11: "And I was formerly¹⁹² living without the Law,¹⁹³ but when the commandment came, sin came to life. And I died" (9-10a). The background of Genesis 2-3 is said to be "all but inescapable" here,¹⁹⁴ yet it should also be pointed out that Paul uses

¹⁹⁰Käsemann, 194; emphasis mine.

¹⁹¹In both 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 7, sin's power derives from its "unholy manipulation of the law"; see Dunn Romans 1-8, 400.

¹⁹²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 382, translates ποτέ as "once upon a time" and restricts the meaning to a time of "paradisaal innocence"; similarly Stanislas Lyonnet, "L'Historie du Salut selon le Chapitre VII de l'Épître aux Romains," Revue Biblica 43 (1963):130-42. On the other extreme, Kümmel, Römer 7, 132-33, applies it to every condition of life ("ganz allgemein den Lebenszustand"). Both of these are overly interpretive.

¹⁹³Notice χωρὶς νόμου again (as in v. 8). Newman and Nida, 134, suggest, "I was alive so long as I did not know about the laws which told me, you must not do such bad things."

¹⁹⁴Dunn, Romans 1-8, 401, concludes, "With v. 9 the reference to Adam becomes all but inescapable . . . For only in the case of Adam is it possible to make such a clear distinction." For example, in Genesis Adam was created a "living being" free from sin (2:7). Then the commandment came (2:16-17) which the serpent used (3:5) to bring sin and death (2:17; 3:4). Espy, 169, contends that Adam and Eve were "'without the Law' in the sense of 'without making use of it, without depending on it'" citing BAG, 890[2Bβ or δ].

ἐγώ for the first time in Romans in 7:9. The key to arriving at a correct understanding of verses 9-10a is a proper interpretation of the verbs ἐζῶν (v. 9a), ἀνέζησεν (v. 9b), and ἀπέθανον (v. 10). In addition, the chiasmic structure of verses 8b-10a provides an important indication of what Paul means. ἀμαρτία νεκρά . . . ἐγὼ ἐζῶν . . . ἡ ἀμαρτία ἀνέζησεν . . . ἐγὼ ἀπέθανον (vv. 8b-10a).¹⁹⁵ He does not intend for νεκρά (v. 8) to be understood in its full literal sense,¹⁹⁶ and the same is true of the other verbs in this chiasm.

Kümmel vehemently insists that ἐζῶν (v. 9a) must be understood in a "pregnant" sense as denoting "true life" as God intended, that is, life in its "fullest religious sense."¹⁹⁷ However, unless one adopts Kümmel's view that there is no sin or guilt apart from the revelation of the Law's commandment,¹⁹⁸ ἐζῶν, in this pregnant sense, cannot refer literally to anyone other than Adam or Eve, and only to them before the fall.

¹⁹⁵Milne, 14; Moo, 125; Kümmel Römer 7, 51, also recognizes this and points out that the corresponding terms need not be understood in identical terms.

¹⁹⁶See the discussion of νεκρά above, pp. 118-21 and the conclusion below, pp. 123-24.

¹⁹⁷Kümmel, Römer 7, 52, "wahren Lebens," and 53, "im religiösen Vollsinn am Leben"; as in 1:17; 8:13; 10:5; 2 Cor. 6:9; Phil. 1:21. Ibid., 51, asserts that it cannot mean merely "to exist" (ἡμην) and later admits, ibid., 132, how crucial this is for his interpretation; see Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 93.

¹⁹⁸See the discussion above, n. 182 and 184, pp. 118-19; Bandstra, 136-37, rejects Kümmel's view at this point.

There is another alternative,¹⁹⁹ however, since ἐζῶν need not be understood as designating life in the full spiritual sense.²⁰⁰ In fact, according to Pauline usage, that interpretation is unlikely.²⁰¹ It is more probable that Paul is using ἐζῶν in "the general sense of 'alive,' 'spend one's time,'" as he utilized it already in 7:1.²⁰² There it hardly denoted the possession of "true life" before God. Rather, it was used to describe actual existence under the lordship of the Law.²⁰³ Though this life was "real," it was not so in regard to God. Bandstra concludes,

"I was alive" apart from the law could only mean living apart from the heightened awareness of the nature of sin

¹⁹⁹One might note yet another plausible explanation which accepts Kümmel's "pregnant" sense. Perhaps Paul was actually truly living as a member of God's covenant people by virtue of his birth and circumcision which acted as a seal of the promise of God that gave life (4:11; 9:2-5; 11:1; see also Phil. 3:5). It was only when he came to view the Law as the basis of his righteous standing before God and as a reason to boast that the Law in actuality condemned him.

²⁰⁰As Moo points out, 128, "There is no reason why ἐζῶν need have any theological force at all." See Bandstra, 136-37.

²⁰¹For ζῶν in Paul, see Otto Kuss, Der Römerbrief, 3 vols. (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1963), 2:445-46. ζῶν occurs 59 times in Paul and only refers to spiritual life about nine of those times (in 1:17; 6:13; 8:13; 10:5; 2 Cor. 8:4[?]; Gal. 2:19; 3:11; 3:12; 5:25). According to Moo, 125, n. 29, the only other occurrence of this verb in the imperfect in Paul refers to "simple existence (Col. 3:7)."

²⁰²Bandstra, 136-37.

²⁰³There is certainly no "pregnant" use there, and a life under the lordship of the Law is certainly being characterized here.

and its consequences.²⁰⁴

ἀνέζησεν expresses the idea "that sin, after the coming of the commandment, now exists in full working power."²⁰⁵ When sin, being *χωρὶς νόμου*, was not having its utmost effect (*νεκρά*; v. 8), "I was living *χωρὶς νόμου*" (9a). Verse 9b then speaks of a time "when I came to know about a commandment"²⁰⁶ or when the commandment "came home to me."²⁰⁷ With the "coming of the commandment" sin was able to exert its full power (*ἀνέζησεν*; see 5:20) and "I died" (v. 10a).

What, then, of *ἀπέθανον*? Paul cannot be referring to death in a purely physical sense in verse 10a since the "I"

²⁰⁴Bandstra, 137; he compares this with the statement "free in regard to righteousness" in 6:20 which similarly "cannot mean total exemption from the punitive righteousness of God (cf. 3:5)."

²⁰⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 52, "daß die Sünde sich nun, nachdem das Gebot vorhanden ist, in voller Wirkungskraft befindet." How to work the prefix into the translation of *ἀνέζησεν* is problematic. It would normally express that sin "came to life again" as BAGD, 53; Leenhardt, 188. Though this is said to apply well to Adam, for example, by Moo, 133-34, n. 44, it is difficult to see how sin became alive *again* in regard to him! This makes little sense here and, as a result, Cranfield, 1:352; and Käsemann, 197, properly look for another sense in the preposition. The emphatic sense of "to become fully alive" is best. Newman and Nida, 135, suggest, that the phrase may then be translated, "sin became active," "sin began to have power," or "sin became strong," or "then I had a strong desire to sin."

²⁰⁶Suggested by Newman and Nida, 135; also "when I learned that I shouldn't do certain things," or, more likely, "that God said I shouldn't do certain things."

²⁰⁷As translated by James Moffatt, A New Translation of the Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935); compare Calvin, 178, "When it began truly to be understood."

continues to live on in verses 10-25 even after he states, "I died" (ἀπέθανον). The death in verse 10a is neither a physical death nor a spiritual death in the fullest sense, though it leans closer to the latter.²⁰⁸ In view of the parallels in verses 7 and 13, "'I died' can only mean becoming specifically aware of the penalty of sin."²⁰⁹ It is death in the sense that the "I" has realized the futility of his existence under the lordship of the Law (7:1). It signifies the end of his apparent life, his assurance of life, or even

²⁰⁸Newman and Nida, 135, conclude that this is "a spiritual death," but suggest that it may be more appropriate to speak of "a sentence of death" here; Ernest Best, "Dead in Trespasses and Sins (Eph. 2:1)," Journal for the Study of the New Testament 13 (1981):16 calls it "realized eschatological death"; adopted by Moo, 125. Murray, 1:251, points out that this death must not be equated with the "dying to sin and union with Christ in his death (6:2)" because the death here comes through the Law's commandment, not the Gospel, and provokes a revival of sin's activity rather than a "death to sin" (6:2).

Dunn, Romans 1-8, 383, counters that the relationship between this death and the deaths in 6:2,7,8, and 7:4 is unclear and that it is unwise to separate them. Ibid., 401, concludes that the two deaths, with Christ and to the world, are the same. Kümmel, Römer 7, 53, argues that neither the Old Testament nor Paul engages in a "splintering" ("Zerspaltung") or holds to "the beloved differentiation of a bodily or temporal and a spiritual or eternal death" ("die beliebte Unterscheidung eines leiblichen oder zeitlichen und eines geistigen oder ewigen Todes"). While the platonic extremes are absent, Paul does refer to faith's coming as both a death and a life, most recently in 6:1-11.

²⁰⁹Bandstra, 137. Moo, 125, concludes that due to the logic of Paul's argument, "it is difficult to understand by ἀπέθανον (v. 10a) anything other than condemnation resulting from sin."

the "false security" which he formerly enjoyed.²¹⁰ It is the death "of the complacent self-assurance" which comes with the full and complete knowledge of one's own sinfulness.²¹¹ So then, as indicated by the chiasm in verses 8-10,

The experience of death was moral and consisted in the resurgence of sin and the loss of a supposed innocence. Likewise the experience of life must also have been moral not [merely] biological, and consisted in a false sense of personal righteousness in the absence of a genuine knowledge of sin.²¹²

However, it must be pointed out that Paul's primary concern here is not to delineate a strictly temporal relationship.²¹³ The main issue is not whether the Law precedes sin or follows it.²¹⁴ Neither is Paul primarily engaged in discussing the origin of either sin or the Law.²¹⁵ He is

²¹⁰The latter phrase is supported by the deception in verse 11. This "life" only binds people more hopelessly to sin's complete domination as expressed in 6:13,16,18; see Lenski, 464,470,472. He contends that moralism and legalism increase this false security and concludes, *ibid.*, 465, that the Pharisees are "the outstanding example" of this.

This need not mean that the sense of verse 9 is reduced to "I thought I lived" as Lyonnet implies, "L'Histoire du Salut selon le Chapitre VII de l'Épître aux Romains," 129-30. The "I" actually was alive (see 7:1) and presumed to be spiritually alive as well.

²¹¹Murray, 1:251; he suggests that Paul may be depicting "the unperturbed, self-complacent, self-righteous life which he once lived before."

²¹²Milne, 14; citing Gundry, 233.

²¹³Recognized by Murray, 1:251.

²¹⁴See Barrett, 145-46.

²¹⁵As Paul does in Romans 5. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 383, speculates that Paul may have used the compound with ἀνεξήσεν "lest his strong language be taken to mean that the law created or gave birth to sin."

speaking about the nature of the interrelationship which exists between sin and the Law, and asserts that the Law's command serves to increase sin's activity and power (5:20).

The remainder of verse 10 goes together with verse 11 and is somewhat less problematic. These verses recapitulate the action of verses 9-10a and enable Paul to further elaborate upon what was already either presumed or presented. "The commandment which was for life, this very one has been found²¹⁶ to result in death for me.²¹⁷ For sin seizing its opportunity through the commandment deceived me and through it killed [me]" (vv. 10b-11). How did the Law's commandment "offer life" (10b)? This was "a self-evident opinion for a Jew"²¹⁸ which Paul himself affirms in Romans 10:5: "For Moses writes [concerning] the righteousness which is from the Law that

²¹⁶Or "proven to be"; note the passive voice of εὐρίσκω which may reveal the influence of the Hebrew נִשְׁמָר; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 383. It may also imply divine intervention in bringing home the effect of Law to the sinful "I"; see 1 Cor. 4:2; 15:15; 2 Cor. 5:3; Gal. 2:17. The nuance of "discovered," present in the disputed text of 2 Peter 3:10, is also a possible alternative.

²¹⁷The dative may be of disadvantage expressing that the commandment was "against me"; see Robertson, 539; Gal. 3:10.

²¹⁸Kümmel, Römer 7, 53, "wie das für den Juden eine selbstverständliche Vorstellung war." For example, Deut. 6:24; 30:15-16; Ps. 19:7-10; Prov. 6:23; Eccl. 7:20; Ezek. 20:11; Luke 10:28. For a survey of references outside of the Old Testament, see Ephraim Urbach, The Sages, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), 1:424-26; he cites, for example, tractate Aboth 6:7 of the Mishnah which states, "Great is the Torah, for it gives them that practice it life in this world and in the world to come"; see also Aboth 2:7; Sirach 17:11; 45:5; Baruch 3:9; 4 Ezra 14:30. Note the close verbal parallel in Psalms of Solomon 14:2: "ἐν νόμῳ ᾧ ἐντείλατο ἡμῖν εἰς θωήν ἡμῶν"; cited from Cranfield, 1:352, n. 2.

the person who does these things will live in them."²¹⁹ But the "I" in 7:7-11 has found out that, because of sin, the commandment which holds out the promise of life had only served to accomplish his death. In stating that the Law's commandment "offers life" (εἰς ζωὴν), Paul continues to exonerate the Law from any blame in causing the death of the "I" (see v. 12). However, as verse 11 reveals, even this aspect of the Law was able to be diabolically manipulated by sin.

Verse 11 parallels 7:8 quite closely, but it more strongly emphasizes that death is the final product of sin (5:12; 6:21,23; 7:5). In addition, verse 11 provides the first plausible linguistic connection with Genesis.²²⁰ In the Septuagint of Genesis 3:13 Eve declares, "ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησέν με."²²¹ There the serpent certainly deceived.²²² However,

²¹⁹Alluding to Lev. 18:5; see Gal. 3:21 in light of verse 10. This phrase is somewhat difficult for those who wish to see Paul speaking exclusively in Adam's name here since the Law was hardly intended to "offer life" to him who already enjoyed free access to the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). The sense of to "preserve or promote life" is suggested by Dunn, Romans 1-8, 401, who proposes that the phrase may reflect Paul's "yearning" for the life of paradise now lost.

²²⁰Alford, 2:380, states that it "is a plain reference to the Tempter deceiving Eve"; similarly Lenski, 467. However, to assert with Barrett, 144, that it is "almost a quotation from Gen iii.13" overstates the case. Kümmel, Römer 7, 54, counters that any recourse to Genesis 3 at this point is "totally unnecessary" ("gänzlich unnötig").

²²¹The verb with the prefix is used by Paul in 2 Cor. 11:3 and 1 Tim. 2:14 to describe the serpent's deception of Eve; see Leenhardt, 188. However, Kümmel, Römer 7, 54, points out that the prefix is not present in the Septuagint. In addition, Paul uses the verb with the prefix elsewhere (16:18;

a reference to the events in the Garden is not the only possible explanation of this verse. How else has the Law been involved in a deception worked by sin?

Throughout Romans Paul indicates another manner in which sin is able to deceive through the Law's commandment. It is not that the Law "falsely" promises life or is overpowered by sin.²²³ Rather, this deception occurs whenever any "I" imagines that he could secure the final verdict of "Righteous" from God by his own works of the Law and in spite of his own sin (2:17-24; 3:20,28; 4; 9:31-10:5). Because of the weakness of the flesh, sin is able to misuse the Law in order to provoke "man's self-assertion."²²⁴ Sin can use the commandment to deceive man into believing that he can adequately fulfill the Law and thereby obtain the life which

1 Cor. 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:3) without reference to Genesis 3 (as also *ἀπαράω* in Eph. 5:6).

²²²In Genesis 2-3 the serpent deceived: 1) by drawing attention only to the negative portion of God's command (2:16-17; 3:1); 2) by denying the fatal punishment for disobedience (2:17 with 3:4); and 3) by using the commandment itself in order to draw forth mistrust of God's intention (3:5). See Leenhardt, 188-89; Cranfield, 1:352-53.

²²³For the former, see Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 91; countered by Espy, 162. The latter is also suggested by Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 89,90. Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 54, rejects both in stating, "The Law is spoken of as being free from all guilt, because the deception lies with sin" ("Damit ist aber das Gesetz von aller Schuld freigesprochen, denn der Betrug liegt bei der Sünde").

²²⁴Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 384; he goes on to note Wilckens's "justified rebuttal of a 'too Lutheran' interpretation"; see Wilckens, 2:107-10. So Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 44, states, "The real intent of the law is corrupted into its opposite into actual idolatry."

the Law promises (see 9:31-10:5).²²⁵ Paul characterizes that approach as "a *mistaken* understanding of the law."²²⁶ This deception, then, involves a denial of the fact that sin is in control and accomplishing death even through the Law's commandment.²²⁷

Although the "I" was unaware of it, the more he relied upon the Law as the way of life, the more certain the result was to be death.²²⁸ The redundant *δι' αὐτῆς* in verse 11 serves to separate the "deceiving" from the "killing." This deception persisted for a time, but the "I" now realizes that sin had actually been using God's commandment as the occasion to bring about his death! In reality, the "I" had been deceived and killed precisely through the commandment he sought to follow as the path to life. Sin's deception had

²²⁵Recognized by Espy, 162. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 384, contends that Paul's words here stand as a "sharp reverse to and rebuttal of the traditional Jewish assumption that the law/commandment promoted life." They are, rather, a sharp reverse to the view that man is able to fulfill the Law and thereby attain life before God. As Paul proceeds to make clear, sin is the culprit which prohibits man from being able "to do" the Law and then blinds him to the actual effect of the Law in a sinful world; see Lenski, 473.

²²⁶Dunn, Romans 1-8, 402; yet he concludes that this was "rendered obsolete as early as the fall." Though sin makes the obtaining of life through the Law impossible, this is not because the Law has become "obsolete" (see 3:31).

²²⁷Theissen, 231; though he explains this in psychological terms as "an incomplete consciousness of sin" and "an unconscious conflict with the law."

²²⁸Murray, 1:252. This is not the most literal way of understanding *χωρὶς νόμου* in verse 9, but it is certainly more literal than removing Paul from his own use of the first person singular.

led him only into further transgressions of the commandment.²²⁹

When the Law accomplishes what Paul describes in verses 7-11, "it effects . . . that which God wants done against sin and the sinner."²³⁰ "It was the divine intention with the Law that it might increase the destructive effect of sin" (4:15; 5:20).²³¹ But even here, where Paul details the "destructive effect" of the demanding Law, he understands

how the law can have both a positive function and a negative function . . . at one and the same time: negative because it is the glue which binds sin to death; positive because it leaves the sinner no alternative to death other

²²⁹An important parallel is Eph. 4:22: τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης; Heb. 3:13 also speaks of the "deceitfulness of sin."

²³⁰Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 281; it makes sin utterly sinful and enables the Law to be used as a destroying power as is fully revealed in 7:13. Moo, 127, aptly summarizes that for Paul the Mosaic Law is "an instrument which imprisons under sin (Rom 7.6; Gal 3.22,23), enables wrongdoing to be 'charged' to each individual's account as trespass (Rom 5.13, cf. Gal 3.19) producing wrath (Rom 4.15) and death (2 Cor 3.7)."

Käsemann, 198, concludes that verse 11 "explains the contradiction" between the intention of the Law and its actual function. However, God certainly knew the effect the Law would have on sinful human beings. There is no reason to see here or in the verses to follow a "discrepancy between the law's original purpose and its real effect," as Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 281, or "a glaring self-contradiction" in Paul's view of the Law as charged by Räisänen, Paul and the Law, 142; Sanders, Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People, 77-81; see below, pp. 139-40.

²³¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 56, "Es war die göttliche Absicht mit dem Gesetz, daß es die verderbliche Wirkung der Sünde steigere." Dunn, Romans 1-8, 402, points out, "Paul would hardly think that [sin's misuse of the Law] had caught God unawares or altered his purposes for man."

than the death of Christ.²³²

In verses 12-13 Paul arrives at the critical point in his analysis of the Law. Verse 12 returns directly to the hypothetical question posed in verse 7, "Is the Law sin?" The answer which follows reveals quite definitively that "Paul is no antinomian":²³³ "So then²³⁴ the Law [is] holy and the commandment [is] holy, just, and good" (v. 12). It is important to note that Paul was careful not to attribute any guilt to the Law in verses 7-11.²³⁵ He now announces that the Law is ἀγιος,²³⁶ an attribute which "puts it as far

²³²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 401; see 7:4-6. Furthermore, when Paul speaks of the Law in the wider sense as the entire Torah, he can also conclude with Käsemann, 197, that "the intention of the law was the promise of 3:21." However, one must recognize that Paul defines νόμος in 3:21 in a wider sense to include the entire Torah which, along with "the Prophets," includes the promise of the Gospel. Käsemann does not separate these clearly enough when he concludes, 198, "The point is that grace revealed itself originally in the law. This was perverted when the law was misunderstood as a demand for achievement."

²³³Käsemann, 198, asserts this against Lietzmann.

²³⁴The ὥστε, as in 7:4, indicates a connection with the preceding verses as well. The μέν is used in an anacoluthon in order to set the contrast with sin even further, BAGD, 503[2a]; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 385.

²³⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 47. As Lenski summarizes, 458, "While everything is wrong with regard to our sin, nothing is wrong with regard to the law and its just condemnation of our sin. The law would be wrong and do wrong if it did not condemn our sin."

²³⁶Compare 2:20 where Paul characterizes the Law as "the embodiment of τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας." According to Murray, 1:253, the Law reflects the purity of God and demands the same from man.

away from sin as possible."²³⁷ In the same manner, Paul emphatically declares that *ἡ ἐντολή*, which here stands synonymous with *νόμος* and continues to indicate its sense in this section,²³⁸ is *ἀγία καὶ δίκαια καὶ ἀγαθή*. *ἐντολή* might refer to the specific commandment cited in verse 7,²³⁹ but, as verse 8 made clear, that commandment was clearly chosen to typify, as well as to be inclusive of, all of the Law's commandments. The adjectives used to describe *ἡ ἐντολή* in verse 12 "are not casually chosen."²⁴⁰ They serve to point out the origin, nature, and effects of the Law.²⁴¹ *ἡ ἐντολή* is holy because its source is holy and it mandates holy conduct.²⁴² It is "just" in that it does not make unfair demands but, rather, calls for the right conduct which God exhibits and requires.²⁴³ Finally, its description is broadened out to indicate that the Law's commandment is "good." It is intended by God to be beneficial for people.²⁴⁴

²³⁷Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 283.

²³⁸*νόμος* continues to be used synonymously with *ἐντολή* to denote the commands of the Torah. See the discussion above, pp. 114-15.

²³⁹As Murray, 1:253, suggests.

²⁴⁰Dunn, Romans 1-8, 402.

²⁴¹Leenhardt, 189.

²⁴²Lev. 19:2; Murray, 1:253, concludes that it reflects the purity of God and demands the same.

²⁴³Murray, 1:254.

²⁴⁴See, for example, Deut. 10:12-13; Newman and Nida, 136; Murray, 1:253.

Verse 13 functions as a hinge:²⁴⁵ 1) it summarizes Paul's arguments from verses 7-11;²⁴⁶ 2) τὸ ἀγαθόν picks up on the statements about the Law in verse 12, and 3) as in verse 7, Paul poses a rhetorical challenge which he proceeds to answer.²⁴⁷ "Therefore did that which is good become for me death? May it never be!" (13a).²⁴⁸ In light of verse 12, τὸ ἀγαθόν is to be identified with the Law's commandment and, actually, the Law itself.²⁴⁹ Paul also refers to the Law's command with ἀγαθόν in verses 18 and 19, as well as with καλός in verse 16 and τὸ καλόν in verses 18 and 21.²⁵⁰

Two final ἵνα clauses follow which parallel the thought and structure of verse 8 and indicate the two-fold purpose for

²⁴⁵Espy, 171; and Dunn, Romans 1-8, 376, recognize this. The former states, 171, "v. 13 does not so much conclude what precedes as introduce what follows."

²⁴⁶Theissen, 186.

²⁴⁷The γάρ of verse 14 stresses its link with verse 13. According to Cranfield, 1:355, "It introduces . . . support for the contention of the previous verse as a whole."

²⁴⁸Paul denounces this with μὴ γένοιτο, as in 7:7. This is not a "metaphorical death" with Newman and Nida, 136, but the recognition of a spiritual one, see above, pp. 124-26; compare 4 Ezra 9:36-37.

²⁴⁹Lenski, 470, defines the use of the neuter singular adjective with the article as "an equivalent of the abstract noun, . . . The context indicates what is referred to, here it is 'the law' and 'the commandment.'" The description of the Law as "that which is good" is also made in tractate Aboth 6:4 of The Mishnah, ed. H. Danby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 459; see the other references cited by Strack and Billerbeck, 1:809; also Walter Grundmann, in TDNT, s.v. "ἀγαθός," 1:13-15; Black, 104; Newman and Nida, 136.

²⁵⁰See below on these verses; also Black, 104-5; Theissen, 211, 220.

which "I" was confronted with the Law.²⁵¹ "But²⁵² sin, in order that it might be shown [to be] sin, [was] accomplishing death in me through that which is good, in order that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (13b).²⁵³ In the first clause sin is unmasked by the Law (3:20; 7:7). It is shown to be what it truly is, "rebellion against the command of God."²⁵⁴ Second, through the commandment sin becomes even more sinful (5:20; 7:8-9).²⁵⁵ Its power is enhanced and its true character is exposed.²⁵⁶ So the end product of the confrontation between "I" and the

²⁵¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 57; Käsemann, 198; Cranfield, 1:354; Newman and Nida, 137.

²⁵²Note the strong adversative (*ἀλλά*).

²⁵³In the last phrase *κατά* introduces a standard or rule of measure. Together with *ὑπερβολήν* it means "to an extraordinary degree, beyond measure" according to BAGD, 840; as in 1 Cor. 12:31; 2 Cor. 1:8; 4:17; Gal. 1:13; see Robertson, 609.

ἀμαρτωλός is normally a substantive (3:7; 5:8,19), but used here as an adjective according to BAGD, 44[1].

²⁵⁴Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 289. Newman and Nida, 136-37, state, "Paul is saying that one cannot see how evil sin is until he realizes that sin takes what is good, that is, a divine command, and uses this to bring death to men. . . . [Yet] Paul intimates that the reason God intended for sin to be shown up in its true nature was so that he might destroy it (see 5:20)."

²⁵⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 57, points out that this clause "intensifies" ("steigert") the first. Lenski, 471, says that they are appositional, but then adds that the second has a "fuller form."

²⁵⁶Murray, 1:253; Kümmel, Römer 7, 57, who calls this sin's "complete dreadfulness" ("ganze Furchtbarkeit").

Law is only death (v. 10).²⁵⁷

In Romans 7:7-13, these two key points emerge:

- 1) Paul clearly enunciates the "destructive effect" of the Law in exposing, convicting, and arousing sin.²⁵⁸ This is due to the fact that the "I"'s "encounter with the divine commandment is no longer direct. Sin always stands in between and has fundamentally perverted my relationship to God's commandment. This perversion is both deception and death. For it suggests that now I may grasp life, which because of sin is never any longer truly an open possibility for me."²⁵⁹ Yet the blame for this rests squarely upon sin and not upon the Law.
- 2) A recognition of the death worked by sin is what God intended to accomplish by revealing the Law's commands.²⁶⁰ God's ultimate purpose in the Law is to show sin for what it is and to demonstrate unequivocally the need for the Gospel which accomplishes that which the Law was unable to do (see 8:2-4).

While Paul continues to enunciate the character and function of the Law in verses 14-25, his main purpose is not merely to justify or support the statements he made in 7:7-13.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷θάνατος is present in verse 11 and twice in verse 13; the verb ἀποθνήσκω occurs in verses 10 and 11. See Dunn, Romans 1-8, 387; Wilckens, 2:84.

²⁵⁸Kümmel, Römer 7, 56, "verderbliche Wirkung"; see also Murray, 1:254.

²⁵⁹Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 92.

²⁶⁰See also 3:19-20; 5:20-21; Barrett states, 145, "The purpose was God's." Lenski, 471, takes the verbs in 7:13 as divine passives and adds, "God sent the law for this purpose."

²⁶¹Although Kümmel, Römer 7, 10, recognizes that verses 14-24 are more than a proof of 7:7-13, as suggested by Dodd, 129 ("further explanation"), he, 57, concludes that they are "first of all" ("zunächst") a continuation of Paul's defense of the Law. But this need not suggest, as Kümmel, 56, intimates, that Paul's earlier statements in defense of the Law were not entirely convincing ("nicht ganz beweisend").

According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 406-7, Paul's specific aim as he moves ahead is two-fold: 1) He intends to counter any thought that to be under the good and holy law is not so

"For we know²⁶² that the Law is Spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold under sin" (v. 14). In verse 14, as in 7:1, Paul draws his hearers along with him by assuming their agreement.²⁶³ In so doing, he provides further evidence that his rebuke of the question posed in verse 13 was valid.²⁶⁴ Having stated the unavoidable fact that sin, through the Law's commandment, has accomplished death (v. 13), Paul proceeds to

bad after all. To base one's standing before God upon the Law is disastrously fatal. 2) Paul strives, without limiting the believer's present reality of salvation, to describe the tension which still exists due to the continued presence of sin and death in this life. As a result, *ibid.*, 407, the "dominant feature" in verses 14-25 is an "intensified note of existential anguish and frustration." However, Dunn, *ibid.*, 406, improperly overstates that "sin and death still have a claim" and describes the Christian as "suspended (so uncomfortably) between the death and resurrection of Christ."

Other conclusions are that verses 14-25 represent a new excursus, Hildebrecht Hommel, "Das 7. Kapitel des Römerbriefes im Licht antiker Überlieferung," *Theologia Viatorum* 8 (1961-62), 102; and that "the results of 7b-11 are presented in their cosmic breadth," as Käsemann, 199; so Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 95. Bandstra, 140, states the theme as follows: "In spite of the 'I' assenting to and willing to do the good, neither the law nor the mind nor the 'I' can deliver the person from the power of sin and its consequences."

²⁶² Instead of οἶδαμεν, Lenski, 475, divides the word into οἶδα μὲν to match the first person singular of this entire section. However, Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 514, properly points out that the ensuing contrast in this verse is not between the "I" here and the "I" in the following portion of the verse but between ὁ νόμος and the ἐγὼ which follows. In addition, *ibid.*, "the plural οἶδαμεν is a typical expression which the apostle uses when he refers to a commonly acknowledged truth (2:2; 3:19; 8:22,28; 1 Cor. 8:4; 2 Cor. 5:1,16).

²⁶³ A similar construction is used in 2:2; 3:19; 8:22,28; 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Tim. 1:8. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 387, speculates that this implies that Paul is speaking to those with "a background of sympathy toward the law."

²⁶⁴ Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 58.

elaborate further on the blamelessness of the Law in causing that death. At the same time, he underscores why the Law is unable to overcome sin and death.²⁶⁵

With πνευματικός Paul refers, as in verse 6, to the Spirit of God.²⁶⁶ Now he unmistakably associates the Spirit with the Law.²⁶⁷ This link, along with verse 12, makes it clear that Paul "will not permit any shadow to rest on the law."²⁶⁸ He does not see the Law in and of itself as a negative or evil force, neither is its influence limited merely

²⁶⁵Dunn, Romans 1-8, 406, states, "It is precisely the inability of the law to bring about man's holiness, righteousness, and good which Paul evidently feels the need to explore further" (see 8:2-3); similarly Leenhardt, 180, "While it makes aware of sin, the law does not impart the capacity to do the will of God."

²⁶⁶Murray, 1:254; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 407; Black, 104. In verse 6 Paul used πνεῦμα; here he uses πνευματικός to refer to the Holy Spirit as in 1:11; 1 Cor. 2:13-15; 3:1; 10:3-4; 12:1; 15:44,46; Eph. 5:19; Col. 1:9; 3:16; compare also Matt 22:43; Mark 12:36; Acts. 1:16; 4:25; 28:25; 2 Peter 1:21. It cannot refer to a merely human spirit in Rom. 7:14 as Newman and Nida, 137, suggest, "the Law is for our spirits but I am just a body."

²⁶⁷The Spirit's association with the Law indicates the "divine origin and character" of the Law according to Murray, 1:254; so Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 290; a "possible" ("möglich") emphasis according to Kümmel, Römer 7, 58. Barrett points out, 146, that such an assertion "was axiomatic in Judaism"; citing Sanhedrin 10:1.

Cranfield, 1:356, goes a step farther than the text here stating that since the Law is Spiritual, it can only be understood with the help of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10-16). Thus only the believer, possessed by the Spirit, can acknowledge that the Law is Spiritual, consent to it, and even rejoice in it (vv. 16,22,23,25b). Without the Spirit, the Law kills (2 Cor. 3:6) and all that can be accomplished is obedience to the letter (γράμμα; v. 6); see below, pp. 313-17.

²⁶⁸Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 298, citing Heb. 7:18-19; 10:1.

to the old age of sin and death (3:31). On the contrary, the Law is a Spirit-filled entity that is intended for life (7:10). However, due to the fallen nature of the flesh, sin has been able to utilize the Law for its own ends (vv. 8,11).

Passages such as these last three verses have led some to charge Paul with being inconsistent and even nonsensical in his appraisal of the Law.²⁶⁹ At first glance verses 7-14 appear to exemplify a contradictory attitude toward the Law on Paul's part and to justify those who criticize him. However, Paul is aware that improper conclusions could be drawn from some of his assertions about the Law and he actively and carefully opposes them. What Paul has stated previously, and makes clear in verse 13, is in no way contradictory to his definition of the Law as *ἅγιος* and *πνευματικός* (vv. 12, 14).²⁷⁰ Instead, his "whole emphasis falls on the inability

²⁶⁹For example, Räsänen, Paul and the Law, 11, charges that "contradictions and tensions have to be accepted as constant features of Paul's theology of the law." Later, *ibid.*, 201, suggests that Paul's understanding of the Law is nonsensical or "strangely ambiguous" and, 199, uses descriptions such as "oscillates" and "blurred"; see also Sanders, Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People, 77-81. Compare Hans Hübner, Law in Paul's Thought, tr. J. Greig, *Studies of the New Testament and Its World*, ed. J. Riches, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), for example, 60-65, 135-36, who contends that within Romans Paul's view of the Law is consistent but that it has developed from, and stands in contrast with, the earlier view he expressed in Galatians. For a review of these, see A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Paul and the Law," Scottish Journal of Theology 38 (1985):613-22.

²⁷⁰Dunn, Romans 1-8, 385, points out that those who quickly jump to negative appraisals and simplistic solutions regarding Paul's view of the Law "betray a failure to grasp the nature and thrust of Paul's critique of the law as understood within the Judaism of his own day."

of the law to overcome sin and its condemnatory role is underscored."²⁷¹

In verse 14 the Law's inability stems from the fact that, in stark contrast to this Spirit-filled Law, "I am composed of flesh,²⁷² which is to say,²⁷³ I have been sold under sin" (compare 8:3). *σάρκινος* expresses more than a person who is "characterized by flesh and blood" by virtue of creation.²⁷⁴ It refers to the fallen, sinful "nature which I have inherited from Adam" (5:12,18).²⁷⁵ This is

²⁷¹Käsemann, 194-95; as becomes clear in 8:2-4.

²⁷²*σάρκινος* is the better attested (κ*,A,B,C,D) and also the more difficult reading since it is used only 3 times by Paul in contrast to the more common *σάρκικος* (second hand of κ). Robertson, 158, and Alford, 2:381, conclude that *σάρκινος* has the stronger meaning of the two and Robertson suggests the translation "rooted in the flesh."

²⁷³The participle is epexegetical; it further explains and supports the definition of *σάρκινος* adopted here.

²⁷⁴Paul does not simply mean that the "I" continues to exist in a fleshly body as Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 299, proposes. Dodd, 129, similarly refers to *σάρκινος* as "the common stuff of human nature" which is not necessarily evil but powerless for moral ends. Seeing "overtones of evil . . . is not a necessary conclusion" according to Newman and Nida, 138; similarly Barrett, 146. Lenski, 476, believes that verse 17 indicates that this expression is to be understood ethically and denotes only a lesser part of the "I" who here confesses that he is "made of something that cannot be spiritualized in this life." Black, 104-5 and Paul Althaus, "Zur Auslegung von Röm 7,14ff.," Theologische Literaturzeitung 77 (1952):475-80, identify the source of Paul's use of this term in the Hellenistic Judaism of the period. However, all of these are excluded by the rest of verse 14 which is descriptive of what *σάρκινος* means.

²⁷⁵Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 145; though he weakly concludes that this nature merely "finds the law uncongenial." As Käsemann states, 199, it further describes man "in his cosmic fallenness to the world." A key point of

further explained by the phrase which follows: *πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*. With the perfect passive of *πιπράσκω*, the picture of the slave market is reintroduced (6:16-23; 7:1).²⁷⁶ This is not surprising, since "the imagery of successful surprise attack [*ἀφορμή*; vv. 8,11] also naturally leads into that of slavery."²⁷⁷ Here, sin is again depicted as a "personal force that takes hold of a man's life and controls it."²⁷⁸

At the same time, one cannot overlook the fact that in verse 14 "the 'I' narration," so prominent in verses 7-11,

interpretation is the relationship between this verse and the existence depicted in verse 5 as *ἐν σαρκί*. Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 299, contends that verse 14 cannot be equated with the "carnally-minded" life of 7:5; see also Cranfield, 1:337. It is certainly significant that *σάρκινος* is used by Paul to describe the weakness of *believers* in 1 Cor. 3:1. Thus *σάρκινος* here need not embrace "the whole man inasmuch as he is not in faith or under grace," as Schweizer, TDNT, 7:144, proposes. In addition, Dunn, Romans 1-8, 388, points out that the description of the "I" as fleshly "weakens any parallel which may be drawn with later Gnostic ideas."

²⁷⁶The Septuagint's phrase, "*ἐπράθησαν ποιῆσαι τὸ πονηρόν*" is somewhat similar as used, for example, in 1 Kings 20:20,25; 2 Kings 17:17; 1 Macc. 1:15. Murray, 1:261, discusses how the first two references have led some (citing Meyer, Bengel, and Clifford; see also Lenski, 462) to conclude that the parallel to Ahab clearly indicates that the "I" is to be identified as a non-Christian. However, Murray, 1:260-61, correctly responds that in Ahab's case, he sold himself to evil before the Lord as the Hebrew Hithpael indicates (*התמכר*). Here the "I" has passively been sold to a power outside of himself. The two cases are not analogous. Compare also the Wisdom of Solomon 1:4: "Because wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, nor dwell in a body enslaved to sin" ("*οὐδὲ κατοικήσει ἐν σώματι κατάρχεω ἁμαρτίας*").

²⁷⁷Observed by Dunn, Romans 1-8, 388; see n. 170, p. 116.

²⁷⁸Newman and Nida, 139; though Paul depicts it as such, he does not actually consider sin to be a *personal* force.

is continued.²⁷⁹ But now the "I" speaks for the first time in the present tense (ἐγὼ . . . εἰμι).²⁸⁰ Additionally, the perfect participle (πεπραμένος) stands in contrast to the consistent use of the aorist tense in regard to the "I" in verses 7-13. It represents the present condition of the "I."²⁸¹ While the transition from the consistent use of the aorist tense to the present tense here may be somewhat subtle,²⁸² it is underscored by the fact that the present tense

²⁷⁹ Bandstra, 139.

²⁸⁰ This transition has been the object of various interpretations. According to Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 285, it indicates a transition to Paul's present Christian existence. Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 86, counters, "It is difficult to put the weight on it that Nygren claims." Eduard Ellwein, "Das Rätsel von Römer VII," Kerygma und Dogma 1 (1955):262, emphasizes that it points to an intensification ("Steigerung"). Karl Kertelge, "Exegetische Überlegungen zum Verständnis der paulinische Anthropologie nach Römer 7," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 62 (1971):109, similarly concludes that in 14-25 "the I walks more strongly in the foreground" ("tritt das Ich stärker in den Vordergrund"). Ibid., 113, and Theissen, 228-34, then interpret this intensification as the process of becoming conscious. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 387, contends that it broadens out the field from "the 'once upon a time' of Adam to that of everyman in the present (εἰμι)." Käsemann, 195, similarly believes that it signals an extended focus which moves from merely the Jewish people or those under the Law in 7:7-13 to all people.

²⁸¹ The tense emphasizes that "the state or condition" of being "sold" is still in effect according to Fritz Rienecker, A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, tr. C. Rogers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1980), 364; also Dunn, Romans 1-8, 388.

²⁸² Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 86, calls the transition "unobtrusive." According to Theissen, 183, "The scissure in vv. 13-14 is marked too weakly to be considered the transition between pre-Christian and Christian periods of life." Yet he later admits, 184, "Up to now, there has been no satisfying interpretation of the change of tense." This includes

continues to be employed uniformly throughout the remainder of the chapter.²⁸³

It has been concluded that verse 14 depicts a situation in which the slavery of the "I" to sin is completely "unbroken."²⁸⁴ This predicament would then appear to contradict *the believer's* release from slavery to sin as described by Paul both prior to and after this section.²⁸⁵ As a result, it is argued that Paul cannot be speaking of his own Christian life, or of any other believer.²⁸⁶ James Dunn responds by charging those who contend that verse 14 cannot be describing the Christian with failing to recognize the tension which is present in the Christian's life.²⁸⁷ Dunn argues that Paul has outlined the believer's discontinuity with the present age in 7:1-6 and now speaks of his continuity within it.²⁸⁸

Verse 14 does present one of the strongest arguments

Kümmel's explanation, Römer 7, 110,126; see above, pp. 50-51.

²⁸³The present tense occurs 34 times in verses 14-25, the only exceptions being the perfect passive participle in verse 14, the use of οἶδα in verse 18 (both of which in effect have a present sense), and the future of ρύομαι in verse 24.

²⁸⁴Dunn, Romans 1-8, 406; but see the discussion below, pp. 153-54.

²⁸⁵For example, 6:14; 7:5; 8:5,8; according to Käsemann, 200, "What is being said here is already over for the Christian according to chap. 6 and chap. 8."

²⁸⁶See chapter one, pp. 46-48; so Schweizer, TDNT, 7:144, applies the description in the verses to follow to Paul's pre-Christian days; as Beker, Paul the Apostle, 217-18.

²⁸⁷Dunn, Romans 1-8, 406; citing Rom. 6:12-23.

²⁸⁸Ibid.

against viewing verses 14-25 as descriptive of a believer. In fact, if a Christian is being portrayed, one might have expected Paul to state just the opposite! "The Law belongs to the old, fleshly era and the believing 'I' is spiritual."²⁸⁹ However, the contrast Paul sets up is between the Spiritual Law and the fleshly "I."²⁹⁰ Whether or not one's interpretation of verse 14 is correct must be determined by the verses which follow, wherein Paul describes the "present" state of the "I" more precisely.²⁹¹

While verse 15 begins this description, it introduces a situation which is repeated with various nuances in the verses to follow.²⁹² It is important to notice that "in each instance, the starting point is a saying on the contradic-

²⁸⁹Suggested by Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 297-98; compare 5:20 and 8:9.

²⁹⁰It is not, as Kümmel, Römer 7, 59, states, "that the I stands in opposition to the πνεῦμα" ("daß das Ich dem πνεῦμα entgegengesetzt").

²⁹¹Paul more clearly defines this state, especially in verses 17,18,25. That verse 15 begins an explanation of 7:14 is recognized by Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 97; Käsemann, 201; Kümmel, Römer 7, 59, who argues that verse 15 proves the correctness of 7:14; and Lenski, 477-78, who points out that with the γάρ in 7:15, "Paul explains at length just what he means."

²⁹²So Espy, 172, "The most striking thing about vv. 14-20 is the repetition." Theissen, 211, suggests that this repetition is an indication that Paul is "reproducing a pre-formed thought." Even though the focus of the discussion moves more to the state of the "I" in the following verses, it is not improper to note with Dunn, Romans 1-8, 390, on verse 16, that a "major thrust of the argument is still to defend the law."

tion of willing and doing."²⁹³ Paul writes, "For I do not approve of that which I accomplish; indeed, I do not practice that which I will, but that which I hate, this I do" (v. 15). A crucial factor for understanding verse 15 is the sense of *γινώσκω*. Does Paul mean that the "I" does not know what he does, or that he fails to understand *why* he does it?²⁹⁴ Both of these interpretations seem impossible. The "I" goes on to describe the very things he is and is not doing, and also indicates his own understanding of the reason why this is so (vv. 14,17,20).²⁹⁵ Neither does *γινώσκω* refer merely to a "knowledge" gained by experience (as in 7:7).²⁹⁶ In line with the slavery motif of verse 14,²⁹⁷ Leon Morris suggests that the "I" does not know the reason or the purpose of those actions which are determined by his enslaved flesh.²⁹⁸ Cranfield properly pushes his definition further to the point

²⁹³Theissen, 188.

²⁹⁴"Understand" is accepted by Kümmel, Römer 7, 59, "das Nichtverständnis . . . nicht ein Nichtwissen."

²⁹⁵This speaks strongly against the objective interpretation of Bultmann and others; see above, pp. 57-58.

²⁹⁶Proposed by Käsemann, 202; also Dunn, Romans 1-8, 389.

²⁹⁷James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1897), 641, states, "Only the hypothesis of slavery explains his acts."

²⁹⁸Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 291, citing Lightfoot who translates, "I do it in blind obedience."

of "to acknowledge" or "approve."²⁹⁹ Although Cranfield seeks a background in Greek usage,³⁰⁰ this nuance is readily appropriated to γινώσκω through the Hebrew שָׁרָה.³⁰¹

The three words used to express "doing" in verses 15 and following are essentially synonymous.³⁰² Paul chooses them

²⁹⁹Cranfield, 1:358-59; Lenski, 428, defines it as "to know with affection, with appropriation, with acknowledgment." Alford, 2:381, counters that although this sense was introduced by Augustine and held by Erasmus, Beza, Grotius, Semler, and others, it "is not sanctioned by usage."

³⁰⁰Cranfield, 1:358-59; he cites the use of γινώσκω for the acknowledgment of a child by his father in Plutarch, Ages 3.1 (597a) and Augustine's statement in Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, vol. 35, col. 2071; see also Plato, Protagoras, 355c, which rejects the notion that "one may acknowledge things to be evil, and nevertheless do them."

³⁰¹So Bultmann, in TDNT, s.v. "γινώσκω," 1:697-98; in this light, Black, 105, suggests the meaning "to choose". Without suppressing the cognitive element, Murray, 1:261, extends this even further to include delighting and rejoicing in something (8:9; 1 Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:19; προγινώσκω in 11:2).

³⁰²Käsemann, 202, concludes that the variations "are undoubtedly rhetorical"; see also Newman and Nida, 138. Alford, 2:382, concludes that there is "no distinction between πράσσω and ποιέω here"; so also BAGD, 698[1]; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 391; Barrett, 147. Those scholars who attempt to make a subtle distinction between these verbs contend that while ποιέω is the basic word for "doing" (vv. 15,16,19,20, 21; see BAGD, 681[11b]), πράσσω indicates more of "a habitual 'doing', a practicing" (see Espy, 185, n. 62). If so, in verse 15 πράσσω denotes the inability to continually put the good into practice. In verse 19 it expresses resignation that evil is habitually done. Christian Mauer, in TDNT, s.v. "πράσσω," 6:636, points out that πράσσω is predominantly used for actions disapproved of in the New Testament and never utilized for an action of God or Christ. He argues that it can be distanced from the other two verbs here in that it is used of a "doing" "which is not orientated to fulfillment." Cranfield, 1:258, similarly contends that πράσσω is less definite and more appropriate for an inconclusive activity. Such a distinction is difficult to maintain in this context, however. Even less likely is the suggestion of Sanday and Headlam, 181,

because their meanings overlap. In this context, however, the presence of *κατεργάζομαι* may be the most significant because it emphasizes the actual accomplishing, or bringing to fruition, of both good and evil (vv. 15,17,18,20).³⁰³ What deeds are actually "done" and "not done" as the specific objects of these verbs is not explicitly stated. However in this context, the *implied* objects of these "doing" verbs are certainly the actions which are either commanded or forbidden by the Law.³⁰⁴ "The point at issue in verse 15 is . . . performance in relation to the law."³⁰⁵ There is no legitimacy to insert into the text man's intention or desire to achieve life.³⁰⁶

The situation introduced in verse 15 virtually defies

that *πράσσω* means "to act as a moral and responsible being."

³⁰³According to Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 44, it is determinative for defining the other two verbs; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 380, identifies it as "a thematic word in ch 7"; see also Espy, 184-85, n. 62.

³⁰⁴Compare 2:13,14,25; this is further indicated by the presence of *νόμος* in verses 16,22, *τὸ καλόν* as a reference to the Law in verses 18,21, and *ἀγαθόν* in verse 18 in light of verse 13.

³⁰⁵Ronald Fung, "The Impotence of the Law: Toward a Fresh Understanding of Romans 7:14-25," in Scripture, Traditions, and Interpretation, eds. W. Gasque and W. LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 43.

³⁰⁶This is foundational to Bultmann's interpretation. He concludes, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 43, "The object of man's intention is life, but the result of what he does is death." He interprets 7:15 to mean "man does not know that his serving 'the old written code' leads to death." Ibid., 44, concludes, "All action is *a priori* directed against its own proper intention. *This is the conflict!*" Bultmann's interpretation is evaluated above, see pp. 57-58.

verbal explanation.³⁰⁷ The "I" here reveals that something gets in between "my willing and my doing."³⁰⁸ But the "I" is never depicted as two "I"'s in verses 15-25; nor do we have a schizoid, dual, or split personality in this section.³⁰⁹ Rather, "it is the same 'I' each time -- the 'I' 'sold under sin' in its fleshliness, and the 'I' as 'the inner man.'"³¹⁰ Paul does not divide or separate the "I" from "the flesh."³¹¹ Neither can that which is portrayed here be explained merely

³⁰⁷Dunn, Romans 1-8, 390, concludes, "As he did with the law in vv 7-13, so here, Paul having painted the 'I' in blackest terms (v 14) now shows that categories are not so clear-cut."

³⁰⁸Ibid., 406; though he calls this "a split in the 'I'." He later, 408, attempts to put it this way: The "I" "understands well enough that he himself is the subject performing the actions he himself abhors (vv 15-16)."

³⁰⁹Kümmel uses a variety of terms. At times he, Römer 7, 63, sees the "I" in terms of "der ganze Ich." But elsewhere he, 59, portrays this struggle in terms of two different "I"s stating, "The acting I is apparently independent of the willing I and stronger than this one" ("Das handelnde Ich is anscheinend unabhängig vom wollenden Ich und stärker also dieses"); see also *ibid.*, 60, "das wollende Ich mit dem handelnden nicht identisch ist"; and, *ibid.*, 61 and 62, where Kümmel speaks of the "I" in a narrow and a wider sense ("Gesamtich"; "in den weiteren ἐγώ-Begriff"). Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 97, ends up with three "splits" in the "I."

³¹⁰Dunn, Romans 1-8, 390; he adds, 408, there is not "a split between the 'I' and the flesh." Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 38, similarly states, "Intentions and actions are not distributed between different subjects . . . but both are carried out by the same self." See also Conzelmann, 234-35; Kümmel, Römer 7, 136; Black, 105.

³¹¹As Lenski, 480, states, the "duality" results from the "presence of an extraneous power in him beside his own ἐγώ."

in terms of inner psychology³¹² or moral shortcoming.³¹³ More profoundly, there is a "cleavage in the existence of *the whole man*."³¹⁴ In 7:15 we observe, for the first time, that the present slavery of the "I" mentioned in verse 14 is "a slavery under protest."³¹⁵ The "I" does what he "hates" (*μισέω*; v. 15).

Paul continues, "But since I am doing that which I do not will, I agree with³¹⁶ the Law that [it is] excellent" (v. 16).³¹⁷ The presence of *νόμος* indicates that Paul continues to discuss the effects of the Law's commandments upon the

³¹²See the discussion below, pp. 161-64. For an able attempt at a psychological interpretation, see Theissen, 222-65. While he critiques the impropriety of other psychological views, 222-28, and brings out many good points, his conclusion, 229, is that "Romans 7 depicts how [Paul's] once-unconscious conflict with the law became conscious." The latter is said to be revealed in verses 14-25.

³¹³Käsemann, 200, concludes that "a purely or primarily moral interpretation of the text cannot be harmonized." Yet he wonders why "it constantly dominates exposition." Käsemann correctly understands that Paul's discussion is on a much deeper level.

³¹⁴Schrenk, in *TDNT*, s.v. "θέλω," 3:51, emphasis mine; he concludes that this "I" "does not follow the true way of salvation."

³¹⁵Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 389.

³¹⁶The common verb *φημι* is found only here in the New Testament with the prefixed *σύν*.

³¹⁷Käsemann, 203, concludes that this verse is key in showing that "the experience Paul envisions consists in the fact that the pious . . . do not succeed in realizing the will of God as the true good so long as the Spirit of Christ is not given to them."

"I."³¹⁸ However, Paul's chief interest in this verse is not to *conclude* his defense of the Law,³¹⁹ but to show the agreement (σύμφημι) which exists between the will of the "I" and the Law. In spite of this agreement, the sentence structure implies that what is described is actually happening.³²⁰ The same "I" whose will (θέλω) opposes the evil and agrees with the Law, at the same time accomplishes that which is against both his will and the Law. Yet the "I" recognizes that the Law is not to blame for his own inability to live according to its commands and to refrain from what it forbids.³²¹ The "I" here "predicates of the law the highest quality of good-

³¹⁸Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 44, limits this to "the affirmation of [the Law's] basic intention, which is to lead to life." He contends that νόμος does not, then, refer to the "concrete demands of the law in a specific situation." Surely the citation of the tenth commandment in 7:7 and the interchange between νόμος and ἐντολή throughout this section speaks against this. The "I" fails to accomplish that which he wills in accordance with the commandment in the "specific situations" of life.

³¹⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 59, "and 7:16, therefore, draws out the conclusion for the defense of the Law" ("und 7,16 zieht daraus den Schluß für die Verteidigung des Gesetzes"). This cannot be as Paul uses νόμος seven more times in the chapter, refers to it with τὸ καλὸν in verse 18, and alludes to it twice with ἀγαθὸν in verses 18 and 19.

³²⁰As in verse 20 also. Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 3:115, suggests the translation "since"; Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 292, states, "If, as is the case, . . ."

³²¹So Kümmel, Römer 7, 59, "Therefore the Law cannot be made responsible for the action of the I" ("darum das Gesetz, . . . nicht für das Tun des Ich verantwortlich gemacht werden kann").

ness" (καλός).³²²

With the verb σύμφημι Paul conveys an attitude toward the Law which it is difficult to conceive of him attributing to a non-believer in its literal sense. However, Ernst Käsemann believes that the situation characterized by σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ "is present among the Gentiles only in the shadow of 2:14ff."³²³ In 2:12-16³²⁴ Paul describes Gentile unbelievers as those who are "without the Law" (2:12). Yet he contends that it is possible for them "to do the things of the Law" (2:14; see also 2:26-27). This is because, and also proves that, τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου is written in their heart and conscience (2:15). Yet Dunn rejects the possibility of including unbelieving Gentiles in the identity of the "I" here because

even if Paul does not exclude the possibility of an inward willing matching an outward doing on the part of the Gentiles (2:12-16), the point of Paul's gospel is precisely that it is only by the power of Christ's risen life that this possibility can be translated into full reality. The gospel . . . enables an obedience to the law from the heart.³²⁵

³²²Murray, 1:262. For the translation of καλός, see BAGD, 400[c], which offers, "in every respect *unobjectionable, blameless, excellent*." Black, 105, translates, "the ideal"; Lenski, 480, states that καλός conveys that the Law is "morally, spiritually excellent."

³²³Käsemann, 203; emphasis mine. He identifies the "I" in these verses with all people, and especially "the pious."

³²⁴Up to this point, Paul had stressed sin in the sense of evil actions done against the Law of God (1:18-2:12). However, in 2:13-14 he begins to emphasize that the Law also demands "doing" (ποιέω; πράσσω in 2:25), the non-fulfillment of which is also sin. Both aspects are summed up with finality in 3:20 and present throughout 7:14-25.

³²⁵Dunn, Romans 1-8, 394; see 6:15-18; 7:6.

It is far more likely that Jews who "relied on the Law and boasted in God" (2:17) would display the attitude toward the Law characterized by *σύμφημι*, though, according to Paul, they would do so in an artificial, superficial, or "fleshly" manner (2:28-29). Yet would such a "boasting" Jew ever confess to being "sold under sin" as the "I" does in 7:14?³²⁶ Would a pharisaic mind admit that which the "I" attributes to himself at the end of the very next verse?³²⁷

"But, this being the case, it is not then I who am accomplishing this, but sin which is dwelling³²⁸ in me" (v. 17). *νυνι* and *οὐκέτι* may hint back to a time when this was the case (vv. 7-13),³²⁹ but they more likely indicate a logical connection with the previous verse.³³⁰

³²⁶As well as the statements in verses 20,23,24,25. Paul certainly strives to drive home a recognition of the just condemnation which God has pronounced upon sin to anyone and everyone who boasts before God; see 2:19-24, especially verse 23; 3:9-20.

³²⁷See the conclusions below, pp. 169-70, and chapter four.

³²⁸Black, 106, suggests the meaning of "to possess" here and makes reference to demon possession (Matt. 12:45; Rev. 2:13; BAGD, 557). This is applicable but cannot be pressed to the point of total domination.

³²⁹Namely, when "I" was, in fact, accomplishing *πάσαν ἐπιθυμίαν* (v. 8) in the scenario described in verses 7-11; so Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 300; Lenski, 480-81. Dunn contends, Romans 1-8, 309, that eschatological overtones are also present to a limited degree.

³³⁰Both *νυνι* and *οὐκέτι* have a logical sense here; that is, they express what is so in light of what was said in verse 16. See 1 Cor. 13:13 and BAGD, 546[2a], for *νυνι* and, for *οὐκέτι*, Rom 7:20; 11:6a; 14:15; Gal. 3:18 and BAGD, 592[2]; see also Cranfield, 1:360; Alford, 2:382; Kümmel, Römer 7, 60; Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 292; and Käsemann,

Two assumptions which have been read into Paul's description in verses 15-17 must be rejected. First, the "I" does not attribute *all* of his actions to sin, as if he *never* did anything good but *only and always* evil.³³¹ Nothing in the text indicates this and, as John Murray responds, "This would be universalizing the apostle's language beyond all reasonable limits."³³² In addition, it is difficult to conceive of how any "I" could ever factually state that his will was *always* thwarted by his actions. If such an interpretation is pressed, it must also conclude that since we are only told about the desire of the "I" for the good in these verses, his will is *always* and only aligned with the Law. It is impossible to believe that Paul would purport this to be true of any un-

204, who translates, "Now in the light of my endorsement of the law . . ."

³³¹This is asserted by Kümmel, Römer 7, 62,107,133; Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 33-34, "According to verses 15-20 . . . the desire to do good is always destroyed by doing evil. . . . The sin . . . constantly overcomes his good intentions"; Schrenk, in TDNT, s.v. "θέλω," 3:50, "No true action corresponding to the θέλειν is achieved. The only result is something which the doer himself finds alien and abhorrent. . . . It never goes beyond readiness and purpose"; Barth, 265, "There is then no performance of *that which is good*"; and Ridderbos, 127, "The discord pictured in Romans 7 consists . . . in the absolute impotence of the I to break through the barrier of sin and the flesh in any degree at all."

³³²Murray, 1:273; see also the discussion below regarding παράκειμαι in verse 18b, p. 160, n. 366. Murray further writes, 1:272-73, "We are not to suppose that his determinate will to the good came to no effective fruition in practice." This is not a "statistical history." Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 144, states that Paul here depicts when the "I" "is compelled by *force majeure* to obey."

believer.³³³ Neither would he contend that a Christian never does any good whatsoever. Paul's immediate concern in these verses is more specific.³³⁴ He is attempting to explain how the "I" can will the good and yet repeatedly fail to accomplish it.³³⁵

Second, Paul's purpose is *not* to show that the "I" is somehow completely removed from his own actions against the Law or not responsible for his failure to enact its commands.³³⁶ In verse 17 the "I" unmistakably identifies the source which leads him to do that which his will abhors and which is counter to the good Law. It is described as *ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀμαρτία*.³³⁷ This phrase indicates that "the fault lies once again with sin,"³³⁸ but it does not mean the "I" is not guilty!³³⁹ "To infer . . . that the I which is speaking

³³³Chapter four will demonstrate this; see pp. 313-17.

³³⁴For his overall purpose, see chapter five.

³³⁵As Lenski, 483, concludes, "Paul describes only one side and not the whole; only where he fails and not where he succeeds. The latter follows in chapter 8."

³³⁶As attempted by Stendahl, 211-214. Barrett, 147, similarly contends that the point of verses 17-20 is that the conscience is "equally blameless with the law." This would hardly explain verse 24.

³³⁷Dunn, Romans 1-8, 399, describes this as "a constraining force from within." See also Espy, 172.

³³⁸Dunn, Romans 1-8, 407; as in verses 7-13.

³³⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 59, asserts, "The sin, not the I bears the guilt" ("Die Sünde, nicht das Ich, trägt die Schuld"). However, even though the "I" stands in opposition against sin, both sin and its guilt are not restricted merely to the flesh in these verses. Lenski, 481, points out that

here wishes to shirk responsibility would be to misunderstand the intention of the statement."³⁴⁰ What the "I" does confess is that the flesh is wholly sinful, that "I" am still fleshly, and that sin "dwells in me" (vv. 14,17). On the basis of the goodness exemplified in the Law, the only possible conclusion for the "I" to draw is that, in contrast to the Law, "I am sinful."³⁴¹ As Otto Michel puts it:

The dwelling of sin in man denotes . . . its lasting connection with his flesh, and yet also a certain distinction from it.³⁴²

This "certain distinction" is most important and Paul elaborates upon it in verse 18:³⁴³ "For I know that good is

Paul here means that "sin dwells in me" and not merely "in my flesh" as in verse 18. If the "I" is a Christian, however, there is a sense in which he bears no guilt or condemnation as 8:1 declares.

³⁴⁰Theissen, 261; the omitted section reads, "from such transsubjective attributions of causality . . ." Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 146, states, "As soon as my will consents to it, then it is I who do it." See also Alford, 2:382; Fung, 43; Lenski, 479; Murray, 1:263, and especially his conclusion on verse 25 (cited below, p. 194, n. 511).

³⁴¹Murray, 1:263.

³⁴²Michel, in TDNT, s.v. "οικέω," 5:135. This "certain distinction" makes it difficult to believe that Paul is describing a non-Christian. This is also the case when Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 293, states, "Paul is personifying sin again; it is in some sense a separate entity, even though it is within him." Ibid., further describes sin as a "squatter" which improperly implies that it is possible, though "very difficult," for the "I" to eject sin. Similarly Barrett, 147, "Sin is personified as an evil power which takes up residence within human nature, and there controls man's actions." Alford's use of the term, "the sinful principle," for example, 2:380, has the danger of becoming too abstract.

³⁴³According to Alford, 2:382, verse 18 is "an explanation of the *οικοδοσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία* of the last verse."

not dwelling in me,³⁴⁴ this is, in my flesh" (18a). This phrase does not imply that there is a complete separation between the "I" and the flesh.³⁴⁵ Verse 14 has already denied this. On the other extreme, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ μου does not serve as a complete identification of the "I" either.³⁴⁶ In view of the fact that the "I" has just been described as willing the good and agreeing with the Law (15b, 16; also 18b), this phrase is best regarded as a "necessary qualification of ἐν ἐμοί."³⁴⁷ Paul does not conceive of σὰρξ here as man's lower self³⁴⁸ or as an aspect of man which has merely been weakened.³⁴⁹ Neither can his uses of σὰρξ be

³⁴⁴Newman and Nida, 139, point out that the sense may be, "I know that the capacity [or the ability] to do good does not live in me."

³⁴⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 61, contends that "in v. 18 the willing I is being separated from the total I" ("in V. 18 von dem Gesamtich ein wollendes Ich geschieden wurde").

³⁴⁶Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 98, claims that in this phrase, the "I" is "defined, not limited."

³⁴⁷Cranfield, 1:360; Kümmel, Römer 7, 61, agrees that it "can be nothing other than a delimitation of the ἐγώ" ("Denn ἐν σαρκὶ μου kann nichts Anderes sein also eine Einschränkung des ἐγώ"); so also Fung, 43, "It has a corrective or restrictive sense, qualifying *en emoi*."

³⁴⁸Therefore Alford's distinction, 2:382-83, between "the better ἐγώ of the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος" or "the *self of the WILL in its higher sense*" and "the lower ἐγώ, ἡ σὰρξ μου" or "the lower carnal self" is unwise. Such platonic distinctions are not operative in these verses or in Paul's theology as a whole; see Robinson, The Body, 11-33; Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen, 178-83.

³⁴⁹As Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 293, who suggests, "Flesh is not inherently sinful, but it is weak."

restricted solely to the unbelieving state.³⁵⁰ In this context, Käsemann appropriately defines *σάρξ* as "the workshop of sin."³⁵¹ *σάρξ* denotes "the whole fallen human nature as such"³⁵² together with its "unavoidable attachment and tie to this world."³⁵³ This qualifying phrase supports an identification of the "I" as a Christian.³⁵⁴ No such qualification would be necessary if Paul is speaking of an unbeliever.

"For to will³⁵⁵ [the good] lies at hand for me, but the accomplishing of the good, no" (18b).³⁵⁶ According to Kümmel, this verse begins a new section in which Paul seeks to clarify

³⁵⁰ See above on 7:5, p. 100, n. 107, 108.

³⁵¹ Käsemann, 205; though the remainder of his definition ("... the whole person in his fallenness to the world and alienation from God.") stems from his interpretation of this section. If this were so, how could it be that Paul speaks of Christians and Jesus himself as existing in the flesh?

³⁵² Cranfield, 1:361.

³⁵³ Dunn, Romans 1-8, 391; note the distinction with *σῶμα* below, p. 186.

³⁵⁴ It is possible for Paul to apply verse 18a to Christians because their present existence is "unavoidably attached" to this world and they remain subject to sin's working through their flesh; see 13:14. Since the Spirit also dwells in the believer according to 8:8-11, Paul must add, "τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου." See below, pp. 332-35, 356-57.

³⁵⁵ Robertson, 1059, states that the subject of the verb is expressed by *τό* with the infinitive. Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 140, suggests the translation, "For I am ready to will what is good for me."

³⁵⁶ The *οὐ* has been seen as an abrupt ending to the sentence and various additions have been made (for example, *εὐρίσκω* and *γινώσκω*). However, *κ*, *A*, and *B* all end with *οὐ*, which is not without clear meaning. Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 293, n. 102, further suggests that *οὐ* represents "the firm negative 'No', and not simply 'not'."

the disparity which exists in the "I."³⁵⁷ However, the Law does not drop from view. The conflict Paul has set up is between the "I"'s ability to will the good *commanded by the Law* and his inability to perform it. Thus *both* the excellent commands of the Law (τὸ καλόν, v. 16)³⁵⁸ and the disparity in the "I" are present in this verse and those which follow.

The verb θέλω, which occurs seven times in verses 15-21, is especially important for identifying the context in which this conflict is set. In contrast to Paul's other uses of the word, Schrenk proposes that θέλω merely describes consent as "an impotent gesture" in Romans 7.³⁵⁹ Henry Alford defines θέλω in the sense of "to wish" and contends that it does not express "the *full determination* of the will."³⁶⁰ However, in verses 14-25, as well as in the context of Pauline usage in general, these definitions are too weak.³⁶¹ θέλω

³⁵⁷According to Kümmel, Römer 7, 10, it offers "die Aufklärung des Zweispalts." This is not completely accurate as has been shown, see above, p. 150 and n. 319. Barrett's suggestion, 147, that this "fresh point" begins at verse 17 at first glance makes more sense, but the logical connection with verse 16 excludes this; see n. 330, pp. 152-53.

³⁵⁸See above, pp. 149-51.

³⁵⁹Schrenk, TDNT, 3:50; he admits that this stands in contrast to Paul's use of θέλω elsewhere.

³⁶⁰Alford, 2:382, contends it "is not the *full determination* of the will, . . . but rather the *inclination* of the will . . . we have θέλω in the sense of to *wish*"; as in 1:13; 1 Cor. 7:7,32; 14:5; 2 Cor. 5:4; 12:20; Gal. 4:21.

³⁶¹Lenski, 479, argues that "wish" is too weak; so also Murray, 1:262, similarly discounts "I would." Schrenk, TDNT, 3:50, contends that while Rom. 7:14-25 "belongs to a different context," in every other passage where Paul uses θέλω

here represents the innate desire or determined will of the "I." This is indicated in two ways:

1) The $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ of the "I" in verses 14-25 is always mentioned first by Paul.³⁶² That which interferes with the ability of the "I" to enact his will always follows. The reason why Paul gives priority to the $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ throughout this discussion is because it, and not the flesh or the sin "in me," represents the real, true identity of the "I."³⁶³

2) The $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ in verses 14-25 is never divided. There is a disparity between willing and action, but Paul always uses $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ to refer to that which the "I" truly desires. In this section the will of the "I" is consistently aligned with the good and opposed to the evil as it is expressed in the Law of God.³⁶⁴

The tension and conflict depicted here are the result of something which gets in between the willing and the doing.

in a religious sense and together with "doing" verbs such as those present here, it *always* conveys the fact that "God effects in believers both a ready purpose and achievement." He cites 1 Cor. 7:36; 2 Cor. 8:10-11; Gal. 5:17. However, these passages do not convey what "God effects" but that which the believer desires in accordance with God's will.

³⁶²He brings it up first in verses 15b, 19, and 21, and then must detail why that which has the priority for the "I" is repeatedly being undermined.

³⁶³So according to Murray, 1:258, $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ reveals that the "I"'s "most characteristic will, the prevailing bent and propension of his will, is the good." He concludes, 1:262, that it is "the determined resolution and volition, that is to say, will to the fullest extent of volition, though not of executive volition."

³⁶⁴Ibid., 1:263, defines it as "that determinate will to the good, in accordance with the will of God, which is characteristic of his deepest and inmost self." He links this with "the will of 'the inward man' (v. 22)." Schrenk, TDNT, 3:50, similarly contends that when used of the believer, $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ "denotes definite purpose and readiness to do the divine will." Conzelmann, 230, counters that Paul "does not speak of the good will, but of willing as intending the good." However, it is difficult to read too much of a distinction between the two.

Paul describes it as the "sin which dwells in me . . . this is, in my flesh" (vv. 17,18).³⁶⁵ Yet sin is not able to quench the determined will of the "I." Neither does Paul state or imply that sin is always able to overcome the will's ability to put itself into action. On the contrary, the sense of the verb *παράκειμαι* in verse 18 is not only that something is near, but that it is possible. The "I" acknowledges that to do the good is "within reach for me" or "within my grasp."³⁶⁶

Verses 19-20 further illustrate what has been said:³⁶⁷

For I am not doing [the] good I will, but [the] evil³⁶⁸
I do not will, this I am practicing. But if I am doing
this which I do not will, I am no longer accomplishing
it but the sin which is dwelling in me.

There is perhaps too great a temptation to view these verses

³⁶⁵Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 290-92, notes that a tension between the believer and sin is also present in chapters 6 and 8 and contends that the "I" must be a Christian. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 391, also contends that Paul places this "willing" together with a "renewed heart and enlightened mind" (see 12:2 and contrast 1:21,28; 2:5). Ibid., further concludes that this "willing" stands in contrast to the "unredeemed mortal body (8:11,23)." However, for Paul the body has already been redeemed. It is the sin which resides in the flesh that makes it "this body of death" (v. 24).

³⁶⁶So Friedrich Büchsel, in TDNT, s.v. "*κεῖμαι*," 3:656, defines it as "to lie ready," "to lie at disposal"; similarly Sanday and Headlam, 182. This verb occurs only here and in verse 21 in the New Testament. See also below, p. 165.

³⁶⁷Verse 19 essentially repeats 15b, and verse 20 does the same for verses 16a and 17.

³⁶⁸Lenski, 482, defines *κακόν* as "what is base, inferior morally and spiritually" and marks a distinction between it and *πονηρός* which denotes that which is actively and viciously wicked.

merely as "repetition."³⁶⁹ Dunn suggests that "the main difference between vv 14-17 and vv 18-20 is that the law is not specifically mentioned in the latter."³⁷⁰ It is true that for Paul sin "exercises its influence whether the law is in view or not."³⁷¹ However, in light of the unquestionable use of τὸ ἀγαθόν to refer to the Law in 7:13, the ἀγαθόν in verse 19 certainly keeps the Law in view.³⁷² What stands out in these verses is that the thing willed by the "I" is now identified explicitly as the "good." Likewise, that which the "I" accomplishes against his determined will is identified as "evil" and attributed to "sin dwelling in me" (v. 20).³⁷³

Reference must be made to citations from pagan sources that have been cited as representing parallels to Paul's

³⁶⁹So Cranfield, 1:361; Bandstra, 145, states that they "add very little new to the argument, except that the 'I' is distinguished further from 'my flesh' in which no good dwells."

³⁷⁰Dunn, Romans 1-8, 408; on 391, he points out that verse 20 compresses verses 16-17 and "the element squeezed out is the defense of the law in 16b." Similarly Kümmel, Römer 7, 10,59.

³⁷¹Dunn, Romans 1-8, 409; as in 1:18-32; 2:12-16; 5:12-14.

³⁷²See above, pp. 114-15, 132-33 with notes 249,304,305; see also Fung, 44.

³⁷³Murray, 1:263. While the categories may be somewhat broader here, the "I"'s knowledge of and direction toward "good" and "evil" certainly stems from the Law. Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 293, suggests that the "I" had earlier described how he cannot stop doing the things which he does not approve and here he stresses how he cannot bring the good into action.

expressions in verses 15b, 18b and 19.³⁷⁴ The most common is Ovid's statement, "video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor."³⁷⁵ Epictetus is verbally even closer to Paul in writing, "ὁ θέλει οὐ ποιεῖ καὶ ὁ μὴ θέλει ποιεῖ."³⁷⁶ If these are accepted as legitimate parallels,³⁷⁷ Leenhardt is correct in observing:

We should interpret [Paul's] words in a psychological and secular sense; the inmost man is the natural man considered from the point of view of his faculties of moral judgment.³⁷⁸

However, these so-called parallels are not operating

³⁷⁴For a complete survey, see Theissen, 212-19; Hommel, 106-13. In addition to those quoted here, they also cite, for example, Plato, Republic, 9:589a, who speaks of the opposition between the inner and outer man. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 145, cites Homer, who writes in Epistles, 1.8.11, "I pursue the things that have done me harm; I shun the things I believe will do me good" ("quae nocuere sequar, fugiam quae profore credo").

³⁷⁵"I see and approve the better course, but I follow the worse"; 7:21 of Metamorphoses; cited from Ovid: Metamorphoses, tr. F. Miller, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols., (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 1:343.

³⁷⁶Arrian's Discourses of Epictetus, tr. W. Oldfather, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 2.26.4, vol. 1, p. 432. Cranfield, 1:359, n. 3, concludes that the context renders this citation "much less relevant" to Romans 7.

³⁷⁷As by Kümmel, Römer 7, 134, who concludes, "They are parallels and not sources" ("sie sind Parallelen und nicht Quellen zu Röm. 7,14ff."). See also Sanday and Headlam, 185; Lucien Cerfaux, The Christian in the Theology of St. Paul, tr. Lilian Soiron (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 438.

³⁷⁸Leenhardt, 191.

on the same level as Paul's statements in Romans 7:14-25.³⁷⁹ First, they do not take cognizance of the revealed Law of God which prompts and pervades Paul's discussion.³⁸⁰ Paul is describing a battle between the sinful flesh and the determined will of an "I" who agrees with and seeks to carry out the commands of the Spirit-filled Law (v. 14). Second, the "I" explicitly identifies sin as that which dwells in and controls his flesh (vv. 14,17-18,20). It is sin which actively prohibits him from doing what he wills. Finally, the "sharpness and frustration of the eschatological tension" which dominates the concluding verses of Romans 7 (vv. 24-25) are absent from these secular sources.³⁸¹ Thus the disparity in verses 14-25 "differs sharply" from the Greek world of

³⁷⁹According to Black, 105, "This conflict goes much deeper in Paul than in these hellenistic writers, since it is a conflict between the ideal of obedience to the Law and the actual reality of human nature as under the pressure of an occupying power, Sin." So Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," 37, charges, "It is impossible that in Romans 7:14ff this basic idea . . . could be abandoned in favor of the trite thought" of Ovid's statement; see also idem., Theology of the New Testament, 2 vols., tr. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 1:248. Leenhardt, 193, recognizes that Ovid's statement is empty of any transcendence. In regard to Epictetus, Theissen, 219, points out "that in Paul the deception proceeds from sin, whereas in Epictetus sin is a result of deception."

³⁸⁰Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 146; Barrett, 147.

³⁸¹Dunn, Romans 1-8, 389; see the discussion of this tension below, pp. 187-88,190-92. For example, Epictetus, 2.26.5, vol. 1, p. 433, finds his answer in the ψυχή λογική since while there may be a contradiction between what a person wills and does, "as soon as anyone shows a man this, he will of his own accord abandon what he is doing."

thought.³⁸² Paul's discussion is far removed from a merely psychological or secular sphere.³⁸³

W. D. Davies contends the rabbinic teaching regarding the "Two Impulses" provides the foundation for the disparity present in verses 14-25.³⁸⁴ Davies proposes that the יצר הרע is comparable to the φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός in Paul (8:6) and to what Paul describes as σάρκινος/σαρκικός.³⁸⁵ The יצר הטוב is represented by πνευματικός and ψυχικός.³⁸⁶ However, Davies's proposal must also be rejected.³⁸⁷ It is not present in the text; neither does its doctrine coincide with that of Paul.³⁸⁸

Paul draws his conclusion regarding this division between

³⁸²Käsemann, 201; he concludes that Paul's thought cannot be reduced merely to "the ethical conflict, which most commentators find here."

³⁸³Cranfield, 1:359; see also above, p. 117.

³⁸⁴W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 21-27.

³⁸⁵Ibid., 26; he cites with approval N. P. Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin (London: 1927), 150, who further asserts that "sin," "the old man," "the sinful body," "the body of this death," "the sinful passions aroused by the Law," and "the mind of the flesh" are similar expressions of the יצר הרע.

³⁸⁶Davies, 20; citing Strack and Billerbeck on 1 Cor. 3:3.

³⁸⁷For example, Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 143, n. 1. Paul's comparison here does not match the three phases Davies, 24, identifies in Romans 7 and 8.

³⁸⁸See the discussion above, pp. 34-37, 40-41.

willing and action in verse 21:³⁸⁹ "So then I find the Law for me the one who is determined to do the excellent [thing],³⁹⁰ that³⁹¹ for me evil lies at hand." The language of this summarizing verse clinches the following points of interpretation:

1) The repetition of ἐμοί clearly reveals that there is only one "I" who is enduring "both of these opposite experiences."³⁹²

2) The verb "to lie within reach" is here associated with the doing of evil. παράκειμαι is used of the will to do good in verse 18. There it emphasizes "the difficulty of doing good, not that it is impossible."³⁹³ Its presence again here indicates that the inability to do good (v. 18), as well as the failure to refrain from evil (v. 21), are not the continuous, uninterrupted state of the "I."³⁹⁴

3) While this verse has been interpreted as referring back to verses 7-13 or even as summarizing the entire

³⁸⁹Lenski, 483, points out that every word in this verse except for εὐρίσκω has already been used in this section and concludes that verse 21 "sums up the matter"; similarly Kümmel, Römer 7, 61. According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 392, it "clearly synthesizes and sums up central elements from the preceding analysis"; note particularly the similarity with verse 10.

³⁹⁰This clause may have a temporal or a concessive sense, Newman and Nida, 140.

³⁹¹The position of ὅτι in this clause is difficult. Here it has been translated where it is present in the text. However, ὅτι could also be understood before the phrase it follows and may have been placed after it for the sake of emphasis ("I find the Law that for me . . ."); see 11:2,31; Cranfield, 363 and n. 3.

³⁹²Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 293; though "experiences" may not be the best word.

³⁹³Dunn, Romans 1-8, 391.

³⁹⁴See above, pp. 153-54; the repetition present throughout this section implies that both are recurring events for the "I."

chapter,³⁹⁵ this cannot be the case. In verse 21 the "I" expresses that the determination of his will agrees with the excellent commands of the Law. When prohibited from putting his will into action by the "sin which dwells in me," the "I" is distraught. The "I"'s fervent desire is to fulfill the good Law, but he repeatedly fails to do so. Here a battle is going on between the determination of the will of the "I" to refrain from evil and that which makes him unable to bring that resolve to fruition. He recognizes that the reason for this inability is his sinful flesh. No struggle or conflict between will and action is present in verses 7-13. There only sin, death, and deception came through the Law's command. Here the "I" consistently expresses his "willing conformity" with the Law.³⁹⁶

At the same time, verse 21 introduces a very perplexing issue. Beginning here the sense of νόμος is disputable and the situation only gets more complex as the chapter moves toward its conclusion.³⁹⁷ Up to this point, Paul has paralleled νόμος with ἐντολή in order to indicate that he is referring to the commanding aspect of the Torah.³⁹⁸ The debated issue is whether or not he continues to do so in verses 21-25. A number of scholars contend that in this verse νόμος refers to "a certain norm or principle" which summarizes the

³⁹⁵The text in no way justifies Bornkamm's statement, "Sin, Law and Death," 91, that "without question, v. 21 comments on the earlier statement (v. 8)." This certainly is the result of his interpretation. So also Newman and Nida, 140, conclude that "verses 21-23 are a summary of what Paul has been saying thus far in the chapter."

³⁹⁶Murray, 1:264.

³⁹⁷This problem will be discussed fully at verse 23 and under 8:2-3 where it becomes most sharply focused.

³⁹⁸See above, pp. 114-15, 132-33, 149-50.

experience of the "I."³⁹⁹ While verse 21 as a whole certainly does do that, a number of factors support the conclusion that νόμος continues to denote the Torah's command. First, the presence of εὐρίσκω here, as in verse 10, signals "that the author now notes the logical result of what precedes."⁴⁰⁰ In verse 10 εὐρίσκω is used with ἡ ἐντολή; in verse 21 with νόμος. The parallel between these two concluding statements about the Law's effect upon the "I" indicates that νόμος continues to be employed synonymously with ἐντολή in order to designate the commands of the Mosaic Law. Second, as verse 21 draws together the experience of the "I" in verses 14-20, it "cries out for a reference to the law equivalent to that of 16b."⁴⁰¹ James Denney captures the essence of Paul's use by paraphrasing, "This is what I find the law -- or life under the law -- to come to in experience:"⁴⁰²

Verse 22 begins to explain the paradoxical situation of verse 21⁴⁰³ and also gives the strongest evidence in favor

³⁹⁹Lenski, 484; Theissen, 233, defines it "as a special instance of a 'rule,' a *nomos*, a principle." So also Bandstra, 145; Black, 107; Räisänen, Paul and the Law, 52, n. 45.

⁴⁰⁰Leenhardt, 192. According to Cranfield, 1:362, εὐρίσκω has the sense of "I prove for myself by experience"; compare the present active with the aorist passive in 7:10.

⁴⁰¹Dunn, Romans 1-8, 392; see above, pp. 149-50.

⁴⁰²Denney, 642; Moffatt similarly translates, 194, "So this is my experience of the Law . . ."

⁴⁰³Kümmel, Römer 7, 62; also Murray, 1:265.

of identifying the "I" in this section as a Christian.⁴⁰⁴ Paul writes, "I rejoice with the Law of God according to the inner man" (22). The verb *συνήδομαι* conveys that the "I" throughout these verses not only agrees with (*σύμφημι*; v. 16),⁴⁰⁵ but also "joyfully accepts" or "rejoices in"⁴⁰⁶ the God-given Law.⁴⁰⁷ He strives to live his life as God wills.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁴Espy, 172; Käsemann, 207, admits that "joyful agreement with the will of God is everywhere reserved, in fact, for the pneumatic." His interpretation is this: "Here, then, reason and the inner man have the ability which is accorded to them in the Greek tradition, namely that of accepting and recognizing the divine will." Yet he must ask of his own interpretation, "How can the predicates and capacities of the redeemed person be ascribed to the unredeemed?" Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 99, explains that "even as a prisoner of sin [the 'I'] remains God's prisoner, who must almost joyously confirm God's right in his law."

⁴⁰⁵This is not merely a parallel expression as Kümmel, Römer 7, intimates, 62, by stating that verse 22 "corresponds" ("entspricht") with verse 16.

⁴⁰⁶This is the only occurrence of this verb in the New Testament. Cranfield, 1:362, argues for translating "re-joyce in" and BAGD, 789, gives the extended sense of "I (joyfully) agree with the law." For Käsemann, 207, it "denotes a positive agreement which is not simply forced on a person." Alford, 2:383, affirms that its sense "is a stronger expression than *σύμφημι*, ver. 16." Lenski, 485, cautions that it is "only a little stronger" and Dunn, Romans 1-8, 393, also warns against overemphasizing the "joyful agreement."

⁴⁰⁷The *τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ* refers to the Torah whose commands reveal the will of God (2:20) and certainly not merely "God's will in a general sense," as Käsemann, 205, suggests.

⁴⁰⁸Note the contrast with the attitude of the "I" toward the Law depicted in verses 7-13. In addition, Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 146, concludes, "In light of 8:7-8, it is difficult to view the speaker here as other than a believer." Indeed, parallels to this thought are representative of the believer throughout Scripture; for example, Col. 3:10; compare 2 Cor. 4:16; see also Ps. 19:8; 119:14,16,24,35,47,70,77,92.

While Paul concedes that a Gentile unbeliever might agree that some of the commandments of God's Law were good and could possibly even perform them (v. 16; 2:14,26), would Paul conceive of such a pagan as actually "rejoicing in the Law of God"?⁴⁰⁹ On the other hand, one could argue that the Jew characterized earlier as relying on and "boasting in the Law" (2:17,23) could be the "I" who here rejoices in the Law of God. Against this, it should be noted that the rejoicing and boasting in the Law on the part of such a Jew (or any self-righteous person) would be in a different sense than Paul intends here, for that "delighting" is in the Law understood in terms of works (*ἔργα*) which are perceived of as fulfilling God's commandments in order to attain the verdict of "Righteous" from Him.⁴¹⁰ Second, as Paul himself exemplifies,⁴¹¹ a pharisaic Jew would not admit to being fleshly and sold under sin as the "I" does in verse 14. As a result,

⁴⁰⁹See the discussion above, p. 151 and chapter four below, pp. 305-24. Paul would also seem to exclude that in 8:7 where the mind of the flesh is said to be at enmity (*ἐχθρα*) with God; see Murray, 1:258.

⁴¹⁰Paul critiques the futility of that approach to the Law in 2:17-3:21,28; 4; 9:30-10:5. As Dunn, Romans 1-8, 394, observes, this "law-abiding stayed on the superficial level of flesh and works (2:27-29; 3:27)." For a complete discussion, see below, pp. 307-9,310-12,314-15,322-23.

⁴¹¹See chapter three below, pp. 262-67; in light of Phil. 3:4-6 and Gal. 1:13-14 it seems unlikely that Paul admitted to such fleshly sinfulness or experienced the conflict presented here when he was "advancing in Judaism" (Gal. 1:14).

the sharp tension displayed in 7:15-25 would not be present.⁴¹²

The phrase *κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον* is crucial for identifying this "I" who joyfully agrees with the Law of God (v. 22). Could Paul be describing some "higher (inner) self" within unredeemed man?⁴¹³ According to Greek philosophy, the *ἔσω ἄνθρωπος* is the rational or even divine element in man which stands in contrast to his baser, animal, or earthly nature.⁴¹⁴ Its presence here illustrates the fact that Paul regularly employs terms which have significant backgrounds in Hellenistic philosophy. However, this does not mean that Paul adopts a Greek view of man or that he adheres to the philosophical definitions of these words.⁴¹⁵ The interpreta-

⁴¹²Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 117, concludes, "With a Pharisee moral despair and [a] recognition of the powerlessness of the Law is unthinkable" ("moralische Verzweiflung und Anerkennung der Kraftlosigkeit des Gesetzes bei einem Pharisäer undenkbar sind"); see his complete discussion, 111-17. Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, 242, similarly contends that the interrelation between the law and sin as revealed in Romans 7 "is unknown to a Pharisaic Jew." Compare Sirach 15:15, which confidently states, "If you will, you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice."

⁴¹³Black, 107; he doubts that Paul is thinking of either the "new creation" or the "new man."

⁴¹⁴As concluded by Joachim Jeremias, in *TDNT*, s.v. "*ἄνθρωπος*," 1:365; *BAGD*, 68[2ca]. Such a Platonic view readily led to the anthropological dualism of Gnosticism; see Wilckens, 2:94; also Johannes Behm, in *TDNT*, s.v. "*ἔσω*," 2:699, who concludes that this term derives "from a terminology of Hellenistic mysticism and Gnosticism disseminated by Platonic philosophy." Cranfield, 1:363, n. 2, cites this phrase or similar ones as used by Plato (*Republic*, 589a), and Philo (*De Congr.*, 97).

⁴¹⁵Käsemann states, 208, "Now Paul undoubtedly uses the idealistic terms and motifs of the Greek tradition. This does not mean, however, that he takes over their original

tion of the phrase in 7:22 must be based upon the context and the manner in which Paul employs the same or similar terminology elsewhere.⁴¹⁶

First, what does the context of verses 14-25 indicate? ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος is undoubtedly to be identified with the θέλω or the "determinate will" of the ἐγώ as discussed earlier.⁴¹⁷ As such it similarly denotes the "essential self"⁴¹⁸ of the "I" which consistently agrees with the Law of God (v. 16). Why does Paul refer to this aspect of the "I" as "the inner man"? Beyond simply a desire for variation, perhaps Paul chooses this phrase because it emphasizes a part of the "I"

scope." Behm, TDNT, 2:699, agrees, "Even though Paul adopts the language, he uses it to express his Christian anthropology with its soteriological and eschatological orientation." Paul's purpose in utilizing this terminology may be to combat incorrect anthropological definitions and to assert the proper understanding. G. B. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible (London: Duckworth, 1980), 170-71, call this "Polemical allegorism." Although the conception of a platonic "inner man" did find its way into Hellenistic Judaism, the Hermetic literature, and Gnosticism, Dunn, Romans 1-8, 394, points out that since Paul calls this same "I" fleshly (7:14), he "hardly belongs to that trajectory of thought." Kümmel, Römer 7, 136, agrees that Paul is not using Hellenistic definitions; see also above, n. 348, p. 156.

⁴¹⁶However, Leenhardt, 194, asserts that a *different* meaning must be posited here. Käsemann, 206, similarly finds here a "remarkable anthropology which finds expression in terms different from those used by the apostle elsewhere." He rejects any appeal to 1 Cor. 2:16 and leans more toward a Greek conception. So Sanday and Headlam, 183, conclude that this phrase is to be equated with "the conscience or reason."

⁴¹⁷See above, pp. 158-60.

⁴¹⁸Newman and Nida, 141; see also Murray, 1:265-66, who uses such terms as "the inmost spirit," "the centre of his personality," and the "deepest and truest self."

which is not recognized by physical sight.⁴¹⁹ In contrast to the visible σάρξ in which no good thing dwells (v. 18), the "inner man" is seen only "by faith."

Second, concerning Paul's use of this phrase elsewhere,⁴²⁰ ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος does not occur again in Romans. However, Paul's use of ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν [ἄνθρωπος] in 2 Corinthians 4:16 and εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον in Ephesians 3:16 are undeniably restricted to Christians.⁴²¹ These passages further indicate that when Paul uses ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος to denote the determinative will or the true essence of the "I" in Romans 7:22 he "evidently has in mind . . . the inner being of man which has been transformed by God's grace and so attempts to do God's will."⁴²²

⁴¹⁹Newman and Nida, 141, refer to it as "the aspect of human personality which is not seen." Similarly Lenski, 485, "the immaterial part of man, the spirit and soul, the real ἐγώ." Compare this with Paul's use of τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 1 Cor. 2:11.

⁴²⁰Murray, 1:266, points out that the context of Romans 7 is more significant than a "simple appeal to II Cor. 4:16."

⁴²¹As Bandstra, 146, concludes, "The term . . . is especially used by Paul to indicate man under the influence of the Spirit." Barrett, 150, elaborates, "In these passages it refers to the interior Christian life. Its meaning cannot be substantially different here. . . . The 'inward man' belongs to the Age to Come, just as the 'outward man' belongs to the present age. . . . It is the new creation, which in faith and sacramentally Christians have experienced." Alford, 2:383, points to the phrase ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος in 1 Peter 3:4.

⁴²²Newman and Nida, 141; see 6:6. Alford, 2:383, concludes, "It is *absolutely necessary* to presuppose the *influence of the Holy Spirit*, and to place the man in a state of *grace before this assertion can be true*." Paul is not describing "merely the mental and reasoning part of man; -- for

In contrast to this, Paul adds, "But I see another Law in my members waging war against the Law of my mind and taking me captive to the Law of sin which is in my members" (v. 23). This passage is a key to understanding Paul's use of νόμος throughout this section.⁴²³ Here the "I" reveals that along with the Law of God in which the inner man delights, there is also "another Law" that is present "in my members." But this "Law" is not merely present. It is actively engaged in "waging war" against the "I" and "taking me captive."⁴²⁴ Once again military metaphors are utilized⁴²⁵ and the warfare depicted is ultimately comparable with the "having been sold

that surely does not delight in the law of God." Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 295, agrees it describes "the essential being of the believer, the inner life that Christ has brought."

⁴²³According to Newman and Nida, 141, the use of νόμος here "may provide a key to the other uses of 'law,' especially in the first two sections of the chapter."

⁴²⁴ἀντιστρατευόμενον, used only here in the New Testament, and αἰχμαλωτιζόμενα are both military terms; see BAGD, 75 and ibid., 27.

⁴²⁵This recalls the imagery of "invasion" used previously (ἀφορμή in 7:8,11), as well as the other metaphors of warfare in the context; for example, 6:13 (ὅπλα); 6:23 (ὀψώνια); 8:7 (ἔχθρα). According to Dunn, Romans 1-8, 395, the predominance of these throughout this section of Romans may serve to indicate that the warfare against sin is "a continuing warfare in which his experience ('I') is typical of believers generally (6:13; 8:13)." However, for Käsemann, 207, these terms "are used to characterize human existence as the place and instrument of the conflict of the powers and which thus supports the 'transsubjective' interpretation of vv. 14-20." It is "cosmic strife."

under sin" in verse 14.⁴²⁶

Who or what is the assailant of the "I" in this battle? It is *ἕτερον νόμον*, a phrase which is certainly to be connected with "the Law of sin" later in verse 23 since both are present "in my members." Through his use of *ἕτερος*, Paul may indicate that he is speaking of "a law of a different kind."⁴²⁷ He is then differentiating this "other law" from the "Law of God" in verses 22 and 25, as well from as "the Law of my mind" later in verse 23.⁴²⁸ If so, Paul is referring to two different "laws."⁴²⁹ That is to say, his uses of *νόμος* in verses 21-25 are to be understood in two diverse senses. At times

⁴²⁶ So Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 63; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 395-96. The two are closely connected since once the victory was won the defeated people were taken captive and sold as slaves (see above, pp. 140-41). As in verse 14, Murray, 1:268, points out, "The captivity is not that merely of our members but that of our persons."

⁴²⁷ BAGD, 315[2], states that *ἕτερος* is used here in this sense and, therefore, strictly separates and contrasts the one *νόμος* from the other; Robertson, 748, states that *ἕτερον* denotes the idea of difference of kind; Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, ed. R. Hoerber (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 375-76, asserts that *ἕτερος* denotes a qualitative difference and negates any resemblance. It refers to "a law quite different from . . ." Newman and Nida, 140, contend that the use of *νόμος* here "has nothing to do with 'the law of God.'" So Murray, 1:267, concludes that this other *νόμος* "must be antithetical to [the Law of God] in every particular."

⁴²⁸ Cranfield, 1:362, refers to the qualification of *νόμος* with *τοῦ θεοῦ* (vv. 22,25) as indicative of a recognition that the word has just been used of another law.

⁴²⁹ Lenski, 468, affirms that there are "only two laws" operative here. Others have identified more. Calvin, 152, found four separate laws at work; Käsemann, 205, also refers to a "fourfold use of the term," citing Kuss, see 2:456-58.

νόμος refers to the Mosaic Law. At other times it denotes a different "standard" or "rule,"⁴³⁰ or, perhaps, a "principle"⁴³¹ and "authority."⁴³² If the latter suggestion is correct, when Paul writes, τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας in verse 23), he utilizes νόμος in a metaphorical sense to describe the power exercised over the "I" by sin which has invaded his members and usurped the proper place of God's Law.⁴³³ However, these metaphorical interpretations fail to take full cognizance of that fact that Paul's topic of concern throughout Romans 7 is how the Law of God and, more specifically, the commands of the Mosaic Torah affect man. In verses 5 and 8-13. Paul has vividly described how the Law's command is utilized by sin. Here again νόμος is at work in the "I."

Dunn responds to the metaphorical interpretations of νόμος by arguing that, for the following reasons, Paul uses νόμος consistently to denote the Mosaic Torah in verses 21-25:

⁴³⁰Alford, 2:384, similarly contends that both uses of νόμος here refer to "the standard or rule set up, which inclination follows"; so Lenski, 486, "a different law."

⁴³¹Suggested by Robertson, 796, who proposes that ἕτερον νόμον is indeterminate as to any specific law; Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 146, translates, "the evil principle"; see also above on 7:21, pp. 166-67 and n. 399.

⁴³²Cranfield, 1:364, "Paul is here using the word 'law' metaphorically to denote exercised power, authority, control."

⁴³³Ibid., 1:364, concludes that Paul uses νόμος here to reveal that "sin's exercising such authority over us is a hideous usurpation of the prerogative of God's law." So Lenski, 487, points out that in contrast to the νόμος of my mind, Paul describes this "other νόμος" as being active only in the "I"'s members. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 146, describes it as "the tyranny of indwelling sin."

1) "All Paul's references to the law so far in the letter (3:27 not excluded) have been to the Jewish law, the Torah."⁴³⁴ Dunn even asserts that this metaphorical meaning of νόμος "is unknown within the N[ew] T[estament]."⁴³⁵ Positing the presence of another "law" here "fails to appreciate the sharpness of the tension in Paul's evaluation of the Torah" (3:27-31; 7:12-14).⁴³⁶

2) The "two-sidedness" of the Law is the topic which Paul concentrates upon in verses 22-23, 25 and 8:2.⁴³⁷ When Paul describes the effect of the Law upon the "I" in the aorist tense (vv. 7-11), he notes how the Law both identifies sin and then also provokes even more sin. Now, as the Law works on the "I" in verses 14-25, a "two-dimensional character" is present. Dunn defines this "as the law of God, reinforcing my desire for good; as the law used by sin, precipitating my action for evil."⁴³⁸ There is not a marked distinction between the substance of the two "Laws" in 7:23. ἕτερος is rather being used like ἄλλος⁴³⁹ in order to contrast one manner in which the Law affects the "I" with "another."

3) The phrase τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας in verses 23 and 25 "can hardly be other than the law used by sin to bring about death, as already explained in vv 11-13."⁴⁴⁰ This cor-

⁴³⁴Dunn, Romans 1-8, 393. Theissen, 257, somewhat less sharply concludes, "Even where Paul separates himself from the Old Testament law in his uses of the term *nomos*, the association with the Mosaic law is never excluded."

⁴³⁵Dunn, Romans 1-8, 392; though he admits, 392-93, that it has been documented in wider Greek use. Wilckens, 2:122, denies the use of νόμος in a metaphorical sense even there, but see Räisänen, Paul and the Law, 50-52, n. 34.

⁴³⁶Dunn, Romans 1-8, 409.

⁴³⁷Ibid.; but see under 8:2, pp. 198-203.

⁴³⁸Ibid.; see also Theissen, 188-89, 255-57; Bo Reicke, "Paulus über das Gesetz," Theologische Zeitschrift 41 (1985): 242-45.

⁴³⁹BAGD, 315[1by], note that the two are often "used interchangeably." Gutbrod, TDNT, 4:1071, reads τὸν ἕτερον νόμον in Rom. 13:8 in this manner. However, it seems best to separate them there by reading, "For the one who loves the other (τὸν ἕτερον) has fulfilled [the] Law (νόμον)."

⁴⁴⁰Dunn, Romans 1-8, 409.

responds with 7:5 where the Law's command is the agent of the passions of sins. It also fits in with the metaphor of captivity in verse 23 since Paul perceives that it is the commands of the Torah which have "bound" man as a prisoner (κατέχω in 7:6; Gal. 3:22-23; Rom. 11:32).⁴⁴¹

Dunn's interpretation is on the right track.⁴⁴² However, two qualifications are necessary. First, his definition of νόμος as "Torah" is too broad. Paul continues to use νόμος particularly in the sense of the Torah's demand for proper conduct and undivided obedience to God, that is, in the narrow sense of its commandments.⁴⁴³ This was indicated by the consistent paralleling of ἐντολή and νόμος throughout the previous section (vv. 7-8,9-10,13). In verses 14-25 it is underscored by the repeated use of verbs "to do" which have as their implied object the fulfillment or transgression of the Law's commands.⁴⁴⁴ Paul's understanding of ὁ νόμος in this sense throughout Romans 7 underlies an important conclusion which Paul will state with greater clarity in 8:3. In 7:15-20 the powerlessness of the "I" to do that which he wills and to refrain from that which he hates is attributed

⁴⁴¹Theissen, 256, agrees that "it is impossible not to think of the Mosaic law with regard to the law that takes captive in v. 23."

⁴⁴²See Dunn, Romans 1-8, 407; he counters the tendency to readily allow a number of varied definitions of νόμος to alternate rapidly even within a few verses. Although this is not impossible, it is unlikely, especially since Paul is aware that "what he writes will be *heard* rather than personally read by most of the letter's recipients."

⁴⁴³See above, pp. 114-15,132-33,149-50.

⁴⁴⁴The verbs ποιέω, πράσσω, and κατεργάζομαι are used 11 times in verses 15-21. See also 2:13; 10:5 quoting Lev. 18:5.

to sin's continued indwelling. Through this discrepancy between will and action, Paul illustrates that the Law understood in the more narrow sense of its commands is unable to eradicate sin or defeat its power in man.

The law is ineffectual as a means of grace, . . . The reason is that the law[']s command even] properly understood (that is, *not* in terms of works) informs the willing but does not enable the doing.⁴⁴⁵

Second, Dunn's application of language such as "a two-dimensional character" to the Law of God is misleading. The holiness of the Law is the character of the Law and of its commandment (7:12). The Law's command does not have "two dimensions" in verses 14-25, but rather has two effects, or, as Dunn later calls it, a "double function."⁴⁴⁶ On the one hand, for the εἰώ who agrees with the Law (v. 16), its effect is to inform, direct, and guide his will. In fact, the "I" so delights in the Law of God (v. 22) that he identifies it internally as "the Law of my mind" (v. 23; also v. 25). But this is not to the complete exclusion of that which the Law worked upon the "I" in verses 7-11. While the ability of sin to deceive the "I" through the Law's commandment is no longer present (v. 11), the "I" still confesses, "I am fleshly, sold under sin" (v. 14). The εἰώ continues to admit that sin dwells in him (vv. 17,20) and, as in verse 5, works

⁴⁴⁵Dunn, Romans 1-8, 393; he further contends, 409, that Paul's purpose is to reveal "the powerlessness of the law."

⁴⁴⁶Ibid., 407; that the same Law can be understood and employed in different ways is already intimated in 7:6.

in his members *through the Law's command* (ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν, vv. 5,23; compare vv. 7-8). This is ἕτερον νόμον, that is, the Law as sin is able to utilize its command to wage war against the mind of the "I" by leading him into evil and by preventing him from doing that which he wills.⁴⁴⁷ The crucial point of distinction between verses 5,7-11 and verses 14-25 is that this sinful resident is now alien to the will of the "I." Furthermore, sin's ability to work in his members through the Law's command (vv. 17,20,23) is now so contradictory to how the "I," in his will, mind, and "inner man," views the Law, that he describes it as "another Law" (v. 23).

What then is τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας in verse 23? The manner in which the genitive is interpreted is crucial. It need not equate νόμος with sin,⁴⁴⁸ a conclusion which Paul would deny as vehemently as he did in verse 7. However, in the intervening verses Paul has detailed how it is possible for sin to make use of the Law's command in order to provoke and identify sin (vv. 8,11,13). And when the Law identifies sin, *the Law also takes man captive to sin and condemns him to death* (see v. 24; 8:2; compare also 3:20; 4:15; 5:12,18, 20; 6:14-15).⁴⁴⁹ Indeed, for Paul to speak in this sense

⁴⁴⁷However, when this is the case, the holy Law is not at fault. As he did in verse 13, Paul continues to exonerate the Law and to place the blame upon "the sin which dwells in me" (vv. 17,20).

⁴⁴⁸As Kümmel, Römer 7, 62, does ("Gleich-setzung").

⁴⁴⁹See above, point 3 on pp. 176-77 and n. 441.

"of 'the law of sin' is hardly much of a step beyond speaking of the law used by sin to deceive and kill (v 11)."⁴⁵⁰ Yet, once again, there is a key contrast with the situation depicted in verses 7-13. In verses 14-25 there is a struggle going on between the "I" and the "Law as used by sin."

Cranfield and others counter that the explanations introduced in favor of this interpretation "are so forced as to be incredible."⁴⁵¹ However, that the Torah's commands can have various effects, uses, and misuses is a topic which permeates Romans.⁴⁵² It should therefore be maintained that νόμος, throughout this chapter, "is related consistently in its various meanings to the Torah"⁴⁵³ in the limited sense of its commands.⁴⁵⁴ Certainly then, there is a sense of "irony"

⁴⁵⁰As Dunn, Romans 1-8, 395, contends is the case here and in 8:2; 6:14-15.

⁴⁵¹Cranfield, 1:361-62; see also Alford, 2:383.

⁴⁵²See, for example, 2:11-3:21, 27-31; 4:13-17; 7; 8:1-4; 9:30-10:5; 13:8-10. To view the Law merely in terms of works is an abuse of the Law apart from God's intention; see Barrett, 149. For Paul both effects of the Law delineated in chapter 7 are divinely intended. The condemning aspect of the Law, as revealed in 7:7-11, is also present, for example, in 3:20; 4:15; 5:20. The manner in which a believer looks at the Law and properly strives to fulfill its commandments is noted in 13:8-10.

⁴⁵³Wilckens, 2:90, "Daß νόμος in seinen verschiedenen Bedeutungsgehalten durchweg auf die Tora bezogen ist." So also Eduard Lohse, "ὁ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς: Exegetische Anmerkungen zu Röm 8,2," in Neues Testament und christliche Existenz, eds. H. Betz and L. Schottroff (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1973), 285-86.

⁴⁵⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 61, regards this as a "false presupposition" ("falschen Voraussetzungen") since νόμος does not always refer to the Mosaic Law (citing 7:23 and 8:2) and

present in Paul's use of νόμος in verses 21-25.⁴⁵⁵ But, as Bo Reicke concludes,

The qualitative genitive forms in these sentences do not express the essence of the Law, but the context in which it is working at the moment. Paul means in [all of these] cases the same divine Law.⁴⁵⁶

This understanding of νόμος by no means precludes Paul from using the "I" to speak of the Christian in verses 21-25.⁴⁵⁷ In the first three chapters of this letter Paul has soundly demonstrated that the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ possessed by the believer has been revealed χωρὶς νόμου (3:21,28; see also 8:2-4).⁴⁵⁸ In addition, that the struggle depicted here could be taking place in "the members" (τοῖς μέλεσιν) of a Christian is evident from Paul's exhortation in 6:13 and 19.⁴⁵⁹

because Paul's defense of the Law has retreated into the background beginning in verse 17. While Paul's "defense" of the Law may have retreated, the Law certainly has not.

⁴⁵⁵Though it is not merely a "play on the concept of law" as Käsemann contends, 205. He concludes that νόμος no longer has "any express reflection on the Torah."

⁴⁵⁶Reicke, 243, "Die qualitative Genitivformen drücken in diesen Sätzen nicht das Wesen des Gesetzes aus, sondern den Kontext, in dem es jeweils wirkt. Paulus meinte in beiden Fällen dasselbe göttliche Gesetz."

⁴⁵⁷See the complete discussion of this issue in chapter four.

⁴⁵⁸In 3:28 a man is said to be justified by faith χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου. In light of 3:20, Paul is also using νόμος in the narrow sense of the Torah's commandments in 3:21a; see below on 8:2, pp. 200-3.

⁴⁵⁹So μέλη is used in a neutral manner in 7:23 which Barrett, 150, defines as "my corporeal existence." Yet it also refers to that which "cannot be divorced from the operation

The presence of the term νοῦς in verse 23 is another word which is heavily utilized and significant in the world of Greek anthropological dualism.⁴⁶⁰ F. F. Bruce proposes that Paul adopts a philosophical definition of νοῦς in this context in order to refer to "the mind responsive to the voice of conscience."⁴⁶¹ However, the phrase τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοῦς in verse 23 is further defined two verses later when the "I" declares, "I serve [*the*] Law of God with [*the*] mind" (νοῦ; v. 25). As a result, the τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοῦς in verse 23 cannot be weakened merely to the "voice of conscience" or taken as an expression of some "moral ideal."⁴⁶² Rather, as Kümmel points out, "Here the νοῦς has the ability to agree with the Law of

of the law of sin" according to Murray, 1:267. Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 295, states, "Paul proceeds from his basic position that the body is not evil, though the forces of evil work through it."

⁴⁶⁰Its use likely indicates Paul's acquaintance with Greek philosophical thought. For its philosophical use, see J. Behm, in TDNT, s.v. "νοῦς," 954-58. He concludes, 954, that it refers to "the organ of knowledge" in which "the theoretical relation (of thinking and perceiving) comes to the fore" and may be equated with "reason" or "spirit" (πνεῦμα). Dunn, Romans 1-8, 395, speculates that Paul may be "deliberately choosing provocative language in order to make clear the paradoxical two-sidedness of the law."

⁴⁶¹Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 148, on verse 25; he adds, "(but scarcely the Spirit-renewed mind of 12:1)." Lenski, 487, also applies this philosophical background in Rom. 7:23,25 and defines νοῦς as the "power to think and apprehend moral and spiritual things." Leenhardt, 193, similarly asserts that νοῦς, used 21 times in Paul's letters, is to be equated with the heart (2:29), conscience (2:15), and spirit of man (1:9).

⁴⁶²T. W. Manson, "Romans," in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. by M. Black (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), 946.

God."⁴⁶³ In addition, the term νοῦς must be identified with and further defined by the phrase ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, which is said to joyfully agree with the Law of God (v. 22), and with θέλω as used in verse 16 and throughout this section.⁴⁶⁴

"I am a distressed/miserable man; who will rescue me from this body of death?" (v. 24). According to Kümmel, the "I" is here lamenting "that he desires a helper from outside, but knows no helper."⁴⁶⁵ Many commentators join Denney in professing, "These words are not those of the Apostle's heart as he writes."⁴⁶⁶ On the other hand, this same verse has convinced others that it is impossible to believe that the

⁴⁶³Kümmel, Römer 7, 136, "dieser νοῦς hat hier die Fähigkeit, dem Gesetze Gottes zuzustimmen."

⁴⁶⁴Alford, 2:383; Newman and Nida, 141, conclude that it is "almost synonymous with the 'I' that wants to do good and hates evil" (vv. 14-17; 19-20); see the discussion of θέλω above, pp. 158-60, and of the phrase ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, pp. 170-72. If one postulates that νοῦς is being used here to depict the "mind" of an unbelieving "I," Paul Althaus, Paulus und Luther über Menschen, Studien der Luther-Akademie, 14 (Gütersloh: "Der Rufer" Evangelische Verlag, 1938), 35, concedes that Paul does not elsewhere describe the mind of unbelievers in this manner. If the "I" here is identified as an unbeliever, this is now the third word or phrase which must be interpreted in a sense that is different from the manner in which Paul utilizes them elsewhere. This is recognized by Käsemann, 206-7, as cited above, n. 416, p. 171.

⁴⁶⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 64, "das eine Hilfe von außen ersehnt, aber keinen Helfer kennt." Ibid., 98, describes this verse as "the doubting question concerning the Redeemer" ("die verzweifelte Frage nach dem Erlöser").

⁴⁶⁶Denney, 643; similarly also Kümmel, Römer 7, 98, Leenhardt, 195. Denney, 643, continues, "They are the words which he knows are wrung from the heart of the man who realizes in himself the state just described. . . . not the cry of the Christian Paul."

"I" is anyone other than Paul himself.⁴⁶⁷ For example, Morris comments, "The language of this verse is impossibly theatrical if used of someone other than the speaker."⁴⁶⁸

The issue hinges partially upon one's definition of *ταλαιπωρος*. It need not depict the "I" in a state of hopeless despair.⁴⁶⁹ Rather, in this context *ταλαιπωρος* portrays the "I" as "distressed"⁴⁷⁰ because his actions do not correspond to his will (*θέλω*; vv. 15-23).⁴⁷¹ It characterizes the state of a man who is being incessantly "pulled in two

⁴⁶⁷See Cranfield, 1:345; Beker, Paul the Apostle, 240; Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 82, who believes it is "too heartfelt" to be otherwise; Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, tr. H. Snape (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 231-32, who concludes that verse 24 "cannot possibly be an abstract argument but is the echo of the personal experience of an anguished soul." Alexander Whyte, Bible Characters: New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1952), 260, denounces those who treat this as a "studied artifice of Pauline rhetoric" or "the spiritual experiences of a man of straw"; cited by Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 146.

⁴⁶⁸Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 296.

⁴⁶⁹Against Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 101; Kümmel Römer 7, 64,98. Neither is Barrett, 151, correct in interpreting it as "the 'I''s recognition that 'the last hope of mankind, religion, has proved to be a broken reed.'"

⁴⁷⁰BAGD, 803; also suggesting "miserable, wretched." Newman and Nida, 142, translate it, "What an unhappy man I am!" This is certainly too weak. Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 301, contends that there is "nothing of doubt or despair." This may be overstated as well, but that this question could be expressing the frustration of one who has the Holy Spirit is shown in 8:23 and 2 Cor. 5:2-5.

⁴⁷¹Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 291.

directions."⁴⁷² This cry, then, is the lament of an afflicted "I" who is yearning for deliverance from the frustrating battle between his will and the "sin which dwells in me" (vv. 17,20).⁴⁷³ In verses 14-23 Paul has depicted this tense battle in the sharpest possible terms, in part by making reference only to the "I"'s failures to enact his will. As a result, this outcry is hardly unexpected.⁴⁷⁴

Of what does this longed for deliverance consist? In verse 24 the "I" cries out for rescue from τὸ σῶμα τοῦ θανάτου τούτου. The demonstrative pronoun is best read with the entire phrase ("this body of death")⁴⁷⁵ and indicates that this

⁴⁷²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 396; in the latter half of this verse, the "I" is also being pulled ahead (compare 1 Cor. 15:54).

⁴⁷³According to *ibid.*, 410, it portrays the tension involved in "trying to walk in newness of life (6:4) while still a man of flesh."

⁴⁷⁴Alford, 2:383, concludes that Paul's purpose is this: "*The object is to set the conflict and misery, as existing even in the spiritual man, in the strongest light, so that the question in ver. 24 may lead to the real uses and blessed results of this conflict in ch. viii.*" I agree; however his statement should read "*only in the spiritual man.*"

⁴⁷⁵θανάτου, by Semitic influence, is an attributive adjective in the genitive case (a genitive of quality or a possessive genitive) as Robertson, 497, evaluates it. τούτου then defines the entire phrase since, according to Blass and Debrunner, 165, "such genitives never have a pronoun or some other modifier"; so Barrett, 151. Lenski, 488-89, points out that demonstrative pronouns are used in this way elsewhere (Ezek. 5:17; 6:7,8,12; Acts 5:20; 13:26), as are other pronouns (Ps. 41:10 and Obad. 7 in the Septuagint; Matt. 19:28; 26:38; Col. 1:20,22; Phil. 3:21; Heb. 1:3).

If taken with θανάτου, τούτου would serve to identify "this death" with the one already referred to in verses 10,11, 13; so Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 214; Kümmel, Römer 7, 63-64; Sanday and Headlam, 184; Murray, 1:268-69;

description can be interpreted along the lines of τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας in 6:6, the phrase ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου which occurs twice in verse 23, and τῇ σαρκί in the following verse (7:25; see also 6:12; 7:18,23; 8:10,11,13,25).⁴⁷⁶ But this cry does not refer to a longing for physical death. Paul does not look for an escape from the body, but, rather, a redemption of it (8:11,23; 1 Cor. 15).⁴⁷⁷ This is indicated by Paul's use of σῶμα in verse 24 which "can cross the boundary of the ages, whereas σὰρξ belongs firmly to this present age" (see 1 Cor. 15:44-50; 2 Cor. 4:7-5:5).⁴⁷⁸ Neither is the "I" here yearning for deliverance from "the lordship of sin."⁴⁷⁹ Verses 14-23 have hardly depicted the "I"'s total enslavement to sin. On the contrary, Paul has portrayed the

Alford, 2:384. If this is the case, deliverance is being sought from the death brought about by sin's working "in my members" (v. 23).

⁴⁷⁶Newman and Nida, 142, suggest, "This body which is causing me to die" or "this body which will result in my dying." It certainly does not denote "the mass of unredeemed mankind" to which Manson refers, 946.

⁴⁷⁷Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 147; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 410; recognized by Kümmel, Römer 7, 64, though he contends 8:23 is different. Against Käsemann's statement, 209, "Salvation can be seen here only as deliverance from this corporeality."

⁴⁷⁸Dunn, Romans 1-8, 391, points out this distinction, while also recognizing that the "range of meanings" between these words may overlap; see also Robinson, The Body, 31-32.

⁴⁷⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 64. While he, 65, correctly sees verse 24 as a cry for release from the condition described in 14-23, he improperly characterizes that condition, 64, as "slavery to sin" ("Sünden knechtschaft") and "the lordship of sin" (die Sünden herrschaft").

"will," the "inner man," and the "mind" of the "I" as engaged in a battle *against* the sin at work in his members. It is this condition from which the "I" cries out. He longs for a deliverance from the body in which sin can all too readily work, even through the Law, as described in verses 14-23 and 25b. The "I" calls out for rescue from the "fleshly, sold under sin" condition which leads to endless contradiction, warfare, and struggle between his will and the "sin dwelling in me."⁴⁸⁰

While Hellenistic parallels may again be cited,⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸⁰Lenski, 489, describes it as deliverance from "what makes his body with its members subject to death through the sin power that is still working in his bodily members."

⁴⁸¹Bornkamm, "Sin, Law, and Death," 99, states that Paul "speaks in Platonic or Gnostic fashion." Edgar Smith, "The Form and Religious Background of Romans VII 24-25a," Novum Testamentum 13 (1971):128-29 points to parallels from the Hermetic literature, Kore Kosmou, par. 34-37, and the "Hellenistic-Jewish novel 'Joseph and Aseneth' (6:1-8)." Leenhardt, 193, points to Corpus Hermeticum 1:15,18,21; 13:7, where the outer man is described as a prison house in which the inner man grows. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 396, contends that this quote from Epictetus, 1.3.3-6, vol. 1, pp. 24-27, is closer to the two-sidedness present here: ". . . inasmuch as these two elements were commingled in our begetting, on the one hand the body, which we have in common with the brutes, and, on the other, reason and intelligence, which we have in common with the gods, some of us incline toward the former relationship, which is unblessed by fortune and is mortal, and only a few toward that which is divine and blessed. . . . 'For what am I? A miserable paltry man, [τι γὰρ εἰμι; ταλαίπωρον ἀνθρωπάριον]' say they, and 'Lo, my wretched, paltry flesh.' Wretched indeed, but you have also something better than your paltry flesh. Why then abandon that and cleave to this?" Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 147, begins by stating, "One can find no lack of verbal parallels to this exclamation in classical literature and elsewhere," citing specifically, 147, n. 2, Cicero, Philo, and Marcus Aurelius. But he properly concludes this issue by affirming, "Paul is no platonist or Stoic."

Paul is speaking of an eschatological or theological tension, not an anthropological one (2 Cor. 4:16-5:4).⁴⁸² The presence of the eschatologically nuanced *ῥύομαι*,⁴⁸³ as well as its future tense, indicate that this "rescue," or at least its final fulfillment, is still in the future. Yet there is no hesitation regarding the certainty of this deliverance as the following verse reveals.⁴⁸⁴ Neither does *τις* "necessarily imply ignorance of the deliverer" as Kümmel contends.⁴⁸⁵ This is proven by the Septuagint's use of *τις* in Psalm 13:7 and 52:7, as well as by the reply which immediately follows.⁴⁸⁶

Verse 25a responds immediately to this apparently unsolvable dilemma with the terse statement:⁴⁸⁷ "Thanks to God

⁴⁸²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 396, contends that the negative side of this eschatological tension is set forth in 4 Ezra 7:62-69, 116-26.

⁴⁸³Wilhelm Kasch, in TDNT, s.v. "*ῥύομαι*," 6:1003, notes that *ῥύομαι* often has an eschatological connotation; see 11:26; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:18; also Matt. 6:13; Luke 11:4.

⁴⁸⁴Compare 8:23; 5:9-10; 6:8; 11:26. Robert Banks, "Romans 7.25A: An Eschatological Thanksgiving?" Australian Biblical Review 26 (1979):39, likens it to the future reference of the present participle *διδόντι* in 1 Cor. 15:57.

⁴⁸⁵Fung, 38; see above, p. 183, n. 465.

⁴⁸⁶Michel, 180; and Cranfield, 1:366, n. 3, point to these Psalm verses where a question similar to the one in 7:24 is followed, as in verse 25a, by a confident statement of hope in God's deliverance.

⁴⁸⁷Banks, 37; Newman and Nida, 142, state: "It is not difficult to see how the first part of verse 25 follows readily upon the dramatic question that Paul raises in the last part of verse 24." For the attempts at rearranging the text, see Appendix Two, pp. 435-440.

through Jesus Christ our Lord"⁴⁸⁸ (compare 6:17,23). This doxology right after the question of verse 24 makes it difficult to understand how the preceding is the "doubting question" of one who "knows no helper."⁴⁸⁹ For here is the helper, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. In addition, the conclusion that this response is "brief and indecisive" is hardly valid,⁴⁹⁰ especially considering the presence of the "full soteriological name" with the *first person plural*.⁴⁹¹ Neither is there any textual support for "supposing a change of speaker

⁴⁸⁸Although a number of textual variants are present here, the reading χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ "seems best to account for the rise of the others" according to Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 515. Cranfield, 1:367, concludes, "There is little doubt that the reading of B, χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ, is original." While there is strong textual support for the reading εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ (for example, \aleph^* , A), this may be due to an error in transcription; see Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 515.

Alford, 2:384-855, concludes that "this exclamation and thanksgiving, more than all convince me that Paul speaks of *none other than himself*, and carries out as far as possible the misery of the conflict with sin in his members, on purpose to bring in the glorious deliverance which follows."

⁴⁸⁹Against Kümmel's assertion, Römer 7, 64,98. He concludes, 66, that verse 25b proves "that v. 25a had, of course, given no answer to v. 24" ("daß V. 25a ja keine Antwort auf V. 24 gegeben hatte"). Though he also admits, 65, that the person writing "already knows the answer" ("schon eine Antwort weiß") as 8:2 reveals. Black, 107, similarly concludes, "This verse does not really supply an answer."

⁴⁹⁰Kümmel, Römer 7, 69, calls it "short and indecisive" ("kurz und unbestimmt").

⁴⁹¹Lenski, 490, points out the "full soteriological name." On the basis of this doxology, Alford, 2:384, argues that the cry of 7:24 "is uttered . . . in full consciousness of the deliverance which Christ has effected, and as leading to the expression of thanks which follows."

between verse 24 . . . and verse 25a."⁴⁹²

Does this thanksgiving refer to a deliverance already possessed or the certain hope of a future rescue? The absence of any verb would normally indicate the present tense and perhaps the "I" is giving thanks for what he has already or just received.⁴⁹³ If taken in this sense, these words have been touted as the conversion of the "I" and the marked achievement of his deliverance from the situation described in the preceding verses.⁴⁹⁴ However, this interpretation is difficult to square with the latter half of verse 25 which continues by offering a summary of the entire section.

On the other hand, there is nothing here to indicate that the "I" speaks specifically or exclusively of a deliverance already accomplished.⁴⁹⁵ As indicated by the future tense of *ῥύομαι* in verse 24, the "I" may be expressing "cer-

⁴⁹²As Fung, 45, suggests; see also below, Appendix 2, pp. 437-38.

⁴⁹³Paul gives thanks for what he has already received in Christ in 6:17 (compare 2 Cor. 2:14; 9:15). As Banks, 37, points out, "Romans 6 is the presupposition for the more intensive analysis of the following chapter. But by the end of Romans 7 the argument has moved on from the point reached in 6:17." Romans 6 speaks of freedom from sin; here the issue is deliverance from "this body of death" (7:24).

⁴⁹⁴Denney, 643, states, "The exclamation of thanksgiving shows that the longed-for deliverance has actually been achieved." Manson, 946, also speaks of it as the deliverance which "comes through Christ by incorporation into his body." Leenhardt, 195, qualifies this interpretation by adding that the answer here is "brief and inadequate. Doubtless ch. 8 will add to this reply."

⁴⁹⁵Lenski, 490.

tainty that God will in the future deliver him."⁴⁹⁶ The very close parallel of 1 Corinthians 15:57⁴⁹⁷ indicates that the "I" here longs for the final fulfillment of his being united with "Jesus Christ our Lord" also in his bodily resurrection.⁴⁹⁸ Verse 24, then, is not a call for conversion, but for the final deliverance "presumably at and/or by means of [Christ's] Parousia" (compare 11:26; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; 1 Thess. 1:10).⁴⁹⁹ The future aspect of this doxology acknowledges that the "I" continues to exist within the tensions described in verses 14-23, though he is by no means uncertain regarding their resolution.⁵⁰⁰ This adequately explains the latter portion of verse 25 where the "I" "returns from his brief, but intense, anticipation of his future deliverance

⁴⁹⁶Cranfield, 1:369; then the cry of verse 24 could hardly have expressed complete despair. Murray, 1:269, refers to verse 25a as the "triumphant assurance of ultimate deliverance." Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 297, "Clearly Paul's words express gratitude for a present deliverance, but it is likely that they also have eschatological significance."

⁴⁹⁷Manson, 946, calls 1 Cor. 15:51-57 "the best commentary on Rom. 7:24." See Banks analysis, 35-36; *ibid.*, 37, points out that the similarity of the context surrounding these "two passages is striking. In both we find the idea of 'sin' gaining 'power' through the 'law' leading to 'death' of the 'body'."

⁴⁹⁸Notice, for example, how *σῶμα*, and not the *σάρξ* which is unable to enter the new age, is used in 7:24; see n. 478, p. 186 on this and Banks, 40. Compare 6:5; 8:11,17,21,23, which describe when and how this will occur; see also Phil. 3:21; 2 Cor. 5:4.

⁴⁹⁹Dunn, Romans 1-8, 411; this is the completion of the good work already begun (Phil. 1:6).

⁵⁰⁰Banks, 40.

. . . to the realities of the present, continuing situation."
This same pattern occurs in 1 Corinthians 15:57-58.

$\alpha\pi\alpha\ \omicron\upsilon\nu$ brings us to a "logical summary of what Paul has been saying."⁵⁰¹ It is a statement of "calm realism" and "a sober, but fitting conclusion" to verses 14-25a.⁵⁰² In a fashion comparable to verse 23, the "I" announces, "So then I myself in [my] mind am enslaved to [the] Law of God, but, on the other hand, in the flesh, [I am enslaved to the] Law of sin."⁵⁰³ One must take note that, as it stands, verse 25b is an "embarrassment to those who see in v. 24 the cry of an unconverted man" who, in verse 25a, has received deliverance from the situation depicted in verses 13-24.⁵⁰⁴ As a result, numerous attempts have been made to alter the text

⁵⁰¹Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 297; compare 5:18; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 397. Alford, 2:385, agrees: "He now sums up his vindication of the law as holy; and at the same time, sums up the other side of the evidence . . . that the flesh is still, even in the spiritual man, subject . . . to the law of sin, -- which subjection in its nature and consequences, is so nobly treated in ch. viii."

⁵⁰²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 411; though he says that it concludes "the exposition of vv 7-25." Kümmel, Römer 7, 67, recognizes that this statement is a "hint back upon [or recapitulation of] 14-24" ("Rückverweis auf 14-24"); Barrett, 151, "an apt summary of the paragraph"; Lenski, 491. Käsemann, 211, warns that this can be the case "only if vv. 14ff. are interpreted in terms of an ethical conflict and a process of struggle for perfection is thought to be described here."

⁵⁰³Newman and Nida, 143, insert an "only" in both phrases since "it is clearly implicit in what Paul says. He is contrasting the fact that it is only with his mind that he can serve God with the fact that his human nature serves the law of sin" (see 7:5).

⁵⁰⁴Cranfield, 1:345; though he adds, "or of a Christian living on a low level of Christian life."

itself or, at least, its indication "that the triumphant thanksgiving in the early part of the verse does not itself bring an end to the conflict delineated."⁵⁰⁵ (These are detailed in Appendix 2, pp. 435-40.)

In verse 25b Paul concludes his description of this distraught "I" in an antithesis which draws together the terms used in the preceding context. This situation is exhibited most vividly in "I myself." This αὐτός ἐγώ adds further support to the view that we have here one and the same "I" who is "equally the 'I' of the mind and the 'I' of the flesh."⁵⁰⁶ In addition, based upon Pauline usage, it is extremely unlikely that this emphatic form denotes anyone other than the author, that is, Paul himself.⁵⁰⁷ If the "I" is not interpreted as reflecting "Paul's personal confes-

⁵⁰⁵Murray, 1:270.

⁵⁰⁶Dunn, Romans 1-8, 411.

⁵⁰⁷According to Blass and Debrunner, 147[281], "In αὐτός ἐγώ . . . Paul certainly applies the words to himself," though they speculate parenthetically "gloss and/or misplaced?" Kümmel, Römer 7, 67, asserts that this phrase can mean nothing other than "ich selbst." Dunn, Romans 1-8, 397, concludes that, in accordance with normal usages, "the αὐτός intensifies and emphasizes the ἐγώ"; citing BAGD, 122[1a]; see also Murray, 1:270-71.

In light of other interpretations of this phrase (see above, pp. 64-65), Banks, 41, states, "In every other occurrence of this combination elsewhere in his letters (Rom. 9.3; 15.14; 2 Cor. 10.1; 12.13 and Eph. 3:1) it is simply Paul himself who is in view, so that it is really synonymous with the parallel expression *ego Paulos*" (see 2 Cor. 10:1; Gal. 5:2; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:18; Philemon 13; Eph. 3:1). Alford, 385, points also to 8:26 (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα) and concludes that "in all which places . . . [this expression] has the same force." See the full discussion of this issue in chapter three, pp. 241-56.

sion," then we are, once again, compelled to accept a definition of terminology opposed to Paul's normal usage and unparalleled elsewhere in his letters.⁵⁰⁸

On the one hand, the "I" declares, *αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῦ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ*. It is difficult even to consider that Paul would use this phrase to represent a nonbeliever. What it describes is characteristic of the Christian who has been bound to the Law of God by the Holy Spirit and now willingly endeavors to be a slave of it. Paul has previously spoken of enslavement to God⁵⁰⁹ in terms which indicate that this slavery is completely different in its essence and its results from slavery to sin (6:19-22; 7:5-6).⁵¹⁰ However, at the same time, the same "I" continues to be enslaved *τῇ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας*.⁵¹¹ As the text stands, it would seem to indicate that until the final fulfillment of the longed-for deliverance arrives (vv. 24-25a), the "I" exists "on both sides

⁵⁰⁸If these verses are applied to a non-Christian, that is, not to Paul as he writes, this would be the fourth time this has been necessary in verses 14-25. See also the discussion of *θέλω* above, pp. 158-60; of the phrase *ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος*, pp. 170-72; and of *νοῦς*, pp. 182-83, especially n. 464.

⁵⁰⁹Compare 6:16,18,19,22; 7:6,22; 8:4; 13:8-10. In the latter two passages, the Christian is both said, and then exhorted, to fulfill the Law. See also how Paul portrays himself as a slave (*δοῦλος*) of Christ Jesus (1:1; Phil. 1:1).

⁵¹⁰Perhaps Paul picks up on the Old Testament use of *עבד* here; see Karl Rengstorff, in *TDNT*, s.v. "*δοῦλος*," 2:265-69.

⁵¹¹Murray, 1:271, concludes, "The most conclusive evidence that he identifies himself with the sin committed and does not disavow responsibility is the 'I myself' as the subject of both kinds of service in verse 25." See above, pp. 154-55.

of the warfare and servitude."⁵¹² Though he is certain of the outcome, the struggle between the θέλω of the "I" and the sin which dwells in him lasts as long as he is τῆ σαρκί.

Verse 25b clearly reveals that in this battle, the Law hits the "I" in two ways.⁵¹³ Primarily now, as reflected in the "I"'s desire to serve the Law, ὁ νόμος is that which determines and directs his "will," his "mind," and his "inner man." At the same time, however, sin continues to work in the "sold under sin" flesh (v. 14). There sin, "through that which is good" (v. 13), is able to effect what it exclusively accomplished in verses 7-13. Sin, "through the commandment" (v. 13), continues to identify sin "in my members" (v. 23), to provoke sin "in my flesh" (v. 18) and to bring about death (v. 13) *in the limited sense* of making this a "body of death" (v. 24).⁵¹⁴ Verse 25b, then, depicts a warfare which lasts until the defeat of the last enemy, death itself.⁵¹⁵

Paul's purpose in Romans 7 will be discussed in detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis. Here, however, it

⁵¹²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 398.

⁵¹³Ibid., 411, states, "'I' as mind, 'I' united with Christ in his death, experience the law as the law of God; 'I' as flesh, not yet united with Christ in his resurrection, experience the law as the law of sin." But *ibid.*, 398, concludes, "the split in the 'I' is now completely fitted to the two-sidedness of the law."

⁵¹⁴See above, pp. 185-87.

⁵¹⁵Then the σῶμα of the "I" will no longer be "this body of death" (v. 24; see 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-26).

should be pointed out that Kümmel's influential interpretation of verses 14-25 is based again and again on two considerations. First, the "I" is said to be completely enslaved to sin.⁵¹⁶ Second, he is said to know of no Helper or Redeemer;⁵¹⁷ "he is helplessly subjected to sin and is without a Savior."⁵¹⁸ Neither of these conclusions is supported by the text. First, the "I" is sold under sin" in his fleshliness (v. 14) and sin still dwells in his flesh (vv. 17,20).⁵¹⁹ His will, however, is not sold under sin. Rather, it desires the good which the Law commands and hates evil (vv. 15b-16). The "determined will" of the "I," along with his "inner man" (v. 22) and "mind" (vv. 23,25), are fiercely engaged in the battle against sin and distraught at their inability to live in accordance with the good Law. Second, the "I" knows his Redeemer as verse 25a clearly indicates (*διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν*).⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁶ Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 98, 103, 107, 136-37. The "I" is overpowered ("Übermanntwerden," 103) and a slave of sin ("Sündensklave," 107, 136).

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 98, 103, 107, 136-37. The "I" "knows no saving" ("keine Rettung weiß," 107) and utters "the hopeless question in 7:24" ("die hilflose Frage 7, 24," 103); see also above on verse 24, pp. 183-88.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 98, he has framed it in a question, asking, "Can Paul confess of himself that . . ." ("kann Paulus von sich bekennen, daß er der Sünde hilflos unterworfen und ohne Retter ist?"). Kümmel rejects this possibility.

⁵¹⁹ See the discussion of the "necessary qualification" above, pp. 155-57.

⁵²⁰ See above, pp. 188-89.

Romans 8

The relationship between chapter 7 and the initial verses of Romans 8 is crucial. Verse 1 marks a transition from 7:25. This, however, is not as strong or abrupt as many interpreters imply.⁵²¹ ἄρα οὖν (8:1) certainly indicates a pause, but how sharp is this "chapter" break? Paul normally uses ἄρα together with οὖν to indicate that what follows is a direct conclusion based upon that which immediately precedes.⁵²² But ἄρα by itself, or together with οὖν as here, need not signal "a fresh exposition" completely independent of what was just stated.⁵²³ On the contrary, it indicates that there is an intimate connection between chapter 7 and the initial verses of Romans 8.⁵²⁴ John A. T. Robinson recognizes this by interpreting 7:7-8:4 as one cohesive unit.⁵²⁵ As a result,

⁵²¹For example, Theissen, 183, argues, "The statements in 7:14-24 represent in content the direct opposite of the statements about Christians in 8:1ff." Kümmel, Römer 7, 70, contends that 8:1 introduces a new thought unconnected with that which immediately precedes it. He cites 2:1 and 5:12 for comparison, but in neither case is ἄρα used. Cranfield, 1:373, concludes, "8:1 makes excellent sense where it stands provided we recognize that it connects neither with 7.25a nor with 7.25b but with 7.6." Even Dunn, Romans 1-8, 415, calls it "awkward."

⁵²²Paul uses ἄρα οὖν to indicate a direct conclusion in 5:18; 7:3,25; 8:12; 9:16,18; 14:12,19.

⁵²³Dunn, Romans 1-8, 416.

⁵²⁴Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 310. So Kümmel, Römer 7, 70, admits parenthetically that ἄρα elsewhere is always connected with the preceding; see 7:21. BAGD, 103, translate, "so there is no condemnation now."

⁵²⁵Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 81-95.

the chapter division between 7:25 and 8:1 is in some respects most unfortunate.

If the *νῦν* in 8:1 is temporal,⁵²⁶ it could indicate the eschatological "once-for-allness" of the present Christian state.⁵²⁷ But it can hardly mark the conversion of one who has already given thanks to God "through our Lord Jesus Christ" (7:25).⁵²⁸ Neither does it signal "a new period of salvation history."⁵²⁹ On the other hand, *νῦν* could also convey a logical sense ("*as things now stand*").⁵³⁰ If so, Paul affirms that in spite of the fact that "I" continue to serve the Law of sin in the flesh (7:25), "there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (*κατάκριμα*; 8:1). Paul explains why this is so in the verse which follows.

"For the Law of the Spirit of life freed you in Christ Jesus⁵³¹ from the Law of sin and of death" (8:2). This verse

⁵²⁶As in 8:18,22; 11:5; 13:11.

⁵²⁷Dunn, Romans 1-8, 415; see 5:9,11; 6:19,21; 11:30-31; 16:26; compare the use of *νῦν* in 7:6.

⁵²⁸Recognized by Cranfield, 1:373; Kümmel, Römer 7, 70.

⁵²⁹So Kümmel, Römer 7, 70, "eine neuen Periode der Heilsgeschichte"; citing 3:21. Leenhardt, 201, speaks of it as ending the "transitory dispensation of the law." The first person singular in Romans 7, together with the *σε* in 8:2, speak against this interpretation.

⁵³⁰BAGD, 545[2], offer this definition in 1 Thess. 3:8 and Acts 15:10, but do not include Rom. 8:1 under this heading.

⁵³¹*ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* goes with the verb. See Robertson, 784, who translates, "through Christ the law has set me free"; also Cranfield, 1:374-75; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 418. Notice how Paul also speaks of a future liberation in 8:21.

represents another passage in which the sense of νόμος is contested. What are ὁ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς and τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου? Many commentators exclude any reference to the Torah from one or both phrases.⁵³² For example, Cranfield resorts to a metaphorical sense of ὁ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς by defining νόμος in terms of "the Holy Spirit's presence and exercised authority and constraint."⁵³³ But this phrase should not be interpreted as some nebulous or unattached power. νόμος designates a codified and unchanging norm.⁵³⁴ In addition, the meaning of νόμος in both phrases must be related to Paul's use of νόμος throughout Romans and, especially, in the previous chapter. As in chapter seven, there is no need to dismiss the Torah from

⁵³²Robertson, 93, identifies 8:2 as "a typical Pauline transition, with one use of *nomos* sliding into another." The Torah is excluded from ὁ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς by Sanday and Headlam, 190; Murray, 1:276; Leenhardt, 201-2; and Räisänen, Paul and the Law, 50, who vehemently objects to this possibility because "the Torah had been superseded in Christ" and Christ is the "termination of the law" (10:4). Ibid., 52, then concludes that 8:2 "support[s] the conclusion that Paul often speaks of the actual abolition of the Torah" (but contrast Rom. 3:31!). For the refusal to see a reference to the Torah in the latter phrase, see above on 7:23, pp. 174-75, 180.

⁵³³Cranfield, 1:376; this is similar to the metaphorical sense Cranfield proposes in 7:23, 25, but there it is employed in regard to νόμος depicted in a negative sense as "the Law of sin"; see above, pp. 174-75.

⁵³⁴See Johann Bengel, Gnomon Novi Testamenti, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Sumtibus Ludov. Frid. Fues., 1855), 564, who defines this phrase as the "gospel inscribed on the heart" ("*evangelium cordi inscriptum*"); also Professor Louis Brighton, in EN-420 "Romans," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, Fall, 1989.

either phrase.⁵³⁵ The association of the Law's commandment with ζωή in 7:10 and the description of ὁ νόμος as Spiritual in 7:14 certainly permit the Torah to be seen in the former phrase. In regard to "the Law of sin and death" in 8:2, the Law's connection with sin (7:5,7,8,9,11,13,23,25) and death (7:5,10,11,23-24) is a prominent focus throughout chapter 7.

νόμος, in and of itself, refers to the Mosaic Torah. But Paul often utilizes the context, in this case the qualifying genitives,⁵³⁶ in order to narrow his focus more specifically. A significant parallel to the use of νόμος in 8:2 is Romans 3:21. In 3:21a Paul defines his initial use of νόμος more precisely by placing it together with "the prophets" (τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν). This indicates that νόμος refers to the five Books of Moses.⁵³⁷ Yet Paul is focusing even more specifically on the promise contained within the Torah which, along with "the Prophets," testifies to the

⁵³⁵ Recognized by Hübner, 144-46; Lohse, 284-87; Peter von der Osten-Sacken, Römer 8 als Beispiel paulinischer Soteriologie, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, no. 112 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 227-30; see also the citations from Wilkens (p. 180, n. 453) and Reicke (p. 181, n. 456) above.

⁵³⁶ Hübner 144-46; compare Reicke's reference, 243, to "die qualitativen Genitivformen" (cited above, p. 181, n. 456).

⁵³⁷ As in Gal. 4:21; and probably 1 Cor. 14:34; see also Matt. 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; Luke 24:27; Acts. 13:15; 28:23; compare the three-fold division of the Old Testament in Luke 24:44.

righteousness of God which is *διὰ πίστεως* (3:21-22).⁵³⁸ In 8:2 *ὁ νόμος* together with *τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς* similarly denotes the Torah and focuses upon its promise which has now been fulfilled in Christ (3:22,24-25; 8:3; 10:4) whose Spirit works life (8:5-6,10-11).⁵³⁹ Anticipating 8:3, Cranfield earlier defined this phrase as follows:

God has by the ministry of His Son and the gift of His Spirit re-established [the law] in its true character and proper office as 'spiritual' and 'unto life', as 'the law of the Spirit of life' which sets us free from the tyranny of sin and death (Rom. 8.2).⁵⁴⁰

Here *ὁ νόμος* is received by faith, "rightly understood, and responded to *ἐν πνεύματι*."⁵⁴¹

In Romans 3:21b the righteousness of God to which *ὁ νόμος* testifies is said to be revealed "apart from the Law" (*χωρὶς νόμου*). As indicated by the use of *ἐξ ἔργων νόμου* in 3:20, as well as 3:27-28, this phrase speaks of the Law under-

⁵³⁸In 3:22 this is further defined as "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" or possibly "the righteousness of God which comes through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ." Paul further elaborates upon the promise of the Torah in Romans 4, see especially verses 3,13-17,20-24.

⁵³⁹So James Fraser, The Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification (Edinburgh: R. Ogle, 1830), 316, speaks initially of the manner in which the term "law is often in the Old Testament put for the word of God in general." But he concludes that "the designation given here [refers to] the gospel."

⁵⁴⁰C. E. B. Cranfield, "St. Paul and the Law," Scottish Journal of Theology 17 (1964):65; the thesis of this article is "that, for Paul, the law is not abolished by Christ." This viewpoint contrasts with that of Räsänen as noted above, n. 532, p. 199. In his later commentary, Cranfield rejects this interpretation of 8:2 by adopting the view cited above, p. 199.

⁵⁴¹Dunn, Romans 1-8, 417; compare 3:27-28.

stood in terms of works done in fulfillment of the Law's commands. Paul has unequivocally demonstrated that ὁ νόμος in that limited sense is "the Law of sin and death" (8:2; see also 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:9-11,13,23-24,25).⁵⁴²

A link can also be established with Paul's use of νόμος in 3:27.⁵⁴³ There Paul declares, "What then of boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of Law (νόμου)? Of works? No, but through [the] Law of faith." In light of Paul's attack upon "boasting" before God on the basis of "works of the Law" (2:17,23; ἔργων νόμου in 3:20,28), the Law of works in 3:27 "can hardly be understood otherwise than as a reference to the Torah."⁵⁴⁴ As chapter 7 has demonstrated, the Torah understood in terms of its command provides no ground for boasting but, rather, is a "Law of sin and death" (8:2). What then is διὰ νόμου πίστεως in 3:27? This is ὁ νόμος as it testifies to the righteousness of God through faith (3:21-

⁵⁴²In light of 7:12, Dunn, Romans 1-8, 419, appropriately paraphrases this phrase, "the law as manipulated by sin and death." This is especially so when the Law is viewed apart from faith and the Spirit; see 2:17-29; 9:30-10:5.

⁵⁴³Hübner, 144, states, "According to our reflections on 3.27, the genitives occurring there, 'of works' and 'of faith', define the Law in regard to the perspective of the moment from which it is regarded. From this alone one might suppose that the same is also true of 8.2"; see also G. Friedrich, "Das Gesetz des Glaubens Röm. 3, 27," Theologische Zeitschrift 10 (1954):401-17; Osten-Sacken, 245-46; Lohse, 284, n. 17.

⁵⁴⁴Dunn, Romans 1-8, 186.

22).⁵⁴⁵ Indeed, in verse 31 Paul concludes that *διὰ τῆς πίστεως* "we establish νόμον" (3:31).⁵⁴⁶ That is to say, the Law is established through faith in Christ whom Paul later calls the "goal" of the Law (*τέλος νόμου*; 10:4). By his Spirit the veil which sees the Law in terms of works is removed and *ὁ νόμος* points toward its own fulfillment as *ὁ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς* (8:2; 2 Cor. 3:16-17).

In 8:2 Paul employs the second person singular to speak of the Christian who has been freed from the Law which convicted "you" as a sinner and pronounced the death sentence upon "you."⁵⁴⁷ As in chapter 6, Paul is careful to say that

⁵⁴⁵As Gutbrod, *TDNT*, 4:1071, states, "Here, then, νόμος is meant in the broader sense of the divine ordinance which describes faith, not works, as the right conduct of man, to the exclusion of self-boasting before God."

⁵⁴⁶Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 51, objects because this interpretation ascribes "a very active role" to *ὁ νόμος* in both 3:27 and 8:2. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 187, responds that the *διὰ* in 3:27 "has the same force as in the nearly synonymous phrase *διὰ πίστεως* in 3:22,25,31." In addition, it is no more active than the νόμος which testifies in 3:21.

⁵⁴⁷Blass and Debrunner, 281, read the variant μέ (A,D) and conclude that it has a representative or universal sense as does the "I" in chapter 7. However, it is easier to see this reading arising from an attempt to harmonize this verse with the first person singular in 7:7-25. The other variant, ἡμῶς, is similarly explained by attraction from 8:4. As a result, σε (K,B), which is certainly the more difficult reading, is to be preferred; see Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 516. According to Cranfield, 1:377, the singular is here used by Paul to point "out the individual as representative of the group . . . to make sure that each individual in the church in Rome realized that what was being said in this sentence was something which really applied to him personally and particularly"; see 2:1, 3-5,17-27; 10:9; 11:17-24; 14:4,10,15,20-22. It is difficult to understand Kümmel's willingness, *Römer 7*, 73, to include Paul in σε after *excluding* Paul from his own use of the first

this is not yet the complete freedom from sin and death which he anticipates in 8:21-23. Rather, it is liberation "from the Law of sin and of death" (8:2b); it is freedom from the condemnation (8:1) which the Law pronounces when its commands are not carried out.⁵⁴⁸

Romans 8:3 represents the climax to Paul's analysis of the Law which began in 7:1: "For that which⁵⁴⁹ was impossible for the Law in that it was weakened through the flesh, God, by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering (*περὶ ἁμαρτίας*),⁵⁵⁰ condemned sin in the flesh." Paul has used *νόμος* to characterize the Torah specifically in terms of its commands throughout chapter 7, as well as in the final phrase of 8:2.⁵⁵¹ It is in this sense that

person singular throughout chapter 7.

⁵⁴⁸This is correctly depicted by Kümmel, *Römer* 7, 73,69, as freedom from slavery to sin ("Sündenknechtschaft"), from the curse of sin ("Sündenfluch"), and from the resulting condemnation ("von der Verdammnis"). However, he then concludes, *ibid.*, 68, that the Christian is now free from the power of sin and death ("von der Sündenmacht," "Todesmacht") and that the purpose of this freeing "is the sinless life of the Christian" ("... ist das sündlose Leben der Christen 8,4.").

⁵⁴⁹The definite adjective with a dependent genitive indicates that this is not abstract, but expresses "the one thing the law could not do"; see Blass and Debrunner, 263[2].

⁵⁵⁰As used in the Septuagint; see Lev. 14:31; Ps. 39:7 [MT: 40:6]; Is. 53:10; see also Heb. 10:6. C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 63, discusses this possibility but concludes that a more general sense ("from sin") which would be inclusive of the technical term is preferable. Robertson, 618, translates, "from around sin."

⁵⁵¹See above, pp. 114-15, 132-33, 149-50, 175-81, 198-203.

the Law is unable. Although the Law clearly specifies what God requires, it is "impossible" (ἀδύνατον)⁵⁵² for the Law's command to accomplish what it demands or to free a person from the condemnation it imposes upon one's failure to live according to it.⁵⁵³ Romans 7:1-8:3 has revealed that for Paul the Law's command is active only 1) when it is used by sin to wage war against a person by provoking and increasing sin (ἀντιστρατευόμενον in 7:23; see 7:5,7-8,17-18,20) and, then, 2) when it takes a sinner captive to death by identifying and condemning his transgression (αἰχμαλωτίζοντα in 7:23; 7:10-11,13,24).⁵⁵⁴ While the Law's command does passively reveal the will of God to the "I" who rejoices in the Law (7:14-25), it is "impossible" for the Law to enable anyone to fulfill its demands to the extent God requires (see 2:17-24; 3:19-20). In addition, the Law's command is "unable" actively to accomplish release from sin and death. Chapter

⁵⁵²Moulton, 221, questions whether ἀδύνατον here means "incapable"/"powerless" (as in 15:1; Acts 14:8) or "impossible" (as in Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Heb. 6:4,18). While it is difficult to draw a sharp distinction between the two definitions, in light of chapter 7 and the sentence structure here, the sense of "impossible" is best; see BAGD, 19[2b]; Dunn, Romans 1-8, 419.

⁵⁵³Kümmel, Römer 7, 70; in view of chapter 7 this is easily understood. Moule, 35, reads τὸ ἀδύνατον as appositional with the end of the phrase. It was impossible for the Law to "condemn sin"; see also Hanna, 270. This is possible, but I take it directly with the verb to "free," though that freeing was accomplished by the condemnation of sin.

⁵⁵⁴See also 3:19-20; 11:32 in light of Gal. 3:22; Gal. 3:10; see the discussion of the argument in Galatians below, pp. 402-8.

7 has demonstrated that the Law's command can neither remove sin nor eliminate a person's failures to enact its commands. In reality, it only serves to increase both.

But it is important to notice that this failure is not attributable to the Law alone. The reason why it is impossible for the Law to effect fulfillment of God's command and to deliver the life it offers (10:5; 7:10) is because the Law is weakened *διὰ τῆς σαρκός* (8:3). Here Paul's critique of the Law comes full circle. If not for the sinful flesh, the "holy" Law and the "holy, just, and good" commandment would present no problem (7:12). The Law would reveal the truth and the knowledge of God to those who could follow it (2:20). There would be no sin or death to overcome. But sin has entered the world and spread to all people (5:12). As a result, "I am fleshly, sold under sin . . . Sin dwells in me . . . this is, in my flesh" (7:14,17,18). In this situation the Law's command can declare but not effect. Thus "the inadequacy of the law lies not in itself but in the conditions in which it has to operate."⁵⁵⁵ It is "on account of the flesh" (8:3).

But God has dealt decisively with sin, death, and the Law's condemnation by sacrificing his own Son as *the* promised sin-offering (8:3b). Verses 2-3 then have a chiastic structure. The Law's command is unable on account of the flesh and, therefore, results in sin and death (vv. 2b-3a). But God

⁵⁵⁵ Dunn, Romans 1-8, 419; see also Wilckens, 2:124.

condemned this "sin in the flesh" in his Son who became both flesh and sin (1:3; 9:5; 2 Cor. 5:21), and suffered the curse of the Law, which is death, on the cross (Gal. 3:13). Those "in Christ Jesus" are set free from the Law's condemnation by the now fulfilled "Law of the Spirit of life" (vv. 2a,3b).

God's purpose in this was that "the just requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (8:4).⁵⁵⁶ Drawing from verse 3, 8:4 speaks of how τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ νόμου was fulfilled for us through Christ's life and how our failures to keep the Law's command were erased by his death (as in 10:4). This verse proceeds to describe those in Christ Jesus (8:1) as ones in whom the Law's requirement is fulfilled. They "walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (v. 4b) who has freed them "from the Law of sin and death" (8:2) and enabled them to serve the Law willingly (7:6; compare 7:16,22).

In verses 5-8 Paul sets up a contrast between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit. This is stated in terms of their respective results, either death or life and peace (v. 6; see 7:4). The mind of the flesh is at enmity with God precisely because it does not subject itself to the Law of God (v. 7). The fact that the flesh is unable to

⁵⁵⁶Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, 285, points out that in classical Greek, this would mean "If we do not walk . . ." However, he supports the translation here as Paul's intended meaning.

submit itself to God's Law and thereby to please him (v. 8) is reflected throughout chapter 7 (7:5,14,17-18,20,25) and underscores the interpretation of 8:3 adopted above.

Verse 9 introduces the second person plural. "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit since⁵⁵⁷ the Spirit of God dwells in you" (v. 9a). As indicated by εἶπερ, ἐν σαρκί does not imply that the believer no longer lives in a fleshly body. Rather, the Christian's life is no longer determined by the sinful flesh as depicted in 7:5 (ἐν τῇ σαρκί).⁵⁵⁸ Since the presence of the Spirit is the mark of the believer (v. 9b), both aspects of the statement in verse 10 can be applied to the Christian and only to the Christian. It can only be said that "τὸ σῶμα is dead on account of sin" (as in 7:24)⁵⁵⁹ and that "the Spirit is alive through righteousness" if Christ is in you (v. 10).⁵⁶⁰

As in chapter 6 (vv. 5,8), Paul depicts our likeness with Christ in regard to his resurrection in the future tense (ζωοποιήσει; v. 11). Verse 11 looks ahead to the final fulfillment of the hoped-for-deliverance in a manner which is

⁵⁵⁷On Rom. 3:30, Rienecker, 357, concludes that εἶπερ is "used of a thing assumed to be true"; see BAGD, 220[VI.11].

⁵⁵⁸See above, pp. 99-102.

⁵⁵⁹Note the reappearance of σῶμα which is used as in 6:6 and 7:24; see above, pp. 79-80,185-87. It is interesting that Paul does not say "you are dead to sin" as in 6:11, but because of it.

⁵⁶⁰This verse appears to match the description in 7:14-25, and especially verses 22-25, fairly well; see the complete discussion below, pp. 332-35.

similar to 7:24. Yet the presence of the Spirit is the guarantee that God will make your mortal bodies alive through that same Spirit (v. 11).

Upon this basis Paul moves to exhortation (as in 6:12). In 8:12 he reminds the ἀδελφοί that they are no longer obligated to the flesh as they were when sin and death fearfully enslaved them (v. 15). But Paul reckons with the possibility that they might allow themselves to be enslaved to fear once again (πάλιν; v. 15). Therefore he encourages the "brothers" to continue to put the deeds of the flesh to death (θανατώω; v. 13). This is an ongoing process which is led by the Spirit who identifies himself with our spirit⁵⁶¹ and thereby guarantees our adoption as God's children and our place as heirs (vv. 16-17). However, so long as we are in this world sufferings remain and Paul continues to hold off "the glory that is to be revealed" (v. 18) until the day when we and "creation itself also will be set free" (v. 21; compare 8:2).⁵⁶²

In describing the futility (μάταιος) to which creation has been subjected against its will, as well as its "anxious longing" for deliverance (ἀποκαταδοκία; v. 20),

⁵⁶¹ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν in 8:16 can be identified with the "will," "the inner man," and the "mind" of the "I" in chapter 7; see above, pp. 158-60, 170-72, 182-83.

⁵⁶² The future, ἐλευθερωθήσεται, contrasts with the aorist tense of the same verb in 8:2. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 418, concludes, "The sense of being taken prisoner (7:23) and of being liberated (8:2) are both part of the believer's experience in Paul's perception -- still imprisoned as a man of flesh by sin and death, yet at one and the same time already liberated 'in Christ Jesus.'"

Paul places all of the universe in a situation comparable to that of the "I" in 7:14-25. While eagerly expecting the revealing of the sons of God (v. 19), creation groans and suffers (v. 22). ἡ κτίσις yearns "to be set free from its slavery to corruption" (ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς; v. 21).

Similarly, Paul says, "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (v. 23). This tension, which is also reminiscent of the frustration which evoked the lament in 7:24, leads Paul to this conclusion: "For we were saved for this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope" (8:24). As Christians we have been saved (v. 24)⁵⁶³ and, although we do not yet visibly see that for which we eagerly hope, we do now have the "first fruits" (ἀπαρχή; v. 23)⁵⁶⁴ of the Spirit who helps us to battle our "weakness" (ἀσθενεῖα; v. 26).

It is difficult to see how this presents a totally different context than 7:14-25⁵⁶⁵ or how Hans Conzelmann can conclude that "the redeemed man no longer cries for redemp-

⁵⁶³The aorist tense of ἐσώθημεν refers either to an indefinite time in the past when faith came to an individual believer or to the decisive act of God on the cross (8:3).

⁵⁶⁴BAGD, 81[1bβ], improperly limit ἀπαρχή to "as much of the Spirit as has been poured out so far." Yet they also point out, *ibid.*, [2], that the idea of "a birth-certificate also suits the context of Ro 8:23."

⁵⁶⁵As Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 101; Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 87. Leenhardt, 182, concludes that the two chapters are not opposites, but "the tone is totally different." See chapter one, p. 38.

tion from the body of death" (8:23; see also v. 11).⁵⁶⁶ True, explicit mention of the Holy Spirit's activity within the "I" is withheld in Romans 7:14-25.⁵⁶⁷ But this need not exclude the possibility of identifying the "I" in those verses as a Christian.⁵⁶⁸ The contrast between chapters 7 and 8 is that in the midst of the frustration, weakness, futility, and groaning exhibited throughout 7:14-8:25, the presence of the Spirit is explicitly announced in chapter 8. There Paul seeks to demonstrate that the present situation is no cause for doubt or despair. This is because the Holy Spirit, and decisively *not* the Law's command (8:3),⁵⁶⁹ is the Helper who provides the intercession we so badly need (8:26-27) and who is the decisive guarantor of the future (8:16-17,22-23).

This launches Paul into the climactic portion of all of Romans (8:29-39). He affirms that since God "did not spare

⁵⁶⁶Conzelmann, 230.

⁵⁶⁷Yet one might question how the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 could identify the Law as Spiritual (v. 14), agree with (v. 16), rejoice in (v. 22), and even serve the Law of God (v. 25) without the Spirit's presence. Above all, how could a person without the Spirit utter the doxology of 7:25a? Rather, the absence of any direct mention to the Spirit's activity in the "I" in 7:14-25 serves to set forth the confrontation between the "I" and the "Spiritual Law" (7:14) in its sharpest terms; see above, pp. 153-55,184-87.

⁵⁶⁸Banks, 41, points out that there is no mention of the Holy Spirit elsewhere in extensive passages where Paul clearly addresses the Christian life (2 Cor. 4-5; Phil. 3; Col. 2-3). This need not exclude the Spirit's presence.

⁵⁶⁹Here understood, as throughout chapter 7, in terms of its command. Since the Law cannot effect its own fulfillment (8:3), it is not the answer to the dilemma in which the "I" finds himself.

his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (v. 32), we are God's elect (v. 33), chosen before creation, justified (v. 30), and free from any condemnation (v. 33-34). Paul is so certain of this that even when he has the future glory-to-be-revealed in mind (vv. 17-18,21), he can speak of it in the aorist tense (ἔδοξασεν; v. 30).⁵⁷⁰ Nothing can separate us "from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 39).⁵⁷¹

Romans 9-16

In Romans 9-11 Paul describes the effect of the δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ upon the Jewish people. Though there is not much material directly relevant to chapter 7 here, two things should be noted. First, the failure of Israel to attain the Law of righteousness is attributed to the fact that they pursued it "by works" (ἐξ ἔργων; 9:32). Their zeal for God is without proper knowledge (ἐπιγνωσιν; 10:2). 9:30-10:5 has been referred to often in this chapter because it offers a significant insight into Paul's evaluation of the Law.⁵⁷²

Second, it is noteworthy that three times in these chapters (9-11) Paul uses emphatic forms of the first person singular similar to those in 7:7-25. He speaks of himself

⁵⁷⁰The aorist tense again emphasizes the act itself; see Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," 967-68.

⁵⁷¹Note the similar expression of Christ as "our Lord" in 7:25.

⁵⁷²See above, pp. 102-3,127-30,201,202-3,207.

by employing *αὐτός ἐγώ* (9:3), *ἐγώ . . . εἰμι* (11:1), and *εἰμι ἐγώ* (11:13). It is not seriously disputed that Paul refers to himself in all three instances. On the other hand, one should not overlook the fact that Paul also uses *ἐγώ* in a "rhetorical" sense in 11:19. He clearly indicates this by introducing his statement with *εἰρησ οὖν*. An analysis of Paul's various uses of the first person singular will be a prominent aspect in the following chapter of this thesis.

In Romans 12:1-15:7 Paul is quite heavily involved in ethical issues. Kümmel contends that these later chapters are "only loosely connected with the first part" of Romans.⁵⁷³ As a result, he concludes that "we need only examine chapters 1-11" in order to interpret Romans 7 properly.⁵⁷⁴ Kümmel's limitation is unwarranted.⁵⁷⁵ While 12:1 does begin a new section, the influence of what Paul has already stated in this letter cannot be completely severed from its concluding chapters. On the contrary, chapters 1-8 serve as an integral basis for the chapters to follow. In addition, what Paul writes in these later chapters must be allowed to have its

⁵⁷³Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 27; the topic here is "mit dem ersten Teil nur lose zusammenhängen."

⁵⁷⁴Ibid., "brauchen wir nur Kap. 1-11 zu betrachten."

⁵⁷⁵Cranfield, 1:346, n. 6, evaluates Kümmel's conclusion as evidence "of a blind spot in the author's theological thinking serious enough to have bedeviled a good deal of the discussion in what is in many respects a valuable and informative book."

proper impact upon the interpretation of Romans 7.⁵⁷⁶

The first two verses of chapter 12 clearly indicate that the Christian life remains an intense struggle. Paul urges his fellow believers to resist the temptation to be conformed to this world (v. 2). After his discussion of Spiritual gifts (12:3-8), Paul's exhortations against being haughty (v. 16), repaying evil with evil (v. 17), and taking revenge into one's own hands (vv. 19-20) are summed up in verse 21: "Do not be conquered by the evil, but conquer the evil with the good." All of these admonitions reckon with the fact that what they denounce are, in fact, real possibilities. The "doing" of evil is an ever present reality for these Christians who must strive to resist being conquered (*νικάω*) and completely enslaved once again (as in 6:17-18,20; 7:5,7-11).⁵⁷⁷

In the next section, wherein Paul speaks of the Christian's responsibilities to government (13:1-7), he again urges his readers to do good and abstain from evil (vv. 3-4). The verses which follow (vv. 8-10) reveal that the Law is that which guides and directs the believer toward good and away from evil. Here *ὁ νόμος* freely interchanges with

⁵⁷⁶For how these chapters impact upon determining the state of the "I" in 7:14-25, see below, pp. 335-37.

⁵⁷⁷Here also the situation of the "I" in 7:14-25 seems comparable. In both instances there is no longer total enslavement, but, rather than the signalling the end of a battle, the presence of the Spirit has marked the beginning of a struggle which persists within the believer; see below, pp. 353-60.

ἐντολή (v. 9; as in 7:7-12). This, as well as the citation of a number of the commandments from the Decalogue in verse 9,⁵⁷⁸ indicates that in 13:8-10 νόμος is again to be understood in terms of the Torah's commandments. As such Paul summarizes the Law in the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (v. 9; Lev. 19:18). This "doing" "is the fulfillment of the Law" (πλήρωμα; v. 10; see also v. 8). These verses give further insight into Paul's appraisal of the Law and emphasize its continued purpose in the Christian life.⁵⁷⁹

The remainder of chapter 13 urges the readers to abstain from a number of base vices (v. 13) since the day of salvation "is nearer to us than when we believed" (v. 11). Verse 14 implores, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not make provision for the desires of the flesh" (τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιείσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας).⁵⁸⁰ What prompts this exhortation? Is it necessary because sin persists in its attempts "to work out every desire" in these Christians even through the Law's command (πάσαν ἐπιθυμίαν in 7:8; ἐπιθυμίας 13:14)? Could it not be that they must continue to battle their σὰρξ

⁵⁷⁸ Paul undoubtedly uses οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις as a summation for the last commandment of the Decalogue here. This weighs heavily in favor of interpreting the expression in 7:7 in the same manner; see above, pp. 112-15.

⁵⁷⁹ Notice, however, that Paul does not say that Christians can fulfill the Law or that the Law is able to effect their fulfillment of it; see above on 8:3, pp. 204-7. He merely points to that which the fulfillment of the Law would entail.

⁵⁸⁰ Literally to give "forethought" or "foresight" to something; see Acts 24:2; BAGD, 708-9[2].

which remains "sold under sin" (7:14)?⁵⁸¹

The topic of those who are "weak in the faith" engages Paul's attention in Romans 14:1-15:8 (τὸν ἀσθενούντα τῇ πίστει; 14:1). Here Paul is addressing issues which are not sinful in and of themselves.⁵⁸² If a stronger Christian eats meat (14:1-4) or fails to observe certain festival days (vv. 5-6), he must be careful that he does not lead a fellow Christian, who considers such conduct sinful, to stumble and fall away from the faith (vv. 13,15). His utmost concern must be that the faith of the weaker brother, in behalf of whom Christ also died, might not be destroyed (v. 15). However, Paul emphasizes that if someone considers such "neutral" acts sinful and nevertheless does them, he has already been condemned. "Everything which is not from faith is sin" (v. 23). Chapter 15 begins by admonishing the strong, who have Christ as their example, to bear with other Christians who are weak in the faith (vv. 1-3).

After rejoicing in the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles in 15:8-13, Paul describes his own ministry and travel plans (vv. 14-33). He makes his transition between these two sections by describing his own personal confidence

⁵⁸¹This verse seems to be an indication that what Paul describes in 7:14-25 is seen by him as an inescapable aspect of the believer's life in this world; see below, pp. 336-37, 353-57.

⁵⁸²He discusses the eating of meat which was likely offered to idols (14:1-4 in light of 1 Cor. 8-10) and the observance of festival days (14:5-6; Col. 2:16-18; Gal. 4:10).

in the Roman Christians with the emphatic *αὐτὸς ἐγώ* (v. 14; compare 7:25). In the final chapter (16), Paul extends personal greetings to a large number of Christians in Rome.

This overview of Romans completes the second chapter of this thesis. It has endeavored to state the semantic sense or content of what Paul writes in Romans 7 by examining the text of that chapter within its context. Conclusions regarding the controversial issues involved in Romans 7 will be made in the chapters of this thesis which follow. Chapters three and four will concentrate upon the identity and spiritual condition of the "I" in Romans 7:7-25. The fifth and final chapter will then draw conclusions about the purpose and function of Romans 7.

CHAPTER III

PAUL'S USE OF THE FIRST PERSON SINGULAR: THE REFERENT QUESTION

Now that the sense of what Paul writes in Romans 7 has been stated, this thesis focuses more specifically on the "I" in verses 7-25. Who is the "I?" How does Paul intend the numerous first person singular forms he uses in Romans 7:7-25 to be identified and understood? What purpose do they serve? In short, what is a proper interpretation of Paul's use of the first person singular in Romans 7?¹

Before attempting to answer these questions, it should be pointed out that two vital, but separate, aspects are involved in them. The first is the question of referent.²

¹If Romans 7 is, indeed, "foundational for an understanding of Paul's theology as a whole," as Douglas Milne, "Romans 7:7-12, Paul's Pre-Conversion Experience," The Reformed Theological Review 43 (1984):9, contends, evaluating this issue as insignificant is unwise. So also, to conclude that this question is capable of accommodating a variety of exegetical opinions may be a critical error for interpreting Paul's teaching. As Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, tr. and ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 196, responds, "This would mean dropping any understanding of a text which is obviously of supreme importance for Paul himself."

²The person generally credited with first making this distinction between sense/meaning and referent is Gottlob Frege; see Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege, eds. and trs. P. Geach and M. Black (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), especially 56-78 which comprises an

Paul uses ἐγώ, as well as the other first person singular forms, in Romans 7:7-25 to speak of an "I,"³ but who does Paul intend his readers to identify as this "I"? Who is Paul writing about or referring to by using these various forms in the first person singular? Who is the referent of the "I"?

After the identity of the "I" has been established, a second factor involved in Paul's use of the first person singular can be approached. This is the field of pragmatics which seeks to determine the impact which an author aims to have upon his readers by using a particular expression.⁴

essay first published in 1892 entitled, "On Sense and Reference." The following is an example of the distinction between sense and referent: One may speak of "Pluto" and of "the last planet in our solar system." While both statements express a different sense/meaning, they are readily understood as referring to the same celestial body. However, what if another planet is discovered beyond Pluto? While the sense conveyed by the two phrases would still "mean" the same thing as before, their referent would have changed.

³This is the field of semantics which was utilized in the second chapter of this thesis; see above, p. 68. There it was determined that the ἐγώ in Romans 7 denotes an "I," that is, a whole person, and not merely some component of inner psychology; see above, pp. 147-49, 165, 193-95.

⁴Kevin Vanhoozer, in "The Semantics of Biblical Literature," chap. two in Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon, eds. D. Carson and J. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1986), 86, defines this pragmatic aspect as "what we bring about or achieve by saying something, such as convincing, persuading." James Voelz, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Where are We Now? Where are We Going?" in Light for Our World, ed. J. Klotz (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1989), 239, states, "According to the speech-act theory, language has not only a 'locutionary force' (= the meaning of the words), but also an 'illocutionary force,' often defined as 'what the words "count as".'" Ibid., 254, n. 28, further identifies the "per locutionary force" as the actual effect which the

Specifically in Romans 7, this involves asking how Paul intends his statements of and about the "I" to function. What are they supposed to "count as"? What does Paul seek to accomplish through his consistent and extensive use of the first person singular in verses 7-25? What effect does he intend to have?

In interpreting Romans 7 one may not omit either of these factors. Both the referent and the function of the "I" must be considered. At the same time, although both aspects are integrally related, they must be clearly distinguished. Much of the confusion surrounding the "I" of Romans 7, as illustrated in chapter one, stems from a failure to distinguish referent from function. For example, when the "I" is identified as Paul, Israel, or Adam, and then also identified with the experience of other people, one has made a significant jump from the text itself.⁵ A number of different referents

words have upon the reader. This may or may not coincide with what the speaker/author intends. Vanhoozer and Voelz both make reference to the work in speech-act theory by John L. Austin, How to Do Things with Words, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975) and by John R. Searle, Speech Acts (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

As an example of pragmatics, one might think of a parent telling their young child who is preoccupied in a toy store, "I am leaving now." The statement is intended to "count as" something more than a sharing of information. Its function is something like, "It is time to go and if you do not want to be left alone in the store, come along now!"

⁵See the "combined" interpretations discussed in chapter one, pp. 26-30 and pp. 58-66. For one example of such a jump, see James Dunn, Romans 1-8, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a, eds. R. Martin, D. Hubbard, and G. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 407, who concludes that the "I" in verses 14-25 is Paul and then adds, "What Paul has to say he can only say in starkly personal and individual terms, those whose experience accorded with what follows would recognize its

have been combined in an effort to apply what Paul is saying and to explain his purpose.

In addition, it is only proper methodologically to deal with the pragmatic issue of function once the referent questions have been resolved. Thus the problem of the referent of the "I" in Romans 7:7-25 should be addressed first. Once the "I" has been identified, one can move on to the second aspect which concerns itself with the intended function of the first person singular in those verses. This has not always been the case.⁶ When Werner Kümmel approaches Romans 7 as an objective defense of the Law, he has begun with a pragmatic aspect.⁷ He then ends up advocating a rhetorical interpretation of the "I" which virtually eliminates the issue of referent from consideration entirely. The "I" has become "no one or every one."⁸

The goal of this chapter is to consider the first of these two aspects, that of referent. Who is the "I" in Romans 7:7-25? A consideration of this question begins with determin-

wider reference without needing to have it pointed out."

⁶For another example, see James Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," Theologische Zeitschrift 31 (1975):261, n. 20, who writes, "However typical the 'I' in these verses it must surely include Paul himself."

⁷Werner Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929); reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 9,10,11,56. [Hereafter, this study is denoted Römer 7.]

⁸Ibid., 132, "niemand oder jedermann ist Subjekt."

ing the identity of the "I." This will be accomplished by comparing the sense/content of what Paul says about the "I" in Romans 7:7-25, as determined in chapter two, with the sense/content of what he says elsewhere about the various referents which have been proposed. However, due to the disputed issues involved in Romans 7, an attempt to identify the referent of the "I" also and inevitably leads to a question of "when" these verses are to be applied to that specific referent. At what time do these verses speak of this "I?" Behind this question lies the debate over the spiritual state of the "I," particularly in verses 14-25. Once these issues have been resolved it is possible to move on to an examination of the function or purpose which Paul's use of the first person singular in Romans 7 is intended to serve. A consideration of that factor will be reserved for the final chapter of this thesis.

The Referent of the "I" in Romans 7:7-11

With whom is the "I" to be identified in Romans 7:7-25? As the survey in chapter one revealed, the issue of referent is a problem particularly prominent in verses 7-11. Only in these earlier verses do we have scholars specifically identifying a number of different referents. This is generally because many of them have concluded that it is "a mistake to treat the passage autobiographically and to look for matching

stages in Paul's own experience."⁹ The crucial importance of identifying the referent in verses 7-11 is underscored by the fact that the conclusions which are reached about the "I" in verses 14-25 are in large part determined by how the "I" is identified in these earlier verses. For example, of the four reasons Kümmel gives for the identity of the "I" he establishes in verses 14-25, two are directly dependent upon verses 7-11.¹⁰ As a result, a consideration of the question of referent can, at least initially, focus upon verses 7-11.

To whom, then, does the "I" there refer? The following referents have been proposed.

The People of Israel

Douglas Moo contends that the "I" in Romans 7:7-11 represents the "redemptive-historical experience of Israel with the law."¹¹ Paul is speaking in the name of the nation of

⁹Dunn, Romans 1-8, 382. Kümmel, Römer 7, 78, contends that if this is attempted, an identification of the time in Paul's life in which these experiences should be placed is left up to the "fantasy of the scholar" ("Phantasie der Forscher"); see also the discussion of Franz Leenhardt, The Epistle to the Romans, tr. H. Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 181-84. As a result, Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, The New Testament Library, tr. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1969), 233, concludes that every attempt at biography, psychology, or the linking of Paul's description with any empirical data is to be opposed. John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1965), 1:251, in essence agrees but with quite different conclusions.

¹⁰Kümmel, Römer 7, 117; these are cited above, p. 49.

¹¹Douglas Moo, "Israel and Paul in Romans 7:7-12," New Testament Studies 32 (1986):123; see also above, pp. 19-21.

Israel and, particularly in verses 9-10, describing their experience at Mount Sinai.¹² Moo supports this by pointing out that in Romans 7 Paul is defending the Mosaic Law which was "Israel's peculiar possession."¹³ Moo then extends his definition of the "I" to include Paul who is, at least in a secondary sense, also the referent. Why is this so? Moo argues that the first person singular in verses 7-11 represents Israel as a "*collective body*"¹⁴ and that Paul is a member of Israel. Therefore, Paul can identify "himself, in a 'corporate' sense, with the experiences of his own people."¹⁵ By this criterion, Paul, along with all the other members of Israel, past, present, and future, can also be the referent of the "I." In a similar, but somewhat broader, fashion, Ethelbert Stauffer proposes that the "I" in verses 7-11 is following the steps of mankind from Paradise through

¹² Ibid., 122-35, especially 129-30.

¹³ Ibid., 123.

¹⁴ Ibid., 128.

¹⁵ Ibid., 129. This is similar to the view of Richard Longenecker, Paul (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 92, who advocates the presence of this same concept in Romans 7:7-11, but then applies it to Adam. For support, Moo, 129, points to parallels from the Old Testament prophets who used the first person singular to "narrate with intense subjective language the horrors which have befallen the city and the people" (Jer. 10:19-22; Mic. 7:7-10; Lam. 1:9-22; 2:20-22; citing U. Luz, Das Geschichtverständnis des Paulus, BEVT, 49 (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1968), 159, n. 87.

Moses.¹⁶

Evaluation

1. First, there is a practical consideration. Nothing in the text indicates that the various forms in the first person singular are to be taken in anything other than their literal sense. Neither is there any textual support for interpreting the "I" in a collective or corporate manner. As Kümmel responds to the identification of the "I" as the Jewish people, "Nothing stands written in the text concerning these things."¹⁷

2. This interpretation applies 7:8b to the era before the Law was given at Sinai. In that period, it is said, sin was "dead" or "ineffective" (*νεκρά* of 7:8). This contradicts Paul's description of the time between Adam and Moses in Romans 5:13-14. He hardly depicts it as one in which sin was in any way dormant.

3. The situation described in verses 7-11 does not at all match the characterization which Paul makes of Israel elsewhere in this letter. Those who "bear the name Jew" (2:17) are pictured as standing in judgment on the sins of

¹⁶Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, tr. and ed. by G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1973), s.v. "ἐγώ," by Ethelbert Stauffer, 2:358-62, contends that the giving of the Law provokes the crisis of chapter 7 which is not resolved until the coming of Christ and is depicted in chapter 8.

¹⁷Kümmel, Römer 7, 85, "daß von all diesen Dingen nichts im Texte steht"; see also 80,84,87.

others (2:1-16), while relying on circumcision and their observance of the Law as the basis for boasting before God (2:17-29).

Specifically in regard to the Law, the members of Israel are exhibiting an attitude of complacency and self-righteousness (chapter 2; 9:30-10:5). According to Paul, Israel views the Law as the ground of their boast (2:23) and as the means for attaining righteousness (9:31-32; 10:3). They in no way "regarded the law as impossible to fulfill in principle or as a spur to sin."¹⁸ That the Law could be involved with sin (7:7-8) and even used as a means of deception and death (7:10-11) would similarly have been regarded as blasphemous.¹⁹

Paul responds by charging the people of Israel with improperly judging others and with being complacent in their own observance of the Law (2:1-4,13,21-24). As a result, they fail to recognize their own transgression of the Law and the unavoidable consequences of that sin, God's judgment (2:5-16; 3:9-20).

All of this stands in sharp contrast to the deep and personal awareness of sin exhibited by the "I" in 7:7-11. The "I" perceives that it is not possible to attain righteousness by the Law's commandment. Rather, the "I" acknowledges that sin has been able to use God's Law to identify sin, to

¹⁸Käsemann, 192-93.

¹⁹Ibid., 195.

provoke sin, to deceive, and to kill (7:7-11).

4. Once the Law had been revealed, Paul refuses to allow any limitations to be placed upon its scope or its duration.²⁰ In light of 2:12-16, Paul does not restrict the recognition and provocation which sin is able to work through the Law's commandment to the Jewish people, that is, to those who know the revealed Torah.²¹ In addition, Moo's contention that "the temporal limitation of the *torah* is a key element in Paul's theology" is refuted by Paul himself (2:20; 3:31; 7:12; 13:8-10).²²

5. If Israel is accepted as the referent in verses 7-11, the difficulties this identification presents if it is maintained in verses 14-25 are virtually insurmountable. Kümmel illustrates this as follows:

But then in 7:14ff., the I is divided into two parts: the willing 'I' represents the behavior of the ideal Jew, but the action of the evil ['I'] that of the sinful Jew. . . . No reader could determine that here a totality is introduced in the midst of his discussion and then . . . this same totality is again separated into

²⁰The only manner in which the Law is in any way inferior is in regard to the promise; see Gal. 3:15 and below, pp. 404-8.

²¹As Moo, 123, concludes in stressing that the Mosaic Law is "Israel's peculiar possession," and, 124, "a special gift to Israel." He attempts to deal with 2:14-16, 26-27, but cannot adequately explain them. According to R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Commentaries on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 462, this factor alone makes the identification of the "I" as Israel "untenable"; though he, 463, adds that "in the case of inferior types of law this realization will naturally be less perfect."

²²Moo, 124.

groups.²³

As a result, those who support this interpretation generally do not even attempt to apply it consistently throughout the remainder of the chapter.

Adam and in Him All Mankind

According to this interpretation, Paul's terms in 7:7-11, and especially his use of the "I," are to be "defined according to the context of Genesis 1-3."²⁴ Adam, who has already been introduced in 5:12-21, now speaks through the *εγώ*.²⁵ Those who support this identification contend that the references to life and death in verses 8b-10a can be

²³Kümmel, Römer 7, 85, "Dann wird aber in 7,14ff. das Ich in 2 Teile geteilt: das Wollen ist das Verhalten des idealen Juden, das Tun des Bösen aber das des sündigen Juden. . . . Kein Leser konnte merken, daß hier eine Gesamtheit also redend eingeführt wird und dann in dieser Gesamtheit wieder Gruppen unterschieden werden."

²⁴John Espy, "Paul's Robust Conscience Re-Examined," New Testament Studies 31 (1985):169; see also C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962), 143-45; Leenhardt, 184-90; Longenecker, Paul, 92-97; Stanislas Lyonnet, "'Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas' (Rom. vii 7)," in Neotestamentica et Patristica, Novum Testamentum Supplements, vol. 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 157-65; idem., "L'Histoire du salut selon le chapitre vii de l'Épître aux Romains," Revue Biblica 43 (1963):130-42; Matthew Black, Commentary on Romans, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1973), 103; and above, pp. 17-19. Even Dunn, Romans 1-8, 404, who supports the Christian interpretation of 7:14-25 can conclude, "It was clear enough in vv. 7-13 that the 'I' was Adam, not Paul himself as such"; though he later adds, 405, that "the sequence of past tenses would have heightened the impression that Paul was describing his own past as well."

²⁵Günther Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," in Early Christian Experience, The New Testament Library, tr. P. Hammer (London: SCM Press, 1969), 93.

applied in their theological sense to Adam alone.²⁶ Ernst Käsemann concludes, "There is nothing in the passage which does not fit Adam, and everything fits Adam alone."²⁷ It is then proposed that Paul's purpose is to present the inescapable fact that "every person after Adam is entangled in the fate of the protoplast. . . . Before Christ Adam is continually repeated."²⁸ The referent, initially identified as Adam, is again extended or combined with other referents.

Evaluation

It is possible that Paul had Genesis 1-3 in mind as he wrote these verses.²⁹ However, those who push all the details of the text in an effort to prove that the referent of the "I" can be Adam alone soon find that all the details do not match.

1. As with the previous interpretation, there is nothing indicated in the text which explicitly directs the hearer or reader to understand the "I" as Adam. For example, in Genesis

²⁶Moo, 125, calls this "the great attraction of the Adamic interpretation."

²⁷Käsemann, 196; though he adds, 200, that these verses depict a general truth applicable to all those "under the shadow of Adam." See also Lyonnet, "L'Histoire du salut selon le chapitre vii de l'Épître aux Romains," 130-42.

²⁸Käsemann, 197.

²⁹C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols., The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979), 1:350, states, "Paul no doubt has the narrative of Genesis 3 in mind. In fact, these verses are best understood as exposition of the Genesis narrative."

2-3 we find specific references not only to Adam, but to Eve, the serpent, the fruit, the tree, and so on. In Romans 7:7-11 Paul neither mentions nor even alludes to any of these. As a result, Gerd Theissen appropriately asks, "Is Adam speaking? But who in the Roman community would have understood that?"³⁰

2. Another serious objection to identifying the referent as Adam is the fact that the Torah was not given until the time of Moses (5:13-14).³¹ That the Mosaic Torah is indeed Paul's topic of discussion here is clearly indicated by his citation of a portion of the tenth commandment at the end of verse 7. It seems improbable that Paul would choose the experience of Adam in order to demonstrate the workings of the Mosaic Law's commandment and to serve as proof for his assertion that the revealed Law of God is not sin (7:7,12-13).³²

3. In response to this objection, it is argued that there are references in Jewish sources which describe the Torah as existing even before creation.³³ The command of

³⁰Gerd Theissen, Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology, tr. G. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 251; Kümmel, Römer 7, 87, argues that it is not implied ("angedeuten") in any sort of way; see also Moo, 132, n. 25.

³¹This is pointed out by Moo, 125, who believes that "this restriction effectively rules out the (purely) Adamic view." Kümmel, Römer 7, 87, similarly concludes that it makes this interpretation "impossible" ("unmöglich").

³²Kümmel, Römer 7, 87.

³³See, for example, Midrash Rabbah: Genesis, tr. H. Freedman and M. Simon (London: Soncino Press, 1939), 8:2, p. 56, which refers to the Torah as that "which preceded the

Genesis 2:17 is then viewed as an expression of the Torah's commandments,³⁴ one of which was broken in Adam's sin.³⁵

creation of the world by two thousand years"; also Neophyti 1: Genesis, tr. and ed. Alejandro Diez Macho, English tr. M. McNamara and M. Maher (Consejo Superior De Investigaciones Cientificas, 1968), on Gen. 2:15, p. 501, which states that the Lord caused Adam "to dwell in the garden of Eden so that he do service according to the Law and keep its commandments." See also Dunn, Romans 1-8, 379; Theissen, 203-4.

³⁴According to Jewish tradition, Adam received a portion of the Law with the commandment which he was given (Gen. 2:17). For example, Midrash Rabbah: Genesis, 24:5, p. 202, states, "R. Judah said: It was fitting that the Torah should have been given through Adam"; also *ibid.*, 16:5-6; Midrash Rabbah: Deuteronomy, tr. H. Freedman and M. Simon (London: Soncino Press, 1939), 24:5, p. 54, discusses how the one verse of Scripture (2:17) indicates that six commandments were given to Adam; these are also detailed in tractate Sanhedrin 56b, The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nezikin, tr. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 382-83, which concludes that Gen. 2:17 refers to the observance of social laws, blasphemy, idolatry, bloodshed, adultery, and robbery. See also Lyonnet, "'Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas' (Rom. vii 7)," 160-65; "L'Histoire du salut selon le chapitre vii de l'Epître aux Romains," 140-47; Longenecker, Paul, 94-95; Käsemann, 196; George F. Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, 2 vols. (New York: Schocken Books, 1927, 1930), 1:274; Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament: Aus Talmud und Midrash, 6 vols (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1954), 3:37. Dunn, Romans 1-8, 379, cautions that "the oldest form of this teaching may well be as early as Paul."

³⁵For example, "The Fourth Book of Ezra" 7:11, in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, 2 vols., tr. B. Metzger, ed. J. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1983), 2:537, records these words of the Lord concerning Israel: "For I made the world for their sake, and when Adam transgressed my statutes, what had been made was judged." This connection is supported by reference to Genesis 3:5-6 where the desire or lust is to be like God and the tree is also said to be desirous, see Lyonnet, "'Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas' (Rom. vii 7)," 161; Cranfield, 1:350-51. However, the same word for coveting is not used in the Septuagint of Gen. 3:6 which reads: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing (*ἀρεστός*) for the eyes to see and it was desirable (*ὄραϊον*) to make wise, then she took its fruit and ate. And she also gave to her husband with her and he ate."

The wrong desire or lust of Romans 7:7 is then interpreted as the root of all sin, even of the sin in Eden.³⁶

One may legitimately infer that in some sense "Adam was breaking 'the law' of God."³⁷ However, the sharp difference between the commandment of Genesis 2:17 and the one Paul cites in Romans 7:7 would have made the proposed connection between the "I" and the experience of Adam difficult to recognize.³⁸ Attempts at equating the commandment against coveting in Romans 7:7 with the prohibition against eating and touching in Genesis (2:16-17; 3:3) overlook the fact

³⁶ "The Apocalypse of Moses" 19:3, in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, 2 vols., ed. R. Charles, tr. L. Wells (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913), 2:146, records Eve's lament that the serpent "went and poured upon the fruit the poison of his wickedness, which is lust, the root and beginning of every sin." Tractate Shabbath 145b-46a, The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Mo'ed, tr. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1938), 738, states, "For when the serpent came upon Eve he injected a lust into her." See also Robert Gundry, "The Moral Frustration of Paul Before His Conversion," in Pauline Studies, ed. D. Hagner and M. Harris (Exeter, England: The Paternoster Press, 1980), 241, n. 10. Lyonnet, "'Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas' (Rom. vii 7)," 161, points out that Targum Neofiti at Gen. 3:6 uses חמד whose Hebrew equivalent is used to translate ἐπιθυμέω elsewhere in the Septuagint; see Neophyti 1, 13.

³⁷ Dunn, Romans 1-8, 400; see Rom. 5:14 and above, pp. 75-77.

³⁸ Moo, 131, points out that no one has furnished evidence that "Jews ever interpreted the Paradise commandment as a prohibition of 'coveting'." In addition, ἐπιθυμέω and its cognates are not present in the Septuagint of Gen. 1-3. Lyonnet, "'Tu Ne Convoiteras Pas' (Rom. vii 7)," 160, 165, responds that although Paul has the commandment of Gen. 2:17 in mind, in Rom. 7:7 he uses the commandment which is the essence of sin for him ("le péché") and would, thereby, encompass all other laws as well.

that the respective commands are markedly different.³⁹ It should also be noted that

Paul, in contrast to the rabbinic tendency to consider the law eternal, attributes great significance to its secondary and historical character.⁴⁰

4. In the Genesis narrative, the temptation to sin comes from outside of man. Adam was personally innocent and without the knowledge of sin which the serpent was trying to bring into the world (Rom. 5:12). In Romans 7:7-11 sin is depicted in terms "of inner processes."⁴¹ Sin is working every desire ἐν ἐμοί through the commandment (v. 8).⁴²

5. The one proposed textual link between Genesis 1-3 and Romans 7 is the verb "to deceive" (ἠπάτησεν in Gen. 3:13; ἐξηπάτησεν in Rom. 7:11). In Genesis 3:13 it refers to the deception of Eve by the serpent. Thus when Paul makes an indisputable reference to that event in 1 Timothy 2:13-14, his point is that Eve was deceived and *not* Adam.⁴³ If Adam is

³⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 86-87. The commands in Genesis are οὐ φάγεσθε (2:17) and μὴ ἀψησθε (3:3) compared with οὐκ ἐπι-θυμήσεις in Rom. 7:7.

⁴⁰Theissen, 203, n. 3; in support of this assertion, see, for example, Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:17.

⁴¹Theissen, 203. He, 206-9, attempts to explain this and concludes, 206, that Paul may be "interiorizing the Fall."

⁴²Furthermore, as Moo points out, 132, n. 25, "The contrast 'sin was dead' (v. 8)/'sin sprang to life' (v. 9b) suggests that sin existed as a force in the world (not just in the serpent) before the commandment came."

⁴³"And Adam was not deceived (οὐκ ἠπατήθη), but the woman, having been deceived (ἐξαπατηθεῖσα), fell into transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14). In Romans 5 Paul's point is that we are all affected by the sin of Adam and not the deceived Eve.

the "I" in Romans 7:7-11, this would, at the very least, represent Paul drawing diverse conclusions from the same text.

6. This interpretation contends that Romans 7:7-11 is an account of Adam's fall into sin which can then be applied to all mankind as Paul himself does in Romans 5. Even aside from the identification of more than one referent, there are problems involved in the jump from identifying the "I" as Adam to making the referent inclusive of all people. It overlooks Paul's point in Romans 5 which is that "Adam was a unique man with only one historical counterpart and that is Jesus Christ."⁴⁴ Paul also indicates that Adam's sin was in a way unlike the sin of others (5:14). How can it be then that he is describing all people by using the "I" for Adam in 7:7-11?⁴⁵

7. The consistent application of this interpretation in verses 14-25 is problematic. As a result, when the "I" is identified as Adam in verses 7-11, this referent is usually abandoned in the verses which follow.⁴⁶

In view of these difficulties and the fact that there

⁴⁴Milne, 11. He claims that "the doctrine that everyman is the Adam of his own soul was Jewish not Pauline," citing 2 Baruch 54:19. However, this must not be allowed to weaken Rom. 5:12.

⁴⁵As Käsemann points out, 196, "It is more likely that the two passages are parallel than antithetical." However, perhaps they are not even intended to be parallels in the strict sense.

⁴⁶Kümmel, Römer 7, 87, concludes that even when this interpretation is improperly accepted in 7:7-11, it is correctly given up in verses 14-25.

is only one plausible textual reference to the fall narrative (see above, point 5),⁴⁷ it seems advisable not to "press the connection with Genesis too hard."⁴⁸

A Rhetorical Expression of Man
in General under the Law

Kümmel proposes that Paul "uses the first person for a portrayal of general human experiences."⁴⁹ Paul, as elsewhere, intends the "I" to be understood as a rhetorical device which does not describe the actual experiences of the speaker or author.⁵⁰ Kümmel's rhetorical interpretation stems from his conclusion that the text of Romans 7:7-11 will not allow the "I" to be identified as any of the other suggested referents.⁵¹ Since it is impossible for the referent to be Paul, Adam, or Israel, the "I" must be a figure of speech used by

⁴⁷Lenski, 467, concludes that any "similarity must not be pressed beyond this act of deception." Kümmel, Römer 7, 87, considers it unnecessary to accept this connection on the basis of his discussion; see also *ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁸Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 283; so F. F. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, rev. ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1963), 142.

⁴⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 89; see above, pp. 21-26. In Käsemann's words, 195, the "I" describes "mankind under the law, or specifically the pious Jew" in verses 7-13, though he admits this does not resolve all of the problems.

⁵⁰As F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, tr. and rev. R. Funk (Chicago: The University Press, 1961), 147[281] state, the "I" is used "in order to illustrate something universal in a vivid manner by reference to a single individual."

⁵¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 84, 87; see above, pp. 21-22.

Paul to make his presentation of a general truth more lively. Since what the "I" states is not actually true of anyone in particular, Theissen terms Kümmel's referent "a fictive 'I'."⁵²

The exegetical bases for Kümmel's conclusion have been presented. They may be summarized as follows:

- 1) "Without Law or commandment, the subject would have remained without personal sin and passion."⁵³
- 2) Sin is unable to assert its power without the Law, "that is, it cannot bring people under the dominion of death."⁵⁴ It is νεκρά (v. 8).
- 3) It was only "with the coming of the commandment [that] sin acquired its power."⁵⁵
- 4) Most significantly, the ἐζων of 7:9 must be taken in a pregnant sense denoting full spiritual life. The text speaks only of the "true life" and then the death of the "I."⁵⁶
- 5) "The 'experiences' of an I, therefore, were used by Paul in order to present, on behalf of the Law, the rela-

⁵²Theissen, 191. Longenecker, Paul, 89, also refers to it as a "clearly gnomic and general" use of the first person singular.

⁵³Kümmel, Römer 7, 75, "ohne Gesetz bzw. Gebot das Subjekt ohne persönliche Sünde und Begierde belieben wäre."

⁵⁴Ibid., 76, "d.h. den Menschen unter die Todesgewalt bringen kann."

⁵⁵Ibid., "mit dem Kommen des Gebotes die Sünde ihre Kraft erlangte."

⁵⁶Ibid, 80, "von seinem wahren Leben und Tod redet." See also 78-79 where he quotes with approval Hans Lietzmann, An die Römer, 3rd. ed., Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, no. 8 (Tübingen, 1928), 27, "Paul cannot . . . say of himself he had 'lived' in the actual sense of the word before his conversion (ποτέ)" ["Paulus kann nicht . . . von sich aussagen, er habe vor seiner Bekehrung (ποτέ) 'gelebt' im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes"].

tionship between sin and the Law."⁵⁷ Such an objective apology for the Law would not have been possible if Paul was merely describing the experiences of his own life.

These factors, along with the continued expressions made by the "I" in verses 14-25, lead Kümmel to conclude that Paul is not describing his own actual possession or consciousness of life and death.⁵⁸ Rather, Paul employs the first person singular in order to speak from a Christian vantage point of unredeemed man in his objective relation to God.⁵⁹

Kümmel supports his interpretation by contending that Paul uses the first person singular in a number of other passages without intending himself, or anyone else, as the referent.⁶⁰ He also cites examples from Greek and Jewish literature, which are admittedly sparse, in order to demonstrate the presence of a rhetorical "I" in the milieu surrounding Paul.⁶¹

Rudolf Bultmann follows upon and expands Kümmel's approach in concluding that Paul here transcends the realm of

⁵⁷Kümmel, Römer 7, 76, "Die 'Erlebnisse' eines Ich werden also von Paulus benützt, um das Verhältnis von Sünde und Gesetz zugunsten des Gesetzes darzustellen."

⁵⁸Ibid., 124; Käsemann, 196.

⁵⁹Käsemann, 196, states, "Paul distinguishes the original intention of the Law as the declaration of God's will from its actual effect This intention . . . is brought to light by the gospel." He later adds, 197, Paul "can do this, of course, only as a Christian."

⁶⁰See the discussion of these below, pp. 242-46.

⁶¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 126; Theissen, 192, states, "Ancient rhetoric had little interest in the use of 'I' as a stylistic device."

individual consciousness and directs us toward the actual existential condition of man, that is, his trans-subjective reality.⁶² Bultmann's interpretation is dependent upon identifying the *ἐπιθυμία* in verses 7-13 as "the desire for realizing one's true nature [which] is contained in the desire to assert oneself, although disguised and distorted."⁶³ This enables Bultmann to conclude that Paul's purpose is to illustrate this fact: "It is precisely man's desire to achieve this true nature which causes him to lose it. This is the deception sin practices on us (v. 11)."⁶⁴

Evaluation

1. Once again, it should be pointed out that nothing in the text indicates that the interpretation of the "I" is to be taken in anything other than its literal sense.⁶⁵ As a result, if Paul intended this more general or rhetorical meaning, one must wonder "how much of such deeper ramifications would have been apparent to the bulk of Paul's Roman

⁶²Rudolf Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," in The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, tr. K. Crim (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967), 45, "Verses 7-13 . . . portray . . . the process which forms the basis for the entire existence under law, and which lies beyond subjectivity and psychic processes."

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵As, for example, in 3:5; 11:19; see below for a complete discussion, pp. 241-56. Kümmel himself makes this objection against the previous two interpretations, Römer 7, 85,87, yet he does not seriously consider this point against his own interpretation.

addressees."⁶⁶

2. Kümmel's analysis requires and then presents a situation in which the "I," representing mankind in general, actually and already was in possession of life in its fullest sense before the Law came. Kümmel even concludes, "Without the Law sin has no working power; therefore the person, when he has no Law, is in a living relationship to God."⁶⁷ Paul will in no way allow that assessment of the spiritual state of any person without the Mosaic Law to stand (1:18-32; 2:12-16). Neither will he permit any such characterization of the era before the Law was revealed (Rom. 5:12-21).⁶⁸ Paul contends that sin and death entered the world and spread to all through Adam (5:12). As a result, all people, with or without the Mosaic Law, have sinned (3:9,23). His proof of this is that all people, both before and after the Law was revealed, are placed under the reign of death (5:14).

3. From a theological perspective, if Paul's argument is what Kümmel suggests, it makes little sense. In Kümmel's schema, man possessed "true life" without the Law. However, the giving of the Law changed that. If Paul's overall purpose here is to defend the Law as not being in any way "opposed

⁶⁶Dunn, Romans 1-8, 372; he concludes that this "is something we cannot tell."

⁶⁷Kümmel, Römer 7, 132, "Ohne Gesetz hat die Sünde keine Wirkungskraft; darum ist der Mensch, wenn er kein Gesetz hat, in lebendiger Beziehung zu Gott."

⁶⁸See the discussion above, pp. 74-78, 118-24.

to God,"⁶⁹ one must ask Kümmel why God would have introduced the Law at all. Why would God disturb the true life which the "I," representing man in general, possessed? Why would God alter a situation in which sin was unable to accomplish the death of the "I"? In view of the horrendous and fatal effects which the Law's commandment has upon the "I" in 7:7-11, would God have revealed the Law merely so "that sin, through the commandment, would be proven as truly opposed to God"?⁷⁰

In Paul's mind this was hardly God's intention. The Law was not given by God to give sin its power or to effect the death of people who already possessed the true life which God intended them to have. Rather, it was sent to evoke a complete recognition of the sin which was already present in man (3:20; 7:7) and then to increase the working of sin (5:20; 7:8) to the point where the death it accomplishes might be unavoidably driven home to the sinner (4:15; 6:23; 7:7-10).

4. Are verses 7-11 an objective description of man under the Law from a Christian viewpoint? The "I" in 7:7-11 exhibits a deep, personal awareness of his own sin. The "I" recognizes the Law's involvement in his sin and the consequences of it. However, when one examines the general descriptions of unbelievers elsewhere in Romans, just the op-

⁶⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 76, "so ist das Gesetz . . . nicht widergöttlich."

⁷⁰As Kümmel, *ibid.*, states, "daß die Sünde durch das Gesetz als wahrhaft widergöttlich erwiesen werde."

posite is the case. From Paul's objective, Christian viewpoint, he depicts Gentiles outside of Christ as being consumed by idolatry and immorality (1:16-32). From that same vantage point, unbelieving Jews under the Law are portrayed as standing in judgment on the wickedness of others, while remaining seemingly oblivious to their own sin (2:1-3:8). They are exhibiting an attitude of complacency and self-righteousness in regard to the Law (2:17-29; 9:30-10:10). These passages provide us with Paul's objective characterization of unrepentant man under the Law, but these other descriptions do not agree at all with the picture of the "I" in Romans 7:7-11. The fact that they sharply contradict each other makes it difficult to believe that Paul is using the "I" to make an objective appraisal of man in general under the Law.⁷¹ In addition, the argument that the description in 7:7-11 is possible only from a Christian perspective, ends up concluding that "the knowledge of sin that is said to come through the Law in actual fact then comes through the Gospel."⁷²

5. A final objection questions the validity of the rhetorical interpretation as a whole and especially Kümmel's contention that "I" contains no personal reference whatsoever to Paul himself. From a grammatical perspective one must

⁷¹As held by Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 2 vols., tr. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 1:247; Conzelmann, 163; Käsemann, 192; see also above, pp. 22-25, 51-53.

⁷²Milne, 13.

ask whether Paul regularly or ever uses the first person singular in a manner which excludes himself as the primary referent. This question prompts a detailed examination of Paul's use of the first person singular in his letters.

Along with Romans 7 verses 7a, 9, 14-24, and 25b, Kümmel cites the following examples of Paul's use of a rhetorical "I": Romans 3:5,7; 1 Corinthians 6:12,15; 10:29-30; 11:31-32; 13:1-3,11-12; 14:11,14-15; Galatians 2:18.⁷³ He contends that the first person singular in these passages parallels the use of the "I" in Romans 7.⁷⁴ Are these passages, in fact, analogous to and supportive of his interpretation?

Totally aside from the issue of referent, a number of factors seriously weaken the similarity of Kümmel's suggested parallels. Theissen conducts an investigation of the eleven passages cited by Kümmel in regard to their sentence structure, tense, and use of an "explicit *ego*."⁷⁵ Four of the parallels occur in interrogative sentences (Rom. 3:7; 1 Cor. 6:15; 1 Cor. 10:29b,30). Four more have a conditional sentence

⁷³Kümmel, Römer 7, 121, lists these and, 121-23, proceeds to discuss them very briefly. All are appropriate to his case except for 1 Cor. 11:31-32 where the forms are all in the plural. Longenecker, Paul, 90, similarly contends, "The indefinite 'one' (*tis*) could as easily have been used in all these cases; though with considerable loss to the power and graphic character of the passage."

⁷⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 121-23.

⁷⁵Theissen, 191-200; however, he alters Kümmel's citation of Rom. 3:5 to 3:8. Verse 8 is cited by Kümmel as an example of the cohortative use of the first person plural in a rhetorical manner.

structure (1 Cor. 11:31-32; 14:11,14-15; Gal. 2:18). Thus only three of the suggested parallels occur in declarative sentences as are present in Romans 7:7-25.⁷⁶ These are 1 Corinthians 6:12; 13:1-3,11-12. According to the criterion of tense, only one out of all of the passages cited by Kümmel, 1 Corinthians 13:11-12, utilizes the past tense as Paul does in reference to the "I" in Romans 7:9.⁷⁷ But since there is no "explicit ego" in 1 Corinthians 13:11-12, Theissen concludes that Galatians 2:19, a passage not even referred to by Kümmel, is "the sole formally convincing parallel to Rom. 7:9."⁷⁸

Specifically in regard to the question of referent, an examination of Paul's use of the first person singular pronoun, ἐγώ, is especially relevant. Paul not only uses the first person singular throughout Romans 7:7-25, he also underscores it by utilizing ἐγώ twice in verses 7-11 (vv. 9, 10) and five or six additional times in verses 14-25 (vv. 14,17,20 [probably twice],24,25). Kümmel contends that Paul uses the emphatic first person singular pronoun in these verses without specific reference to himself. Theissen counters, "The *ego*

⁷⁶Conditional sentences are found in reference to the "I" only in verses 7b, 16, and 20.

⁷⁷Theissen, 195, concludes that this is "of decisive significance."

⁷⁸Ibid., 199; he then cites, 199-200, 18 passages in Paul's writings where the first person plural occurs in declarative statements in the past tense with an emphatic pronoun where Paul is unquestionably included among the referents (1 Cor. 2:3; 3:1,6; 4:15b; 5:3; 9:15; 11:23; 15:10; 2 Cor. 2:10 [twice]; 12:13,16; Gal. 1:12; 6:14; Phil. 4:11; 1 Thess.2:18; 3:5; Philemon 13).

is unquestionably personal," not only in Romans 7, but "almost everywhere."⁷⁹ Is Theissen's conclusion correct or does Paul use ἐγώ, in Romans 7 and elsewhere, as Kümmel claims?

Paul's use of ἐγώ throughout Romans provides an interesting study. Outside of chapter 7, ἐγώ occurs 12 times. Four of these are in Old Testament quotations where the referent of the ἐγώ is the one who is speaking. Three times this is the Lord (10:19; 12:19; 14:11) and once it is Elijah (11:3). In 16:22 Tertius, Paul's amanuensis, uses ἐγώ in reference to himself as he sends his personal greetings to the Roman Christians. In each of these instances, the referent of the ἐγώ, though fictive with reference to Paul himself, is clearly identified as the one speaking or writing.

Romans 11:19 displays a rhetorical use of an ἐγώ which is clearly not applicable to Paul. He utilizes it in order to put forth the hypothetical assertion of an individual Gentile. "Therefore you will say, 'The cultivated branches were broken off in order that I (ἐγώ) might be grafted in'" (11:19). The manner in which Paul introduces this statement indicates the rhetorical nature of this ἐγώ and the context in Romans 11 clearly points out who the intended referent is (vv. 13,17-18).

While Kümmel does not make mention of 11:19, he does

⁷⁹Ibid., 200; he finally adds, "Without the contradiction to Philippians 3, . . . and the nonbiographical statement in Rom. 7:9, probably no one would ever have come up with the idea of considering the 'I' fictive." See the discussion of Phil. 3:4-6 below, pp. 270-71.

cite Romans 3:7 as an example of a rhetorically fictive "I." Even though Paul does not make it as evident as in 11:19, this should be accepted as such. The fact that Paul is engaged in a dialogue is the factor which explains his use of a rhetorical ἐγώ.⁸⁰ Paul is responding to hypothetical (3:7), as well as actual (3:8), objections to his teaching. In verse 7 he himself poses a potential challenge: "But if the truth of God increased by my lies (ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι), why am I (καγώ) still being judged as a sinner?" (3:7). This objection charges that if man's sinfulness is merely "a foil to set off the righteousness of God,"⁸¹ God would be unjust in punishing people for their sins. Paul counters that God will rightly judge the world (3:5-6) and that his κρίμα is just (3:8).

Romans 3:7 vindicates Kümmel's view that Paul can use a rhetorical "I" in a hypothetical or fictive manner. The referent of this "I" is not Paul or any specific person. But Paul does not use the ἐγώ without any referent whatsoever. Even though the referent is, at least at this point, imaginary, Paul has a referent in mind. His statement anticipates a potential objector who might draw this false conclusion from

⁸⁰For a study of this, see Stanley Stowers, The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, no. 57 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981). While offering a number of valuable insights, he does not deal with 3:1-8 or chapter seven at any length.

⁸¹William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 69.

Paul's argument. As in 11:19, he is not using the ἐγώ simply to speak of "no one or everyone."⁸²

Is the ἐγώ of 3:7 parallel with the manner in which Paul uses the "I" in Romans 7? A number of factors speak against this conclusion. First, the conditional sentence structure of 3:7 indicates the hypothetical nature of the objection being raised and the rhetorical intent of the ἐγώ. This is contrasted by the numerous declarative statements made by the "I" throughout 7:7-25 (all except vv. 7b,16,20). In regard to Paul's rhetorical use of ἐγώ both in 3:7 and 11:19, Moo concludes,

The inherently 'unreal' nature of these constructions is so different from the narrative and confessional style of Romans 7 that it is hardly fair to compare them.⁸³

In addition, the sustained argument of Romans 7 contrasts with the single occurrence of ἐγώ in 3:7. Finally, Kümmel properly recognizes that Paul, as in chapter 3, is engaged in a dialogue style of argument in Romans 7. However, the partner he draws into the dialogue in chapter 7 is not at all the "I." It is the questioning "we" in verse 7 and the affirming "we" in verse 14 (see also the question in v. 13).

Aside from the above instances, the other five times an ἐγώ is present in Romans, Paul utilizes it in order to make an emphatic, personal reference to himself.

For I wish that I myself (αὐτὸς ἐγώ) were cursed [away]

⁸² Kümmel, Römer 7, 132, "niemand oder jederman."

⁸³ Moo, 129.

from Christ in behalf of my brothers, my kinsmen according to [the] flesh (9:3).

I say, then, has God rejected his people? May it never be! For indeed I am (ἐγὼ . . . εἰμι) an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin (11:1).

But I am speaking to you Gentiles; therefore inasmuch as I am (εἰμι ἐγὼ) an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry (11:13).

And I have been persuaded, my brothers, even I myself (αὐτὸς ἐγὼ) concerning you, that you are full of goodness (15:14).

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks in behalf of my life, for whom not only I (ἐγὼ μόνος) give thanks but also all the churches of the Gentiles (16:3-4).

The presence of αὐτὸς together with ἐγὼ in 9:3 and 15:14 recalls 7:25. It is difficult to comprehend how words which served Paul as an emphatic and personal reference to himself in 9:3 and 15:14 could, without some explicit indication, be otherwise in 7:25.⁸⁴

Paul uses ἐγὼ 84 times in his other letters.⁸⁵ In 77 of these instances, Paul is speaking of himself. In the other seven occurrences, the referent of the ἐγὼ is certainly

⁸⁴It is interesting to notice that outside of Romans, Paul uses αὐτὸς in the nominative case for emphasis to refer to himself five additional times (1 Cor. 9:20,27; 2 Cor. 10:1; 12:13; Phil. 2:24). In two of these instances, ἐγὼ is also present for double emphasis (2 Cor. 10:1; 12:13).

Paul uses αὐτὸς in the nominative 29 times altogether. Frequently it denotes God as is exclusively the case in the Thessalonian correspondence (1 Thess. 3:11; 4:16; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:16; 3:16).

⁸⁵See Concordance to the Novum Testamentum Graece, 3rd ed., ed. by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research and the Computer Center of Münster University with the collaboration of H. Bachmann and W. Slaby (New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1987), 12*.

not Paul. But these do not support the general or purely rhetorical use advocated by Kümmel. In each case, the referent is unmistakably identified. In 2 Corinthians 6:17, the $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ occurs in an Old Testament citation where the referent is the Lord who is speaking. The six other occurrences are in 1 Corinthians where Paul uses $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ in order to present the statements which members of the Corinthian factions are, at least in effect, making. Paul explicitly introduces these as the actual or implied statements of others. In 1:12 he writes, "But I say this, that each one of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' and 'I of Apollos,' and 'I of Cephas,' and 'I of Christ.'" Each one of these uses the emphatic $\epsilon\gamma\omega$. In 3:4 Paul repeats the first two of these assertions, again using $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ and again explicitly introducing them as the statements of others.⁸⁶ The "I" is not Paul, but he clearly indicates who the referent is.

The only passages cited by Kümmel in support of his interpretation of Romans 7 where Paul uses $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ are 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:29-30. In 6:12 he writes, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not beneficial; all things are lawful for me but I ($\epsilon\gamma\omega$) will not be put under authority by anything." Since nothing in the content or context of this verse indicates otherwise, Paul cannot be excluded as the referent of the "I" in this verse. On the

⁸⁶ "For when someone says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I of Apollos,' are you not [mere] men?" (1 Cor. 3:4).

contrary, both factors support identifying the "I" as the Apostle. It is the same Paul, for whom all things are lawful including the consumption of meat offered to idols (6:12; 10:23), who later asks, "If I (ἐγώ) partake with thanks, why am I being blasphemed concerning that for which I (ἐγώ) give thanks?" (10:30). The manner in which Paul intends both occurrences of ἐγώ to function may be broader than as statements of his own apostolic convictions. But they are at least that. Paul, the founder of the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor. 4:15), intends himself to be identified as the referent of the "I" in these verses.

In conclusion, when Paul uses the emphatic first person singular pronoun, ἐγώ, he always has a specific referent in mind. In addition, unless he indicates otherwise in the context, and usually unmistakably so, the referent is himself.⁸⁷ It would seem that in Romans 7 (vv. 9,10,14,17,20,24, 25) a particular referent of the ἐγώ is also intended, and since there are no indications to the contrary, the "I" would appear to be Paul himself.

When the first person singular pronoun is present outside of the nominative case in Paul's letters, the outcome is

⁸⁷The lone possible exception is Romans 3:7. Theissen's statement, 199, is correct (cited above, pp. 243-44, n. 79). So also C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Fontana Books, 1959), 107, concludes, "It will in fact be found on examination that Paul rarely, if ever, says 'I' unless he is really speaking of himself personally, even if he means to generalize from the particular instance."

even more consistent. This is illustrated by the following:

- 1) ἐμοῦ is present seven times in Romans and 15 additional times in Paul's other letters. Except for the Old Testament quotation in Romans 11:27 where ἐμοῦ denotes the Lord who is speaking, these are all used by Paul in reference to himself.
- 2) μου occurs 37 times in Romans. Four of these are in 7:7-25. Throughout Romans, μου occurs in Old Testament quotations seven times, referring to God six times and Elijah once. Elsewhere the referent is Paul. Outside of Romans, μου is used by Paul 97 times. Three of these refer to God in Old Testament quotations. In the remainder, the μου is used by Paul to speak of himself.
- 3) ἐμοί is present nine times in Romans. Apart from the two Old Testament citations in which the ἐμοί is God, all seven others are in 7:7-25! ἐμοί is present 37 others times in the Pauline corpus where the referent is always Paul.
- 4) μοι occurs nine times in Romans, three of these in 7:7-25. μοι is present 49 times in Paul's other letters. Of these, only once is the referent other than Paul. In 2 Corinthians 6:18 God is the referent within an Old Testament quotation.
- 5) ἐμέ is used in three of its four occurrences in Romans as a referent to God in Old Testament quotations. Elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, all 14 occurrences denote Paul himself.
- 6) με is present six times in Romans, half of them in 7:7-25. Of the three other times, only once is the referent other than Paul. This is in 9:20 where με occurs in an Old Testament quotation in which the clay of a potter is personified. In the 38 other times με is used in the Pauline corpus, Paul is always the referent.

Paul also uses the first person singular as the subject of numerous verbs without an emphatic ἐγώ. It is not possible to detail all of these. Yet particular attention should be given to those instances which Kümmel identifies as rhetorical, thereby contending that Paul himself is not the referent.

Of the passages Kümmel cites, 1 Corinthians 13 provides the

occurrences which are most directly parallel to Romans 7.⁸⁸

Paul writes,

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I have become a brass sounding [gong] or a clashing cymbal. And if I have [the gift of] prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but I do not have love, I am nothing. And if I divide all my possessions and if I hand over my body in order that I might boast, but I do not have love, I gain nothing (vv. 1-2).

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned as a child; when I became a man, I put aside the things of a child. For now we see through a mirror in an indistinct image, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I am also fully known (vv. 11-12).

The suggestion that the referent of the "I" here is not Paul arises out of the universal nature and scope of these verses.⁸⁹ But those considerations introduce the pragmatic issue of the intended purpose or function of the "I" in 1 Corinthians 13. What Paul intends for the "I" to "count as" is a valid question to pursue. However, *one cannot thereby legitimately bypass the issue of referent*. Can Paul be the referent here? There is nothing in the text of these verses or in their context which would exclude Paul as being the referent of the "I" or which would indicate otherwise. On the contrary, the universal character of this section supports identifying Paul himself as the referent.

The situation is similar in the other passages cited

⁸⁸See the results of the study by Theissen cited above, pp. 242-44.

⁸⁹Kümmel, Römer 7, 122-23.

by Kümmel where an "I" is the subject of the verb.⁹⁰ Paul poses a question to himself in 1 Corinthians 6:15 and then soundly rejects the suggestion.⁹¹ In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul discusses speaking in tongues. Paul uses himself as the referent in a number of conditional statements (vv. 11,14) and then declares his own resolution to this phenomenon in the context of public worship: "I will pray with the Spirit and I will also pray with the mind; I will sing the Spirit and I will also sing with the mind" (1 Cor. 14:15). Again, Paul may intend his discussion to function as much more, but he couches his statements in the first person singular. The "I" is clearly Paul, the one who can thank God that "I speak in tongues more than you all" (1 Cor. 14:18).

Each one of these uses of the first person singular as the subject of various verbs indicates that in the vast majority of cases, Paul is to be identified as the "I." His use is consistent with the manner in which he employs the other first person singular forms. Unless Paul indicates otherwise in the context,⁹² he intends himself as the referent.⁹³

⁹⁰Aside from the passages discussed here, Gal. 2:18 is the only remaining parallel suggested by Kümmel. It will be discussed below, pp. 275,404-5,408.

⁹¹"Therefore after taking the members of Christ will I make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!" (1 Cor. 6:15b).

⁹²An interesting example where Paul does indicate another referent is 1 Cor. 12:15-16 where he uses *εἰμι* four times, but explicitly introduces the speaker as an imaginary foot or ear. Compare the "eye" in verse 21; also 1 Cor. 1:14; 3:4.

Although not directly related to the use of the first person singular in Romans 7, Paul is able to speak of himself in two other ways in his letters. First, he often makes use of the first person plural. Kümmel cites a number of passages which illustrate a cohortative or questioning use of the first person plural in which, he contends, Paul's "own person would not in any way come into consideration" (Rom. 3:8b; 6:1,15; 13:12,13; 14:13; 1 Cor. 10:8,9,22; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:25-26; 1 Thess. 5:6,8-10).⁹⁴ Kümmel argues that these passages should also be taken in a rhetorically "fictive" sense. This is made most clear by Romans 13:12-13 where "the demand for conversion is without doubt not to be related to Paul."⁹⁵ However, those verses are by no means a call to conversion. They are directed toward Christians who are urged to abstain from evil works. Does not Paul need the same encouragement? Finally, Leander Keck points out that Paul discloses various things about himself in a variety of ways which do not utilize the first person form at all.⁹⁶ While both of these methods

⁹³Thus it is not the case that Paul speaks only or more emphatically of himself when he uses an ἐγώ, as charged against Dodd by Longenecker, Paul, 89, n. 7.

⁹⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 121, "seine eigene Person ernstlich mit in Betracht käme."

⁹⁵Ibid., "Ist zweifellos die Bekehrungsmahnung nicht auf Paulus mitbezogen."

⁹⁶Leander Keck, "Images of Paul in the New Testament," Interpretation 43 (1989):343-44, terms this "Paul disclosed" and contrasts it with Paul's statements of "deliberate self-projection."

of personal revelation provide fertile soil for further study, due to the prominence of first person singular forms in Romans 7:7-25, they need not be examined extensively here.

This survey of Paul's use of first person singular forms brings the validity of Kümmel's rhetorically fictive interpretation of the "I" in Romans 7 into serious doubt. In the vast majority of the passages where Paul uses the first person singular, he himself is the referent. When Paul uses the first person singular with a referent other than himself, he makes this evident to his readers. This is the case in his Old Testament citations and in some of the other passages discussed above (Rom. 3:7; 11:19; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4). In every other passage, including those cited by Kümmel as representing Paul's use of a rhetorical ἐγώ, Paul intends himself as the referent of the "I." Whether in statements or in questions hypothetically proposed, the text always allows and even indicates that the "I" is to be understood as Paul. In some passages Paul may use the first person singular and intend a broader or more general final application, but this certainly does not exclude Paul himself as the referent of the "I." In none of these passages is it impossible for the "I" to be Paul speaking of himself.

Kümmel's interpretation of Romans 7, in effect, "argues both that the 'I' does not denote Paul's personal experience but that it does denote the experience of everyman -- everyman,

except Paul!"⁹⁷ Paul has spoken of what is true of "man in general" previously in Romans (for example, 1:18-32; 3:19-20,23; 5:12-19) and, at times, understood himself as being included in these portrayals.⁹⁸ Through the first person plural in 7:5 (*ἡμῶν*), Paul includes himself in his description of a former existence "in the flesh." As Paul proceeds in verses 7-11, it is unwarranted to lessen his involvement to the point where his consistent use of the first person singular is now viewed merely as a tool utilized for dramatic effect. To do so is to "depersonalize the language and destroy the foremost quality of the passage stylistically considered."⁹⁹

When Kümmel argues that the "I" in Romans 7:7-11 cannot be Paul, his interpretation is left without parallel. Paul may not always use the first person singular of himself, but, as a rule, if Paul does not intend himself as the "I," he explicitly indicates this and points out who the referent is. No such signal is present in the text of Romans 7. Nothing suggests that the referent is anything or anyone other

⁹⁷Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 260; he characterizes this as a "rather convoluted process of reasoning."

⁹⁸He would certainly have included himself in 3:19-20,23 and 5:12-19. He also could see his own past in his description of Judaism in 2:1-3:20.

⁹⁹Milne, 12; if such an approach is adopted, Milne argues, "The problem is then to explain how a general 'I' is capable of making such deeply personal and subjective expressions about sin and the law. One suspects that theoretical constructions are being imposed on the passage from outside instead of allowing the literal style of the writing itself to determine the lines of the exegesis."

than Paul. Finally, when the sustained nature of the argument and the repeated and extensive use of various first person singular forms in Romans 7:7-25 are considered, there is no section in Paul in any way comparable to the manner in which Kümmel identifies the "I" of Romans 7.

Paul's usage, therefore, convincingly argues against even the conceivability of Kümmel's interpretation. It seems clear that in verses 7-11 "Paul does not speak of an arbitrary 'I', but of one person to his individual experience."¹⁰⁰ Is that one person, then, Paul himself?

Paul's Personal Experience

This is "the natural way" to understand the first person singular in 7:7-11,¹⁰¹ and "most commentators admit that *prima facie* the words of Romans 7 read like autobiography."¹⁰² The "existential character" of these verses is also pointed to as being indicative of this.¹⁰³ However, a number of

¹⁰⁰Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Römer, Kritischer-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 13th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966), 170, "P[au]l[us] spricht nicht von einem beliebigen 'Ich', sondern von einer an seine Person gebundenen Erfahrung."

¹⁰¹J. I. Packer, "The 'Wretched Man' of Romans 7," in Studia Evangelica, vol. 2, ed. F. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 622.

¹⁰²Milne, 12; see also Kümmel, Römer 7, 90, 124; Barrett, 143; Dodd, 123; and above, pp. 9-17. Milne adds, 12, "But then they reject them as such for other pre-conceived reasons."

¹⁰³Dunn, Romans 1-8, 382 and 401, contends that the portrayal is "too sharp" to be a presentation of a general experience. So also Dodd, 125-26; Karl Kertelge, "Exegetische Überlegungen zum Verständnis der paulinischen Anthropologie

serious objections have been leveled against this interpretation.¹⁰⁴

Evaluation

1. The major problematic issue in identifying Paul as the referent of the "I" is determining an adequate period in Paul's life into which the experiences described in verses 7-11 may be placed. If the consistent use of the aorist tense in this section points to a "definite moment" in the past,¹⁰⁵ of what event does Paul speak? Can these verses be understood as describing a particular time in Paul's life?

"A favourite answer . . . has been to say that Paul here is recording his first discovery of sinfulness when as an adolescent lad he lost the innocence of childhood."¹⁰⁶

nach Römer 7," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 62 (1971):107-8; Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 260-61; Milne, 12; John Robinson, Wrestling with Romans (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 82; J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 240-43; Theissen, 190-208; Alan Segal, "Romans 7 and Jewish Dietary Law," Studies in Religion 15 (1986):362.

¹⁰⁴See the discussion above, pp. 14-17.

¹⁰⁵Käsemann, 195; so also Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 97; Gundry, 236.

¹⁰⁶Milne, 13. For example, Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 139-40; Adolf Deissmann, St. Paul, tr. L. Strachan (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1922), 93-94; Oskar Holtzmann, Das Neue Testament nach dem Stuttgart griechischen Text übersetzt und erklärt (Geißen, 1926), refers to the "Unschuldsparadies seiner Kindheit"; the latter is cited from Kümmel, Römer 7, 77. Philo, Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres, 294, does state, "The infant from the day of its birth for the first seven years, that is through the age of childhood, possesses only the simplest elements of soul, a soul which closely resembles smooth wax and has not yet received any

Paul had been living "without the Law" (7:9a) during his happy childhood, but then the Law's commandment came (v. 9b).¹⁰⁷ Verses 9-10 have then been interpreted as depicting the adolescent Paul's first conscious awareness of the Law and/or the day when he became a "son of the commandment" at his *bar mitzvah*.¹⁰⁸ In either case, Paul "became aware of the precepts and prohibitions of the Law . . . and imperious desires for forbidden things forced themselves into his mind" (7:7-8).¹⁰⁹ According to Robert Gundry, the ἐπιθυμία Paul has in mind are predominantly sexual (as in 1:24).¹¹⁰

This avenue of interpretation falters in attempting to explain how Paul was ever literally alive "apart from the Law" or before "the coming of the commandment" (7:9).¹¹¹

impression of good or evil"; cited from Philo, tr. F. Colson and G. Whitaker, 10 vols., The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932), 4:435.

¹⁰⁷Aboth, 5.21, quotes Rabbi Judah ben Tema who states, "At five years old [one is fit] for the Scriptures, at ten years for the Mishnah, at thirteen for [the fulfilling of] the commandments, at fifteen for the Talmud, . . ."; cited from The Mishnah, ed. H. Danby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 458.

¹⁰⁸See the more complete discussion above, pp. 11-16.

¹⁰⁹Dodd, 128.

¹¹⁰Gundry, 232-33; see also 1 Thess. 4:5; W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 21-22.

¹¹¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 79; however, his objection springs from his insistence on the pregnant sense of "to live." He states, "The term ἐζων is very difficult to understand as a description of the childhood of Paul" ("der Terminus ἐζων als Beschreibung der Kindheit des Paulus sehr schwer verständlich ist"). The greater difficulty stems from how Paul was

Even if something resembling the *bar mitzvah* was practiced already in Paul's day,¹¹² that event would not have confronted him with the demands of the Law for the first time.¹¹³ It is quite evident that for Paul circumcision is what places one

ever "apart from the Law." As Kümmel points out, Römer 7, 83, this expression does not point to a non-existence of the Law.

¹¹²This is unlikely, at least as the rite is presently understood. According to Kümmel, Römer 7, 82, "But the institution of the bar-mitzvah is itself a creation of the Middle Ages" (Die bar-mizwah-Institution selber aber ist eine Schöpfung des Mittelalters). He points out that the term occurs only once in the entire Talmud (Baba mezia 961) and there it refers to the adult slave of a Jew; see The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nezikin, tr. and ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 556.

¹¹³This fits in quite well with Paul's description of Timothy as one who knew the Scripture from infancy (*ἀπὸ βρέφους*; 2 Tim. 3:15). This is further supported by two references from Philo's De Legatione ad Gaium. In 115 he states, "For he [Gaius] looked with disfavour on the Jews alone because they alone opposed him on principle, trained as they were we may say even from the cradle, . . . of the sacred laws and unwritten customs." In 210 Philo describes the Jewish nation as "holding that the laws are oracles vouchsafed by God and having been trained in this doctrine from their earliest years, they carry the likenesses of the commandments enshrined in their souls." Cited from Philo, tr. F. Colson, 10 vols., The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 10:56-57, 108-9. Theissen, 251, n. 52, refers to an inscription from a Jewish gravestone in Rome which describes a child (*νήπιος*) as a "lover of the law" (*φιλόνομος*; see also 203, n. 4, where he cites G. Horsley, euremata, n. 60). See also Josephus, Against Apion, in The Works of Josephus, tr. William Whitson, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 2.178, p. 805; Cranfield, 1:343; Strack and Billerbeck, 2:144-47; Leenhardt, 187.

Kümmel, 83, agrees, "So the child is never apart from the Law" ("So ist . . . das Kind niemals *χωρὶς νόμου*"). He contends, 81, that to argue the opposite would be similar to asserting that a child raised in a Christian home would be without the Gospel until adolescence.

directly under obligation to the Law (Gal. 5:3; Phil. 3:5).¹¹⁴ As a result, any *literal application* of Romans 7:9 to an early period in Paul's life when he was "alive" in any sense of the term apart from the Law or without obligation to it is most improbable. It is also extremely tenuous to assert that Paul believed in the sinlessness of children or held that God would look upon their sin with any less severity (see, for example, Romans 3:19-20,23; 5:12; Galatians 3:22).¹¹⁵ In addition, restricting the ἐπιθυμία to sexual lust goes against Paul's own citation of the last commandment of the Decalogue in 7:7 which enables him to make the widest application possible (πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν in v. 8).¹¹⁶

All of this speculation points to the fact that any association of these verses with Paul's childhood or adolescence must be based upon purely hypothetical grounds. Paul nowhere refers "to his youth as a time of special signifi-

¹¹⁴Dunn, Romans 1-8, 401. In Gal. 5:3 Paul clearly warns that being circumcised obligates one to keep the entire Law.

¹¹⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 81; he cites Alfred Juncker, Die Ethik des Apostels Paulus, 50, as contending that God would look upon their sin "with very much milder eyes" ("mit sehr viel milderer Augen"). The contention of Milne, 14, that "the idea of childhood innocence has more in common with Western romanticism than with actual reality" is certainly a more accurate appraisal of Paul's perspective.

¹¹⁶See above, pp. 115-17. This commandment further establishes the root evil of all sin; see the discussion above on 7:7, pp. 111-13. If Paul's intention was to speak of sexual sin, one would have to ask why he did not simply quote the Sixth Commandment with an application similar to that made by Jesus (Matt. 5:27-28)?

cance for his religious development"¹¹⁷ in the same manner as depicted in Romans 7:7-11. Neither does Paul even allude to a period when sin ran rampant over him as implied by this line of interpretation. On the contrary, when Paul speaks of his birth and upbringing, he refers to them in an unimpeachable manner (Acts 26:4-5). Paul stresses that he was born an Israelite, descended from Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5). He was circumcised on the eighth day according to the Law (Phil 3:5). Though born in Tarsus, he later arrived in Jerusalem where he was trained as a Pharisee by Gamaliel himself (Acts 22:3). He then excelled in living in accordance with "the Law of our fathers" (Acts 22:3; Gal. 1:13-14). Finally, the text of Romans 7 itself gives no indication that verses 7-11 offer a description which should be restricted or applied exclusively to Paul's young life.¹¹⁸

Is it possible that verses 7-11 refer to Paul's adult life as a Pharisee? At first glance, this seems even less possible.¹¹⁹ Many scholars reject any application of Romans 7:7-11 to Paul's life as a Pharisee by concluding that such

¹¹⁷Milne, 14. As a result, the theory that Rom. 7:7-11 reflects an adolescent transgression has no textual foundation. Kummel's opinion, Römer 7, 78, that this must be determined by the "fantasy of the scholar" ("Phantasie der Forscher") has some warrant!

¹¹⁸According to Lenski, 465, the "time of false security extended far beyond Paul's childhood."

¹¹⁹See the weighty objections made above, pp. 14-17.

an interpretation stands in sharp contradiction to passages such as Galatians 1:13-14 and Philippians 3:4-6.¹²⁰ A brief survey of what Paul tells us about his life in this period will be helpful before responding to this objection.¹²¹

When Paul speaks of his adult life before his conversion, he emphasizes that "according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived [as] a Pharisee" (Acts 26:5; also 23:6). He even points out, "I was advancing in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people, being extremely zealous (ζηλωτης) for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14). As a result of his "zeal," Paul recalls, "I myself thought that it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). He violently and intensely persecuted Jesus' followers, beating and imprisoning them (Acts 22:4,19; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:13). Since Paul was intent on destroying this sect (Gal. 1:13), he states, "I persecuted this Way unto death" (Acts 22:4).

What do Paul's letters reveal to us about what he believed to be his status before God at this time? First, he characterizes all of the above as comprising a basis upon

¹²⁰It is also said to contradict the general pharisaic view of the Law. See, for example, Kümmel, Römer 7, 109-17; Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 83; Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," Harvard Theological Review 56 (1963):200-1; and the others cited in the discussion above, pp. 33-41. For responses to this objection, see Theissen, 234-35,237; Cranfield, 1:344.

¹²¹The sources for this study are Acts and the Pauline Epistles which the Christian Church has historically recognized as *homologoumena*.

which he could have confidence before God. He writes,

If some other person thinks [he has reason] to be confident in the flesh, I [have] more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; according to the Law, a Pharisee; according to zeal (ζήλος), persecuting the church; according to righteousness which [is] in the Law, being blameless (Phil. 3:4b-6).¹²²

At that time Paul based his confident stance before God on his zeal for God's Law (compare 10:2).¹²³ He characterizes himself as being ζηλωτής ("extremely zealous") both for God (Acts 22:3b) and for "the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14; Acts 22:3a). As the ultimate mark of his zeal, Paul points to his persecution of the church (Phil. 3:6; Acts 22:3).

The description in Romans 7:7-11 does stand in sharp contrast with the appraisal Paul made of his own life in relation to God and the Law when he was a Pharisee. At that time Paul quite obviously did not view the Law as either "a heavy and uncomfortable burden" or an entity that was actually

¹²²The translation of The Holy Bible: The New International Version (New York: International Bible Society, 1978), is somewhat interpretive of the phrase "κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ" in verse 6. Yet its translation, "legalistic righteousness," is supported by the contrast Paul later draws between the righteousness of faith and "my own righteousness which is from the Law" in verse 9. Other statements by Paul clearly indicate that a righteousness derived from the Law was really no righteousness before God at all because of sin (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16). Gal. 2:21 decisively concludes, "For if righteousness [was] through the law, then Christ died for no purpose."

¹²³This fits well with the description he makes of unbelieving Israel in Rom. 10:2: "For I bear witness to them that they have a zeal (ζήλον) for God, but not according to full knowledge" (ἐπιγνωσιν; see above, p. 212).

provoking sin and involved in deceiving him.¹²⁴

Is this objection then insurmountable? Are the statements in Romans 7:7-11 and in these other passages irreconcilable? The answer is "No." The solution to this problem, however, must be drawn from a recognition of two factors. First, in Romans 7 Paul is writing from a Christian perspective and, second, he is applying the description in 7:5 to his own pre-Christian life. Romans 7:5 provides the basic outline for verses 7-11. There Paul portrays his life when its inevitable outcome was the "bearing of fruit to death" (7:5 with vv. 10-11).¹²⁵ This is because his life lived "in the flesh" was one in which "the passions of sins *which were through the Law* were operating in [his] members" (7:5 with vv. 7-8).

A recognition of the interrelationship between the Law and sin as described by Paul in Romans 7:7-11 draws a sharp dividing line in Paul's own life.¹²⁶ These verses reveal an insight into the Law and its effects which Paul only perceived

¹²⁴Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, tr. C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 282. Leenhardt, 187 states, "Among the rabbis the law is presented as an efficacious help in the struggle against the 'tendency to evil' which exists prior to the knowledge of the law and prevails until the law enables one to combat it."

¹²⁵Recognized by Kümmel, Römer 7, 45-46; Murray, 1:255.

¹²⁶As a result, Kümmel's full title, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus ("Romans 7 and the Conversion of Paul") makes an important connection. However, he chose this title because, according to his interpretation of Romans 7, that chapter can no longer be utilized as a text for interpreting the events or effects of Paul's conversion.

after his encounter with the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus.¹²⁷ It was only after reflecting upon the impact of Jesus' appearance to him that Paul realized that the Law could be used as a tool of sin and that his earlier estimation of the Law's function and purpose in his own life had, in fact, been sin's deception.¹²⁸

This is supported by what Paul tells us about his life as a Pharisee when he writes from a Christian perspective. In Galatians 1 he implies that what he had in fact been accomplishing while he "was advancing in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people" (1:14) was not attaining a righteous standing before God. Rather, he was trying "to please men" (1:10). As he looks back upon his previous zeal for God and the Law, exhibited most emphatically in his persecution of the sect of Jesus, Paul now realizes that he had in reality been "a blasphemer (βλάσφημον) and a persecutor

¹²⁷As Espy states, 175, "Full consciousness of sin came only on the Damascus road." Yet this event provoked much more than "an increased sensitivity to the law" as Moo states, 132; see also Gundry, 233.

¹²⁸Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 282, refers this to the time "when, on the Damascus road, [Paul] came to see that the law was a false way of salvation." Milne, 14, also contends, "The very vividness and poignancy of the language used would suggest a moment of religious crisis in the apostle's life." Murray states, 1:255, "It is not, however, the period of pre-regenerate self-complacency but his experience after he had been aroused from his spiritual torpor and awakened to a sense of his sin . . . when, shaken by the conviction which the law of God ministers, his state of mind was no longer one of unperturbed calm and self-esteem." This experience was certainly prompted by the appearance of Christ on the road to Damascus.

and a violent person" (1 Tim. 1:13). The actions he thought he was doing in behalf of God had in fact made him a blasphemer of God,¹²⁹ the most heinous of sins.¹³⁰ Certainly Paul's description of himself as the foremost (πρῶτος) of sinners is based upon those actions (1 Tim. 1:15-16).¹³¹ At that time, he admits, "I acted ignorantly in unbelief" (ἀπιστία; 1 Tim. 1:13).

Even in his zeal for God and the Law, Paul acted "ignorantly in unbelief." How was this possible? Romans 7:7-11 provides the vital clue. Paul's description there is perhaps unique. However, these other passages offer support for identifying the "I" there with Paul's own experience prior to his conversion.¹³² Romans 7:7-11 provides a glimpse into how Paul re-evaluates his earlier zeal for the Law, the zeal which had provided the basis for his confident standing before God. In these verses *Paul is looking back from his Christian perspective and describing what was in reality happening prior to his conversion. He declares that the good and holy Law brought forth sinful desires and even led to his "death"*

¹²⁹Paul recalls that he was also guilty of trying to make the followers of Jesus blaspheme as well. "And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme" (Acts 26:11).

¹³⁰See, for example, Lev. 24:10-23; 2 Chron. 32:16; Is. 65:7.

¹³¹However, this is not exclusively the case as the present tense in 1 Tim. 1:15 indicates; see below, p. 294.

¹³²So Käsemann, 192, contends.

(vv. 8,10). Paul confesses that at that time he was deceived (v. 11). Sin was able to deceive him precisely through the Law's commandment (7:8). Paul, the Pharisee, thought his zealous actions in behalf of the Law made him righteous and blameless before God (Phil. 3:5-6). He was, in fact, a blasphemer (1 Tim. 1:13). His zeal for God was without the true knowledge of God and apart from the righteousness God gives by faith (see Rom. 10:2). He was in a state of unbelief.

When did this deception end? The answer to this question is found in the series of events usually grouped together under the label of "Paul's Conversion." How does Paul describe these experiences? Paul speaks in the first person singular of the historical events which comprised the dramatic turning point in his life twice in Acts and briefly in 1 Corinthians (Acts 22:6-16; 26:12-18; 1 Cor. 15:8; see also Acts 9:3-19). It is noteworthy that when Paul narrates his own account of the events surrounding his conversion, he utilizes an "I"-style argument similar to what we have in Romans 7. A detailed examination of these parallel accounts is not possible here,¹³³

¹³³For a detailed examination, see especially Seyoon Kim, The Origin of Paul's Gospel, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2, Reihe 4 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981); Gerhard Lohfink, The Conversion of St. Paul, tr. and ed. B. Malina, Herald Scriptural Library (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1976); and Heikki Räisänen, "Paul's Conversion and the Development of His View of the Law," New Testament Studies 33 (1987):404-19.

but two relevant points should be stressed.¹³⁴

First, when the Risen Lord Jesus appears to him on the road to Damascus, Paul recounts that Jesus immediately revealed the deception sin had worked in him through the Law. In his supposed zeal for God and the Law, Paul had not been persecuting merely Jesus' followers; he had been persecuting the Lord himself! "I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?'" (Acts 22:7; compare 9:4; 26:14).

Second, Paul does not narrowly limit his "conversion" to the events which took place on the Damascus road. In fact, the events which followed three days later in Damascus are more descriptive of how Paul speaks of conversion. Paul recounts that "a certain Ananias, a man [who was] devout according to the Law, as witnessed by all the Jews living there" (Acts 22:12), reluctantly came to him at Jesus' command (Acts. 9:10-17). Ananias told Paul that his purpose in coming was that "you might see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17). Paul remembers how Ananias then asked, "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16).

Paul offers his theological reflection upon these events in a number of passages. Paul speaks of them as the time

¹³⁴It is also important to note that Paul's recollection of Jesus' appearance on the road and the events which followed in Damascus detail not only his conversion, but also include the appointment of Paul as "a minister and a witness" (Acts 26:16; see also 9:15; 26:17-18).

when God, who "set me apart" from birth, "called me by His grace" (Gal. 1:15; compare Is. 49:1). In addition, Paul makes numerous references to the Damascus road as the place of his calling or appointment as an apostle of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 9:1; Gal. 1:16; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:11).

Another aspect of Paul's theological reflection upon the events which occurred on the road to Damascus is presented Romans 7:7-11. If one wanted to suggest a time when Paul first arrived at the reappraisal of the Law and its effects expressed in Romans 7:7-11, the three days of blindness after Christ's awesome appearance to Paul could be pointed to most specifically (Acts 9:8-19a).¹³⁵ Perhaps it was in those intervening days that Paul "suddenly saw how completely mistaken he had been about the Law."¹³⁶ However, as his letters reflect, this event was permanently etched in Paul's memory and he continued to wrestle with its impact upon him for the

¹³⁵Lenski, 466; Moo, 126, counters that the accounts of Paul's conversion do not "suggest such a struggle." However, a re-evaluation of the Law certainly had to have occurred! What is recorded about the appearance of Jesus to Paul on the Damascus road reflects that this was mostly a "Law event" for Paul. James Fraser, The Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification (Edinburgh: R. Ogle, 1830), 192, concludes "that any special comfort to him was referred to the time when Ananias in Damascus was sent to him." It is only with the coming of Ananias three days later that Paul hears the message of sins forgiven, receives that forgiveness and the Holy Spirit through Baptism, and experiences the return of his physical sight (Acts 9:10-19a; 22:12-16).

¹³⁶David Lloyd-Jones, Romans: An Exposition of Chapters 7.1-8.4 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), 174; he continues, "He saw its spiritual character, he understood the meaning of coveting . . . that period is sufficient to account for all we have been looking at."

rest of his life.¹³⁷

The contrast between passages such as Philippians 3:4-6 and Romans 7:7-11 is then answered from the point of perspective.¹³⁸ These two diverse sets of passages portray the drastic difference between Paul's two appraisals of his own life under the lordship of the Law (Rom. 7:1). In Philippians 3:4b-6 Paul reveals his previous understanding of the Law and what he thought his place before God on the basis of the Law had been. In this sense, those verses have a "restricted application."¹³⁹ But

what Paul conceals in Philippians 3 -- namely, how he sees his pre-Christian period in the light of the 'knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 3:8) -- is precisely what he

¹³⁷This is indicated by the fact that Paul reflects upon these events again and again in his letters. For example, see 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8-10; Gal. 1:13-17; 1 Tim. 1:12-16; also Acts 22:6-21; 26:11-18. Paul's concentration upon the events of the Damascus road stands in contrast to the lack of significance which he attributes to any earlier period in his life.

¹³⁸One might note the contrast between passages, such as Rom. 2:17-23 and 7:7-11 as well. The other attempts to explain this contrast are less convincing. For example, Gundry, 234, observes that the items listed in Philippians 3 are all observable "and provide the details surrounding the summarizing 'blameless'. . . . Only by making 'blameless' mean sinlessly perfect could we pit the term against the pre-Christian autobiographical view of Rom. 7."

¹³⁹Milne, 15. He points out that verses 7-11 do not provide a complete guide to the outward events of Paul's conversion, neither are they able to fully describe the "inner" or spiritual aspects of his conversion. Paul's description here is sufficient for his purpose which will be discussed in chapter five of this thesis. Milne, 15, recognizes that "for the same reason Paul omits from his summary of his change of life from Judaism to Christianity any mention of Ananias who yet played a key role in the actual course of events between the Damascus Road and the reception of Paul into the . . . Church (Acts 9:10ff)."

develops in Romans 7.¹⁴⁰

Philippians 3, on the other hand, proceeds to detail the manner in which Paul, as a Christian, now views those things on which he formerly relied. While he once put confidence in his own flesh, in his zeal for God, and in his observance of the Law, Paul now writes, "But whatever things were profit for me, on account of Christ I regard these things as loss" (Phil. 3:7). Of those things he had previously valued so highly because of what he believed they warranted for him *coram Deo*, he now declares,

I regard them as dung in order that I might gain Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God on the basis of faith (Phil. 3:8b-9).

What period in Paul's life is described in Romans 7:7-11? As indicated by the predominance of verbs in the past tense, Paul writes from a Christian perspective about "his own experience of the Law and sin . . . prior to his conversion to faith in Jesus Christ."¹⁴¹ There is no need to attempt a precise determination of a single occasion when this interaction between the Law and sin occurred or to restrict the

¹⁴⁰Theissen, 242.

¹⁴¹Milne, 14; who inserts "as an adult." There is no particular need even for that limitation except perhaps in regard to the deception of 7:11. Milne, 17, n. 2, cites the following for support: "the younger Augustin, Calvin, Fraser, Deissman, Glover, Kennedy, Garvie, Hodge, Shedd, Brown, Stewart, Lenski, Sabatier, Hausrath, Holtzmann, Wernle, Stevens, Hendricksen, Murray, Fairbairn, Nygren."

events here depicted in that manner.¹⁴² Paul's choice of the aorist tense "concentrates attention upon the act itself" denoted by each verb.¹⁴³ Verses 7-11 then offer us "an authentic transcript of Paul's own experience during the period which culminated in his vision on the road to Damascus."¹⁴⁴

When one recognizes that these verses reflect "an issue which, in the most proper sense, is the problem of [Paul's] own life,"¹⁴⁵ it becomes perfectly understandable for him to make his presentation in the first person singular. Indeed, one would almost expect it. These verses are a deeply personal and reflective account which strikes at the very heart of Paul's existence prior to his conversion. As Paul looks back and tries to describe his previous view of God's Law, he now perceives what sin had led him to believe about it. Now he recognizes what had actually been happening and how he had been deceived through God's own commandment (v. 11).

¹⁴²As Lenski observes, 466, "Such time fixing is unwarranted." There was not one "crash" into sin, but an actual process repeated again and again by a sinful person under the lordship of the Law (7:1). Lenski, 466, properly concludes that its "end came during Paul's three days in Damascus" when Paul died to sin and to the Law as a means of life.

¹⁴³James Voelz, "The Language of the New Testament," in Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Principat, vol. 25[2], eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase (New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1984), 967; the aorist is "non-connective or neutral." In contrast, the present tense is "essentially connective: a speaker or writer using it connects the verbal action to the person doing the acting."

¹⁴⁴Dodd, 126; however, he states this in regard to the entirety of Romans 7:7-25.

¹⁴⁵Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 279.

What Paul means in 7:9-10 may be paraphrased as follows:

I was alive, that is, I possessed physical life and thought I possessed spiritual life. However, I was actually living an existence under the lordship of the Law (7:1), the end of which was death (7:5). I was being deceived by sin into a mistaken apprehension of the purpose and function of the Law's commandment. When my full understanding of sin and the Law came, when I realized the actual effect of God's Law upon me as a sinful man, "I died" (ἐγὼ ἀπέθανον; 10a).¹⁴⁶

Paul's statement about himself "living formerly without the Law" (v. 9a) should not be taken as representing his possession of the true life God intended; neither does it express that he was living without any connection to the Law whatsoever.¹⁴⁷ Certainly Paul's awareness of the Law increased at various times throughout his life. This occurred as he was instructed in the Law as a circumcised child, if and when he experienced some type of *bar mitzvah* ceremony, and while he was trained as a Pharisee.¹⁴⁸ However, it was the encounter on the Damascus road which led Paul to realize that even during his pharisaic life he was deceived by sin into living a life *without the full knowledge and awareness of what the Law actually says* (3:20; 4:15; 5:20; see especially 10:2).

¹⁴⁶In this manner these verses coincide with Paul's earlier statements, for example 3:19-20; 4:15; 5:12; 6:23; compare also Gal. 2:20-21 and 3:22-24.

¹⁴⁷In regard to the former, note the possible exception referred to above, n. 199, p. 123. The latter suggestion is improbable due to the chiasmic construction in verse 9; see above on verses 8-9, pp. 121-26.

¹⁴⁸See the discussion above, pp. 123-24 and pp. 258-61, especially notes 112,113; it is also possible that verse 9 refers to one or more of these occasions in a general manner.

In a similar manner, the death brought on by the coming of the commandment (9b-10a) is not the end of true spiritual life but a *recognition* that the only fruit which is produced by a life lived under the lordship of the Law is death (7:1,5). These words express the death of the view that one is able to utilize the Law's command as a means to life.

Romans 7:7-11 can then be understood in a *similar*, though not equivalent, manner to the way in which Paul describes the events of conversion. He speaks of conversion in two paradoxical ways, as the death of a former existence lived to sin and as a new life which has arisen out of former "deadness."¹⁴⁹ However, Paul does *not* here speak of the death which occurs in conversion. Only the Gospel can bring that death. The death he speaks of here can certainly be worked by God through his Word, but it is not the death which gives life. It is the death which results from a recognition of sin's diabolical misuse of the Law in continuing to hold out the Law as a means of life for a sinner (Rom. 7:10-11). It is the death which recognizes that, because of sin, the Law's commandment

¹⁴⁹For example, it is a coming to life from the dead in 4:17(?); 6:4; 11:15; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 2:1-6; 5:14; Col. 2:13. Against this, Moo, 128, charges that Paul "never uses life/death *in that order* in a theological contrast." Yet Paul does portray conversion as a death repeatedly in the previous chapter of Romans, for example, 6:2,3,5,8. This is the death of a life lived to sin. In this very context Paul refers to conversion as the death of a life lived to and under the Law (7:1,4,6). Paul ties both aspects together in 6:11: "Even so consider yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." See Milne, 14; Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 261.

has only been able to produce even more sin (vv. 7-8). It is the death which realizes that there is no way in which man on his own can escape the just condemnation of God's Law. In Paul's specific case it was the death which "killed forever the proud Pharisee thanking God that he was not as other men and sure of his merits before God."¹⁵⁰ The Law has now done its divinely intended work upon Paul (3:19-20).

Outside of Romans 7, the passage in which Paul most clearly describes the events depicted here is Galatians 2:19. What Paul says there fits in very well with the statements made by the "I" in Romans 7:7-11. "For through the Law I (ἐγώ) died to the Law."¹⁵¹

2. Another objection to identifying the statements of the "I" in Romans 7:7-11 with Paul's own experience is the charge that this interpretation limits the application which can be drawn from these verses. Kümmel, for example, questions whether Paul's personal experiences can really serve as an

¹⁵⁰Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 282. This is the death of which Paul here speaks. It is not the saving death of 6:2-4.

¹⁵¹Donald Guthrie, Galatians, The New Century Bible (London: Oliphants Publishing, 1969), 93, concludes that Paul saw his being crucified with Christ in Gal. 2:20 as dying to the Law in the sense that "he ceased to live in that world in which the law was dominant (i.e., in Judaism). This dying had, in fact, come about by his experience under the law (cf. especially Rom. 7 as a commentary on this statement)." Note that Gal. 2:17-20 also heavily employs the first person singular. This passage will be discussed more fully in chapter five. Andrew Bandstra, The Law and the Elements of the World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, n.d.), 141, views Gal. 2:15-20 as descriptive of Paul's situation in Rom. 7:14-25.

objective defense of God's Law.¹⁵² This is a valid objection to the interpretation adopted here when the question of the referent of the "I" in Romans 7 is the only question addressed. It is a valid objection when the pragmatic function which Paul intends these verses to serve is overlooked. While the issues of purpose and function will be addressed more fully in chapter five, a number of points regarding the "I" as depicted in verses 7-11 should be noted.

First, the insights Paul here reveals about the working of the Law are not presented as the long-sought solution to his own unique, inner, psychological struggles.¹⁵³ Verses 7-11 are taken this way by J. Christiaan Beker, for example, who asks, "How could the Christophany have been so traumatic and so radical in its consequences unless it lit up and answered a hidden quest in his soul?"¹⁵⁴ This approach dis-

¹⁵²So Kümmel, Römer 7, 84,90; so also Moo, 126, charges that this interpretation "applies Paul's ostensibly objective, descriptive language to the realm of subjective consciousness." However, this objection overlooks the fact that while Paul's language here is extremely personal, he uses it to reflect more than his own subjective experience (see chapter five, pp. 380-88).

¹⁵³See Theissen, 235-36. In addition, John Gager, "Some Notes on Paul's Conversion," New Testament Studies 27 (1981): 697-704, asserts that "Paul's involvement with the Christians as their persecutor fits into the category of 'stress experiences' which frequently precede and prepare for conversions of various kinds."

¹⁵⁴Beker, Paul the Apostle, 237. However, rather than answering a "hidden quest" for Paul, Christ's appearance prompted some traumatic soul-searching in regard to the Law. Milne, 16, similarly interprets the "kicking against the goads" in Acts 26:14 as indicative of "an inner struggle against the light within Paul himself, a struggle that is

regards the fact that Paul nowhere suggests that any such inner turmoil was present in his life when he was a Pharisee. On the contrary, he displayed confidence and even boasting before both God and men (Gal. 1:10,13-14; Phil. 3:4-6).

Second, while the death Paul here describes did lay him out flat and open him up to accept Baptism and forgiveness in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:17-19a), he does not view this "death" as some sort of transitional stage that is one step closer to God or one rung above a state of ignorance. Paul's own unique journey to God is not being portrayed in Romans 7:7-11. Neither do these verses depict a psychological progression by which Paul became more acceptable to God than when he, in his former self-righteousness, rejected Jesus as the Messiah and persecuted his followers.¹⁵⁵

Who, then, is the "I" in Romans 7:7-11? Paul himself is the referent. These verses considered in the context of Paul's life and letters have "given the decisive answer to the question, Who am I? I am the one deceived and killed by

externalised in his violent behaviour against the representatives of Christ."

¹⁵⁵So, for example, Milne, 16, "Paul here describes the spiritual transition of the Christian from ignorance to repentance and faith." Lenski, 464, similarly speaks of three stages. Murray entitles his treatment of 7:7-13 "Transitional Experience" and states, 1:255, that these verses represent "the preparatory and transitional phase of his spiritual pilgrimage."

sin" which worked through the Law's commandment.¹⁵⁶ The "I" is Paul, a man who formerly took great pride in his observance of the Law. But the "I" is also the Paul who, by the dramatic intervention of Jesus Christ in his life, has come to recognize the damnable effect of the statement "that the Law exercises lordship over a man as long as he lives" (7:1).¹⁵⁷

Paul describes his personal experience in Romans 7:7-11.¹⁵⁸ His purpose in doing so will be discussed more fully in the final chapter of this thesis.

The Referent of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25

The manner in which the "I" is identified in verses 7-11 has had varying degrees of impact upon the "I" in verses 14-25. Those scholars who support identifying the "I" in verses 7-11 with Adam or Israel make too light of the connection between the two sections. In fact, this is where the other referents proposed in verses 7-11 betray one of their

¹⁵⁶Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," 95; but he adds, "who is hopelessly caught in the illusion of life and who has long since forfeited life. I always begin my life under the law as a child of deception and death."

¹⁵⁷As Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 282, points out, when the full effect of the Law comes it not only kills the pride of a pharisaic boaster in the Law. It also kills "off the happy sinner" who had been ignorant of the revealed Law and suppressed the Law written in the heart (2:15).

¹⁵⁸Lenski, 439, enunciates this as follows: "This chapter is intensely personal, . . . [It] furnishes Paul's own inner biography, and thus becomes as gripping as nothing of a didactic nature could possibly be." Paul's purpose in being "intensely personal" is not merely for dramatic effect; see below, pp. 388-402.

greatest weaknesses.¹⁵⁹ Kümmel is more methodologically correct in drawing his conclusions about the "I" in verses 14-25 in large part because of the interpretation he advances in verses 7-11.¹⁶⁰ On that basis, however, he dismisses the entire issue of referent from his interpretation of verses 14-25 as well.

Since nothing in the text of the intervening verses indicates otherwise, it is almost inconceivable that the identity of the "I" in verses 14-25 could be anything other than what it is in verses 7-11.¹⁶¹ The "I," in all probability, has the same referent in both sections. The "I" in verses 7-11 has been identified as Paul. Barring any insurmountable difficulties, it should be assumed that the referent of the first person singular forms in the verses which follow is also Paul.

The disputed issue which has always surrounded verses 14-25 is not so much whether the referent of the "I" is Paul or not. Instead, the unresolved question concerns "when." When could what the "I" says be true of Paul? An answer to this question is dependent upon a determination of the spiritual state of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. Is it possible for

¹⁵⁹ See above, pp. 227-28, 234.

¹⁶⁰ Kümmel, Römer 7, 117; of the four reasons he cites for rejecting an identification of the "I" with Paul in verses 14-25, two are directly dependent upon verses 7-11; see p. 49.

¹⁶¹ Espy, 173, enunciates the "rather obvious point that the 'I' is the same as the 'I' of vv. 7-12." See also Kümmel, Römer 7, 110; and above, pp. 31-32, n. 81, 82.

the "I" to be Paul before his conversion? Is it possible for the "I" to refer to Paul after his conversion? Are both options permissible or is neither allowable? Each of these questions has been answered in the affirmative by some scholars and soundly rejected by others.¹⁶² The dispute remains.

Can this issue be resolved? Since Paul continues to speak in the first person singular in verses 14-25, this question should be considered initially in the light of what Paul says about himself elsewhere in the first person singular. Does the situation of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 fit among the statements Paul makes about himself before or after his conversion? At what time, if any, can what the "I" says be Paul's description of himself?

The introduction and consistent use of the present tense in Romans 7:14-25 would seem to imply that these verses describe Paul's state as he writes; that is, they represent Paul as a Christian. The greater burden of proof, therefore, lies with those who advocate another interpretation. The chief argument against the present Christian interpretation is the contention that what the "I" states could not be a description of Paul's Christian life. Is it possible that Paul is using the present tense to throw himself back into the situation he was in before his conversion? Is he using the first person singular in a dramatic or vivid manner in order to describe his life as it was then?

¹⁶²See above, pp. 33-48.

Paul Before His Conversion

A number of the passages in which Paul refers to the appraisal he made of himself and of the Law prior to his conversion have already been discussed. How do these compare with what the "I" says in verses 14-25? Can they be describing the same situation?

First, Paul recounts that prior to the events on the road to Damascus, he took great pride in his fleshly lineage and upbringing; he put confidence before God in his flesh (Acts. 22:3; 26:4-5; Phil. 3:4-5). The picture Paul paints of himself before his conversion is not that of a man who would admit that sin "is dwelling in me. For I know that nothing good is dwelling in me, this is, in my flesh" (7:17b-18). He did not view himself in the same manner as the "I" who confesses, "I am fleshly sold under sin" (7:14), and who yearns for deliverance from "this body of death" (7:24).

Second, Paul, like the "I" in verses 14-25, viewed the Law of God and its commandments as representing the highest good (Acts 22:3; 26:5; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:6; Rom. 7:12-13,16,18). As a Pharisee, however, Paul did not view the Law of God as an entity which could actually be used to work sin and death in his members (7:17,20,23). Neither would he have allowed the Law to be spoken of as the "Law of sin" (7:23,25). On the contrary, he derived a righteousness from the Law which, to his way of thinking, made him blameless (Phil. 3:6; compare Rom. 9:30-10:5).

Third, both before and after conversion Paul zealously desired to do good and to abstain from evil as instructed by the Law. Prior to his conversion, the method Paul chose to that end was living in accordance with the strict rules of the Pharisees (Acts. 26:5; 23:6) and "the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14; Acts 22:3). Paul thought he was able to accomplish what the Law required, at least to a degree that far surpassed the achievements of others (Gal. 1:14). Paul's conception of himself as blameless "according to the righteousness which is in the Law" was based upon his ability to fulfill the commandments of the Law (Phil. 3:6).¹⁶³ In contrast, the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 laments his inability to do the good required by the Law and to refrain from the evil it prohibits (7:18-19,21). The Law reveals the continued futility of his attempts to fulfill its commands.

Can the "I" in Romans 7:14-25, then, be identified with Paul's life as a Pharisee? When Paul speaks of himself before his conversion, he uses many of the same terms employed by the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. However, these terms are not evaluated in the same way. Before Paul's encounter on the road to Damascus, the Law had one determining effect upon him. Paul zealously agreed with the Law and delighted in living according to its commandments (Acts 22:3; 26:5; compare

¹⁶³Those who contend that verses 14-25 depict a situation in which the "I" only does evil and can never do any good certainly cannot apply these verses to Paul's pre-conversion life; see above, pp. 153-54.

Rom. 7:16,22). He had progressed far beyond his contemporaries in Judaism and thought he was able to fulfill the Law adequately (Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4b-6). The Law enabled Paul to put confidence in his flesh. According to the "I," however, the flesh is no basis for confidence (7:14) because sin resides "in my flesh" (7:18). Though the "I" rejoices in the Law's command (7:16,22), he also acknowledges that the Law places him under captivity to sin and pronounces a sentence of death upon his body (7:23-24).

According to the interpretation of Romans 7:7-11 advanced above, it was at the point of his personal confrontation with Jesus that Paul came to realize that what he thought to be the basis of his righteousness, his own ability to fulfil the Law (Phil. 3:9), was, in fact, a deception (7:11).¹⁶⁴ When Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, the true nature of that deception and the involvement of the Law in it became apparent. Paul thought that the Law served him as an accessible means of life. In reality, in his life apart from Christ, the Law only served to kill him (7:10-11). At that specific point in time, the "I" saw the Law only as an entity which was used by sin to kill him. Then there was no agreement with the Law, no rejoicing in it (7:16,22).

In neither of these situations does Paul exhibit the view toward God's Law which we find in Romans 7:14-25. There the Law has a double effect upon the "I." The "I" heartily

¹⁶⁴ See above, pp. 129-31.

agrees with the Law's commandment which directs him toward the good and away from evil (7:16,18-19,21). Yet the "I" also acknowledges that the Law identifies his own inability to do what the Law's commandment requires because of the sin which dwells in his own flesh (7:14,17-20). Paul's characterization of himself before his conversion, whether from a pre- or post-conversion perspective, is not at all the same as the picture of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. These verses cannot serve as Paul's description of his own pre-Christian life or of his experience on the Damascus road.¹⁶⁵

Paul After His Conversion

Is it possible for the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 to represent Paul's life after conversion, or does what Paul tells about his Christian life elsewhere exclude that interpretation? A more extensive survey of Paul's use of the first person singular in reference to his own Christian life is the proper starting point for attempting to answer this question.

Paul speaks of his life after conversion in the first person singular in a wide variety of areas. While not all of these can be discussed thoroughly here, we do receive quite a substantial picture of Paul's view of his own Christian existence. This survey approaches these passages with the question, "Does Romans 7:14-25 fit within this picture?"

¹⁶⁵The latter is suggested by Bandstra, see above, p. 59, n. 198. Kümmel, Römer 7, 111-17, comes to the same conclusion on this point, though he argues more on the basis of general studies of Pharisaism and less from Paul's own words.

The effects of Paul's conversion and calling were immediate. Years later he recounts,

I was not disobedient to the vision, but first to those in Damascus and [then] Jerusalem, [and] throughout all the region of Judea and to the Gentiles, I announced that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance (Acts 26:20; compare 9:20).

Thereafter Paul dedicated his life to "proving that this [Jesus] is the Christ" (Acts 9:22). He did this first to and among his own people.¹⁶⁶ But after the continued hostility toward and rejection of the Gospel by many Jews, Paul turned more and more to the Gentiles with the message of salvation (Acts 13:46-48; 19:8-9; 28:17-28).

One factor often overlooked is that after his conversion Paul continues to describe himself as an Israelite or Jew (Rom. 9:3; 11:1,14; 2 Cor. 11:22).¹⁶⁷ Though he is no longer "under the Law" (*ὑπὸ νόμον*; 1 Cor. 9:20), Paul maintains his connection with the Law. He is not *ἄνομος* (1 Cor. 9:21). In fact, Paul even speaks to the Jewish council years after his conversion in the present tense declaring, "Men, brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (Acts 23:6). Paul can still challenge those who place their confidence in the flesh

¹⁶⁶See, for example, Acts 13:5,14-50, especially vv. 14 and 43; 14:1; 17:1-3,10-12; 18:1-4; 26:23; 1 Cor. 9:20. Note that his calling as recorded in Acts 9:15 is to bear Jesus' name "before [the] Gentiles and kings and [the] sons of Israel."

¹⁶⁷It is significant that Paul sees himself, as well as the other Jews who have believed in Christ (Rom. 16:7,11; Col. 4:11), to be the demonstration that "even at the present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5).

by asserting, "If some other person thinks [he has reason] to be confident in the flesh, I [have] more" (Phil. 3:4). Although Paul no longer describes himself as an adherent to "the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14; compare Acts 22:3),¹⁶⁸ he still goes up to Jerusalem to worship at the temple (Acts 24:11). He continues to profess,

I serve the God of the fathers, believing in all things which are in accordance with the Law and which have been written in the Prophets (Acts 24:14).

In proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus both to Jews and Gentiles, Paul contends that he stands in direct continuity with the believers and Scriptures of the Old Testament (Acts 26:22-23; 2 Tim. 2:8). Near the end of his missionary career Paul can confidently declare, "I thank God, whom I serve [as my] forefathers with a pure conscience" (2 Tim. 1:3).

In numerous passages Paul emphasizes the distinctness of his Christian life. His authoritative proclamation of the Gospel is based upon his direct calling as an apostle by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 16:10; Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:17; Gal. 1:10; Eph. 3:7; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:11; Tit. 1:3). Paul even

¹⁶⁸This phrase may well refer to the Oral Law of Judaism which was added to supplement and authoritatively interpret the Old Testament. For its source, see Tractate Aboth 1:1 in The Mishnah, 446. Danby, xii, contends, "The Mishnah marks the passage to Judaism as definitely as the New Testament marks the passage to Christianity." Paul's earlier adherence to these "traditions of the fathers" (Acts. 22:3; Gal. 1:14) and the later omission of any reference to them may imply his recognition that adherence to the Oral Law was a wrong and tragic turn Judaism had taken. For a brief discussion of this, see Horace Hummel, The Word Becoming Flesh (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 612-17.

points out the manner in which his ministry is distinct from the other apostles: "I am an apostle of [the] Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13; see also 15:16,20; Eph. 3:20; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 2:7). Paul describes his apostolic mission as a sacred obligation, as his "priestly duty" (ιερουγέω; Rom. 15:16). "For if I proclaim the gospel, I have no boast, for a compulsion has been placed upon me" (1 Cor. 9:16a; see also 16b-18).

Paul relates that his apostolic ministry entailed a great deal of strenuous labor and the endurance of much suffering at the hands of both Jews and Gentiles. He details these very graphically in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 (see also Gal. 5:11; 6:17; Col. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:10-12). When writing of his sufferings as an apostle, Paul makes it clear that the Gospel is that "for which I am suffering to the point of being chained like a criminal" (2 Tim. 2:9; see also Acts 26:29; Eph. 3:1; Phil. 1:7, 12-13; Col. 4:3; 1 Tim. 1:8; Philemon 9,13).¹⁶⁹ In fact, Paul characterizes his attitude toward his own sufferings for the Gospel by disclosing,

Now I rejoice in [my] sufferings in your behalf and I fill up the things lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions in my flesh in behalf of his body, which is the church (Col. 1:24).

Yet Paul also views his apostleship as a high privilege and a great honor, writing, "I thank the one who has empowered me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he considered me faith-

¹⁶⁹Since this is the case, he urges the believers, who may be suffering as well (Phil. 1:29-30; 2 Tim. 3:12), "not to be discouraged in my tribulations on your behalf, which are your glory" (Eph. 3:13).

ful, placing me into ministry" (1 Tim. 1:12). Paul's apostolic authority gives him boldness and confidence. Even to the Roman Christians whom he has not yet visited he admits, "I wrote to you very boldly" (Rom. 15:15; also 2 Cor. 10:1-2). In the face of challenges, Paul staunchly defends his apostleship.¹⁷⁰ "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1). "I consider myself to be lacking in no way to the super-apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5; see also v. 23; 12:12).

Paul asserts that he could "boast somewhat freely" about the authority he had from the Lord and about his conduct as an apostle (2 Cor. 10:8; 11:17-31). He boasts that he did not make use of all of his rights as an apostle (1 Cor. 9:15). He discreetly boasts of the visions and revelations he received from the Lord (2 Cor. 12:1-6). Thus Paul concludes, "Indeed, if I do determine to boast, I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth" (2 Cor. 12:6).

Yet above all of his reasons for boasting, Paul tells us, "Very gladly, therefore, I will rather boast in my weaknesses" (2 Cor. 12:9; see v. 5). He does so because his weaknesses continually point out the necessity of his reliance

¹⁷⁰Paul's apostleship was often challenged, or at least questioned, as was especially true at Corinth (1 Cor. 4; 2 Cor. 10-12; see also Gal. 1-2). Some of these challenges may have arisen against Paul because he, unlike the other apostles, was not a *μάρτυς* of Jesus' earthly ministry (Acts 13:31). Paul's references to his calling by Jesus himself served to defend his apostleship and, more importantly, to authenticate the Gospel of which he says, "I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher" (2 Tim. 1:11).

upon Christ. In regard to boasting he finally concludes, "May it never be that I boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14).

Because of his faith in Christ crucified, Paul maintains that he is free, free from trying to please men (Gal. 1:10) and free from the ceremonial regulations of the Old Testament (Gal. 5:11). He writes, "I know and am convinced in [the] Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom. 14:14). He even adds, "All things are permissible for me" (1 Cor. 6:12; see also 9:1). Yet Paul's freedom is for a purpose.

For although I am free from all people, I enslave myself to all in order that I might gain the more. . . . And I do all things for the sake of the Gospel, in order that I might be a fellow-sharer of it (1 Cor. 9:19,23; compare vv. 20-22).

In apparent contrast with the "I" of Romans 7:14-25, Paul expresses that he is blameless in a number of passages. First, he is without fault in regard to the performance of his apostolic duties and his relationship with the congregations he has founded and served (2 Tim. 1:3).¹⁷¹ In this context, the basis for his blamelessness is revealed by the following statement:

You know how, from the first days after which I entered

¹⁷¹For Paul's descriptions of his personal relationship with various congregations, see, for example, Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:15,18-19; 15:31; 2 Cor. 10:8; 11:2,28; Phil. 1:7-8,24; 4:10-12; Col. 2:5; 4:3; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Tim. 2:10; Philemon 7,19-20. He also speaks in the first person plural of the blameless conduct of his missionary team (1 Thess. 2:10; 2 Cor. 1:12).

Asia, I was with you all the time, serving the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears and trials which happened to me through the plots of the Jews, as I did not shrink away from declaring to you any of the things profitable [for you] and from teaching you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews and Greeks of the repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus. . . . Therefore, I testify to you on this very day that I am pure from [innocent of] the blood of all (Acts 20:19-21,26; see vv. 34-35).¹⁷²

Second, Paul also proclaims his innocence in regard to religious, civil, and political laws. In his defense before Festus Paul contends, "I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar" (Acts 25:8; see also v. 10; 28:17).

As a result of his unimpeachable conduct, Paul can call upon his fellow Christians to imitate him.¹⁷³ As the spiritual father of the Corinthian believers, Paul writes, "I urge you, therefore, be imitators of me" (1 Cor. 4:15-16; see also Phil. 3:17). Paul points out the underlying reason for this in exhorting, "Be imitators of me, just as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).¹⁷⁴

All of these statements by Paul concerning his blame-

¹⁷²Paul's conclusion here is based upon the prophetic characterization of the Watchman (Ezek. 2:16-27; 33:7-9).

¹⁷³Paul does place some limitations on this, however. In regard to his unmarried status, he advises, "I wish that all men were even as I am. But each one has his own gift from God" (1 Cor. 7:7).

¹⁷⁴D. M. Stanley, "'Become Imitators of Me': The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition," *Biblica* 40 (1959):859-77, proposes that the imitation of Christ is the underlying force behind all of Paul's calls for Christian to imitate him.

lessness or innocence are in the context of what he has faithfully handed on from God and what God has accomplished in and through him both as a result of his call to faith in Jesus Christ and his call to be an apostle. In these areas Paul declares himself innocent. But does he make similar claims in regard to his standing before God? In words to the Corinthians Paul describes his own innocence with this important qualification:

But it matters very little to me that I am examined by you or by a human court; indeed, I do not even examine myself. For I am aware of nothing against myself, but I have not in this been justified/acquitted (δεδικαιωμαι), the one who examines me is the Lord (1 Cor. 4:3-4).¹⁷⁵

While Paul boasts of his innocence before men and in his relationship with the congregations he founded, he indicates that his innocence before God does not lie within himself, nor is it based upon his own conduct or awareness. Just as his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah was not based upon his own efforts, but came in spite of his unbelief, blasphemy and violent conduct (1 Tim. 1:13,16), so also his continued

¹⁷⁵Kümmel, Römer 7, 103, cites this passages in support of his contention that Paul "himself was cognizant of no individual sin, at least he has said nothing concerning it. But then to construe Rom. 7:14ff. as a present confession of Paul is excluded" ("sich keiner einzelnen Sünde bewußt war, zum mindesten nichts davon gesagt hat. Dann aber ist es ausgeschlossen, Röm. 7, 14ff. als Gegenwartsbekenntnis des Paulus aufzufassen"). While 1 Cor. 4:3-4 would seem to vindicate the first portion of Kümmel's statement, his conclusion is based upon the further assertion, *ibid.*, 101, "that [Paul] was totally free from fleshly conduct" ("daß er ganz frei geworden sei vom fleischlichen Wandel"). The discussion which follows disputes the validity of that contention, as well as Kümmel's conclusion concerning Romans 7:14-25.

stance within that relationship is based on faith in Jesus. Why is this so?

Even after his conversion and his calling to be an apostle, Paul reveals that he must continually struggle with and against his own flesh. He does this in a number of different ways. To begin with, Paul often mentions his own personal weaknesses and the frailties of his flesh. He brings these up especially in the context of his boasting. Paul confesses to the Corinthians, "I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3; see also Gal. 4:14).¹⁷⁶ He later discloses the source of more weakness:

Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble and I do not burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things pertaining to my weakness (2 Cor. 11:29-30).

In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul reports that because of the great revelations he received, "A thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan in order to beat me so that I would not exalt myself" (2 Cor. 12:7). The precise nature of this "thorn" or "stake" (σκόλοψ) in Paul's flesh is a matter of great debate.¹⁷⁷ The key point for the present discussion is that it resided in Paul's flesh and did so on a continuing

¹⁷⁶One aspect of this may be revealed in 2 Corinthians where Paul writes, "But even if I am unskilled in speech, . . ." (11:6).

¹⁷⁷See, for example, Neil Smith, "Thorn that Stayed: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 12:7-9," Interpretation 13 (1959): 409-16; Terence Mullins, "Paul's Thorn in the Flesh," Journal of Biblical Literature 76 (1957):299-303; William Alexander, "St. Paul's Infirmary," Expository Times 15 (1903-4):469-73, 545-48; William Ramsay, St. Paul: The Traveler and the Roman Citizen (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), 94-97.

basis during his Christian life. The fact that Paul calls it "a messenger of Satan" (ἄγγελος σατανᾶ) is sufficient for an appraisal of his own view of its source and effect. In one of his most revealing passages, Paul proceeds to depict how his own weaknesses served to strengthen his dependence upon the Gospel. When Paul asked God three times to remove this thorn in the flesh,

He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for [my] power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell upon me. Therefore I am pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions and distresses in behalf of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

Paul also discloses some of his personal anguish in his letters.¹⁷⁸ Because of the rejection of the Gospel by so many Jews, Paul laments, "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart" (Rom. 9:2). His distress is more commonly related to his ministry. It is because "the pressure [of] the daily concern for all the churches is on me" (2 Cor. 11:28; see also vv. 29-30; 1 Thess. 3:5). For example, to the Corinthians he states, "For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears" (2 Cor. 2:4).

Whether or not one can place the previous references into the category of "sin" is debatable. Nevertheless, they are indicative of the continuing weaknesses and frailties of

¹⁷⁸Acts also reveals two times when the Lord (18:9) and an angel (27:23-24) appeared to Paul and told him, "Do not be afraid."

Paul's own flesh. Yet Paul's letters more clearly portray his own ongoing struggles with sin in his flesh in two additional ways.

First, Paul characterizes his daily life as consisting of an enduring battle *against his own flesh*.¹⁷⁹ He speaks of it this way, "I beat my body and lead it into slavery, lest somehow after I have preached to others, I myself might be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27). Paul indicates that this struggle is not over. He has not yet reached perfection.

Not that I already received [this] or have already been made perfect, but I press on if indeed I might take hold of that for which I was also taken hold of by Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12).

Second, as Paul looks at himself in the presence of God's holiness, he describes not only his past, but also his continuing Christian life in the present tense as follows:

"The saying is faithful and worthy of full acceptance, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am (εἰμι ἐγώ) the foremost'" (1 Tim. 1:15).

It is important to note that Paul's continuing struggles in this life do not alter his assurance in the Gospel. They do not shake his confidence before God through Christ or his certainty concerning his eternal fate. Paul is personally convinced that nothing can separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38-39). In the context of his present

¹⁷⁹In 2 Cor. 4:11 Paul speaks of his missionary team in the first person plural and describes how the life of Jesus is revealed "in our mortal flesh" (ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν; compare Rom. 7:24).

sufferings he writes, "But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). Paul even portrays this confident attitude in the face of his own imprisonment and death:

For I know that this will turn out for my salvation through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my eager expectation and hope I will not be ashamed in anything, but with all boldness, as always even now Christ will be exalted in my body whether through life or through death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain (Phil. 1:20,22).

In regard to his death, Paul describes it as a sacrificial offering (Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6). The closing words of 2 Timothy beautifully summarize Paul's attitude toward his imminent death: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Tim. 4:18).¹⁸⁰ In words which serve as a fitting conclusion to his life, Paul states with great assurance, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). His faith in Jesus Christ is clearly wherein his innocence and confidence lie *coram Deo*.

In conclusion, it can be admitted that Romans 7:14-25 is unique. Paul nowhere else speaks directly of himself with the same terms and in the same manner as the "I" speaks

¹⁸⁰The presence of *ῥύσεται με* here recalls the wording of Rom. 7:24. There is a manner in which a Christian still cries out for deliverance.

there.¹⁸¹ As a result, when the complete picture of Paul's references to his own Christian life is taken into consideration, the question of whether Romans 7:14-25 fits within that picture is perhaps not answered as decisively as one would like. In some passages Paul declares that as a Christian he is innocent or blameless in a manner which would seem to exclude what is confessed by the "I" there.¹⁸² Yet the statements in which Paul speaks of himself as being without fault must be interpreted in a manner appropriate to their context. For example, is he referring to his blamelessness before men on the basis of the fulfillment of his apostolic duties, or is he speaking of his innocence before God? A determination of this is somewhat problematic since, from the outset of his Christian life, Paul describes his calling by God's grace together with his calling to be an apostle (as in Gal. 1:15-16). The two cannot be completely separated. They can, however, be distinguished. If Paul is speaking *coram Deo*, what is the basis of his innocence? It is no longer his own zeal or ability to fulfill the Law as was the case prior to his conversion. It is his faith in Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, nothing Paul writes about himself prohibits Romans 7:14-25 from being descriptive of himself as a Christian. While there are no explicit parallels, a number

¹⁸¹See, for example, his use of *σῶμα* instead of *σάρξ* in 1 Cor. 9:27.

¹⁸²See above, pp. 289-92. This is Kümmel's conclusion, *Römer* 7, 103; see above, n. 175, p. 291.

of the passages cited above (pp. 291-94) point toward this conclusion. Perhaps Romans 7:14-25 provides the starkest portrayal of Paul's own inner struggles as a Christian. Could those verses represent his most intimate disclosure of the continuing presence of sin in his own Christian life when it is viewed in the presence of the holiness of both God and the Law? This interpretation has not been excluded by what Paul says about himself elsewhere.

A more definitive resolution to the question of the spiritual state of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 can be obtained by examining the broader statements Paul makes about the spiritual state of unbelievers and about the Christian life throughout his letters. These can be legitimately applied to Paul's own life as he himself reveals in this statement:

But for this reason I was shown mercy, in order that in me, the foremost [of sinners], Christ Jesus might demonstrate [his] unlimited patience as an example (*ὑποτύπωσιν*) to those who are about/destined to believe on him for eternal life (1 Tim. 1:16).

Paul will not allow the events of his own spiritual life before conversion to stand in opposition to his teachings about other unbelievers. Neither did Paul believe there was any contradiction between his own life after conversion and the lives of other Christians. On the contrary, Paul viewed his own experience as an example (*ὑποτύπωσιν*) for other believers. This is, indeed, fortunate. It enables us to gather evidence concerning the spiritual state of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 from Paul's more general descriptions of

unbelievers and of Christians.

It is not here proposed that the life of any or every Christian, either before or after conversion, can be made rigidly paradigmatic for the life of Paul or *vice versa*. For example, Paul himself stresses his unique calling and mission to be the apostle to the Gentiles.¹⁸³ As a result, his descriptions of his apostolic calling, ministry, and authority are not applicable to all other Christians. However, light can be shed upon Paul's life before conversion by examining the manner in which he describes other nonbelievers. In similar fashion, the various ways in which Paul depicts the sanctified life of Christians in general enable us to look more fully into Paul's own Christian life.

This chapter has identified the referent of the "I" in Romans 7 as Paul and placed the description of verses 7-11 within Paul's pre-conversion experience.¹⁸⁴ The following chapter will examine the question of the spiritual state of the "I" in verses 14-25 within a wider frame of reference, Paul's overall view of the unbeliever and of the Christian. This will enable us to determine Paul's spiritual condition in those verses with greater assurance and conviction. Once the precise referent of the "I" throughout Romans 7 has been identified, an evaluation of Paul's purpose there can be made.

¹⁸³See above, pp. 286-87.

¹⁸⁴See the specific details about the manner in which verses 7-11 apply to Paul in the discussion above, pp. 261-78.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIAN OR NON-CHRISTIAN "I" IN ROMANS 7:14-25?

Introduction

Scholars have come to diverse conclusions regarding the spiritual state of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. Is the "I" a non-Christian?¹ If so, Paul attributes to the unbeliever the ability to agree with what he recognizes as the Spirit-filled Law (7:14,16) and to rejoice with the Law of God in his "inner man" (7:22). If this is true, Paul believes that it is possible for the mind of an unbeliever consistently to will the good required by the Law (7:16,18,21,23,25) and to give thanks to God "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (7:25). On the other hand, is it possible that the "I" is a Christian who nevertheless admits to being fleshly and sold under sin (7:14)?² Is the "I" a believer in Christ who is unable to do the good as directed by God's Law and led to do that which he hates by the sin still dwelling in him (7:15,16, 17,20)?

The fact that the debate over this question persists

¹See those who advocate this position in chapter one, pp. 32-38,46-54,58-60.

²See those who advocate this position in chapter one, pp. 43-6,56,60-61.

is one indication of its problematic nature. Each of these diverse interpretations can cite evidence in favor of its position, but is apparently unable to respond convincingly to the serious objections raised against it. Is there a solution to this impasse?³

The study of the sense or meaning of the text of Romans 7:14-25 in the second chapter of this thesis has identified the fundamental characteristic of the "I" there portrayed. Paul is illustrating the disparity in the "I" between his willing what the Law says and his inability to accomplish that which he wills. This tension "between intention and

³In view of the apparent difficulties with either of these positions, a third alternative has arisen. Is the "I" representative of either a non-Christian or a "lapsed" Christian who is not living up to the potential of his faith (as suggested above, pp. 61-65)? The serious problems with this interpretation have been noted above (pp. 65-66) and it will not be discussed at length here. The most damaging point against it is the sharp contrast which Paul incessantly draws between believers and unbelievers. For Paul the spiritual state of a person is certainly an "either/or" situation. Paul makes this clear in passages such as Romans 6:16-23; 7:4-6; 8:5-9; 2 Cor. 5:17-18, and so forth. Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, tr. and ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 204, points out, "Only when the arguments of 1:18-3:20, 5:12ff., and 6:3ff. are forgotten can one postulate a middle state between the fallen person and the saved person." James Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," Theologische Zeitschrift 9 (1975):269, affirms that for Paul there is no "middle path between these alternatives." In addition, the strongest arguments against both the Christian and the non-Christian identification of the "I" in 7:14-25 are negative ones. These contend that the "I" cannot be a believer or an unbeliever for certain reasons. This alternative interpretation, by positing that the "I" could be either a Christian or non-Christian, is left to face the objections weighed against both of the other positions.

performance"⁴ may be illustrated as follows:⁵

<u>Will</u>	<u>Action</u>
(14) For we know that the Law is Spiritual,	but <u>I</u> am fleshly, having been sold under sin.
(15) For I do not approve	of that which I accom- plish; indeed, I do not practice
that which I will, but that which I hate,	this I do.
that which I do not will, I agree with the Law that [it is] excellent.	(16) But since I am doing
	(17) But, this being the case, it is not then then <u>I</u> who am accomp- lishing this, but sin which is dwelling in me.
	(18) For I know that good is not dwelling in me, this is, in my flesh.
For to will [the good] lies at hand for me,	but the accomplishing of the good, no.
[the] good I will, I do not will,	(19) For I am not doing but [the] evil this I am practicing.
	(20) But if <u>I</u> am doing this

⁴Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, tr. C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 293.

⁵Here I am indebted to Paul Raabe, professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, who provided the basis for this analysis.

which I do not will, I am
no longer accomplishing it

but the sin which is
dwelling in me.

(21) So then I find the Law
for me the one determin-
ing to do the excellent
[thing],

that for me evil lies
at hand.

(22) I rejoice with the Law
of God according to the
inner man.

the Law of my mind

(23) But I see another
Law in my members
waging war against
and taking me captive
to the Law of sin
which is in my
members.

(24) I am a distressed/miserable man; who will
rescue me from this body of death? (25) Thanks
to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then I myself in [my]
mind am enslaved to
[the] Law of God,

but, on the other hand,
in the flesh, [I
am enslaved to
the] Law of sin.

Is it possible for this disparity to be present in an un-
believer, or is this contradiction between will and action
characteristic of the believer? This question is ultimately
decided by determining whether Paul would conceive of such a
disparity existing only within an unbeliever, only within a
Christian, or within both.

This chapter seeks to address the question of the spirit-
ual condition of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 by comparing the
sense/content of Paul's words about the "I" with the sense/con-
tent of other statements he makes about believers and unbeliev-

ers elsewhere.⁶ It is here proposed that the issue of the spiritual state of the "I" in verses 14-25 and, thereby, also the specific referent of the "I," can be satisfactorily resolved by considering it in the context of the entirety of Paul's theology as expressed in his letters and his statements in Acts.⁷ The following study is, then, divided into

⁶The attempt to support one's interpretation of Romans 7 by appealing to Paul's theology as a whole has been alluded to occasionally and a passage or two has been cited. For example, Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 289, points out that a non-Christian interpretation "flagrantly violates Paul's own thought." J. I. Packer, "The 'Wretched Man' of Romans 7," in Studia Evangelica, vol. 2, ed. F. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964), 625, concludes that "elsewhere Paul consistently denies the existence of any such affinity" with the Law of God in unbelievers. Yet he cites only "Eph. 2,3; 4,17ff." John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1959), 1:257, is properly disappointed that "modern expositors have dealt so inadequately with these considerations."

The few exceptions include James Fraser, The Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification (Edinburgh: R. Ogle, 1830), 220-306, which is entitled, "A Dissertation concerning the General Scope and Purpose of the latter context of Chapter vii. 14-25." Fraser, however, generally extends his survey beyond the bounds of Paul's letters. See also Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," especially 264-73; David Wenham, "The Christian Life: A Life of Tension?: A Consideration of the Nature of Christian Experience in Paul," in Pauline Studies, eds. D. Hagner and M. Harris (Exeter, England: The Paternoster Press, 1980), 228-45; and Werner Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929); reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 98-118 [Hereafter, Römer 7]. Kümmel, Römer 7, 134-38, is aware of some of the difficulties his interpretation presents when viewed in the context of Paul's theology; so also Paul Althaus, Paulus und Luther über den Menschen, Studien der Luther-Akademie, 14 (Gütersloh: "Der Rufer" Evangelische Verlag, 1938), 32-38.

⁷Those epistles accepted as genuine here are the letters which the Christian church has historically recognized as *homologoumena*. In seeking a solution to this debate by

two parts. First, it compares the "I" portrayed in Romans 7:14-25 with the manner in which Paul depicts unbelievers and asks, "Are the two descriptions compatible?" The second portion of this chapter follows the same procedure, but focuses upon the "I" in light of Paul's characterizations of the Christian and asks, "Are these two pictures capable of accommodating one another?"

This survey is by no means meant as a complete analysis of Paul's anthropology,⁸ his view of the unbeliever,⁹ the

examining Paul's other epistles and his statements in Acts, one is faced with the question of whether Paul's theology is consistent or not. This vital issue is currently being addressed, for example, by J. Christiaan Beker, "Paul's Theology: Consistent or Inconsistent," New Testament Studies 34 (1988): 364-77; idem., "Paul the Theologian: Major Motifs in Pauline Theology," Interpretation 43 (1989):352-65; and Richard Longenecker, "On the Concept of Development in Pauline Thought," in Perspectives in Evangelical Theology, Papers from the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, eds. K. Kantzer and S. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 195-207. Longenecker, 206, correctly concludes that one should allow for a "development of conceptualization and expression as brought about by God's Spirit" in Paul's letters. Paul expresses himself in various forms. He employs different language and utilizes new metaphors. However, *ibid.*, contends that there is "continuity with an unchanging foundational core of revelation and conviction." This is especially true in regard to the question under consideration here.

⁸See, for example, the studies of Werner Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1948); reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 178-98; William Nelson, "Pauline Anthropology," Interpretation 14 (1960), 14-27; John Robinson, The Body, Graduate Theological Foundation (Bristol, IN: Wyndham Hall Press, 1988).

⁹See, for example, Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 2 vols., tr. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 1:190-269; Olaf Moe, The Apostle Paul, 2 vols.

Christian life,¹⁰ Christian ethics,¹¹ and so forth. It aims to investigate the content of Paul's words specifically in order to assess the spiritual state of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. As a result, this analysis will be primarily concerned with those factors which have come to the fore in the first two chapters of this thesis.

Paul's Portrayal of Unbelievers and
the "I" in Romans 7:14-25

In Romans 1:18-32 Paul describes Gentile non-believers as being able to perceive of God's existence by virtue of the things he has created (1:19-20). But Paul does not say that these Gentiles are able to know or agree with God's revealed Law. On the contrary, he charges them with suppressing the knowledge about God which is available to them (1:23,

(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954), 2:108-25; Herman Ridderbos, Paul, tr. J. De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1975), 91-158.

¹⁰See, for example, Günther Bornkamm, "Baptism and New Life in Paul (Romans 6)," in Early Christian Experience, The New Testament Library, tr. P. Hammer (London: SCM Press, 1969), 71-86; Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, 1:270-352; Moe, 2:307-57; Ridderbos, 205-326.

¹¹See the excellent overview of William Dennison, "Indicative and Imperative: The Basic Structure of Pauline Ethics," Calvin Theological Journal 14 (1979):55-78; also J. F. Bottorff, "The Relation of Justification and Ethics in Pauline Epistles," Scottish Journal of Theology 26 (1973):421-30; Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Ethics in the Writings of Paul," in The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, tr. K. Crim (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967, 7-32; Victor Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968); idem., The Moral Teaching of Paul, 2nd rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985); Ridderbos, 253-58.

25,28).¹² Far from having a mind which desires the good, Paul characterizes Gentile unbelievers as being "futile in their thinking" and having "senseless hearts" which have become even more darkened (1:21). As a result, Paul declares three times that God "gave them over" (παρέδωκεν) "in the desires of their hearts to impurity" (v. 24), to dishonorable passions (v.26), and "to a useless mind" (εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν; v. 28). Paul describes Gentile unbelievers as "haters of God" (θεοστυγῆς; v. 30); they are "foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless" (v. 31). He concludes this section by describing the attitude of these unbelievers toward those acts committed against God's will: "They not only do them but approve of those who practice them" (1:32).

This description is in no way congruous with the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. Far from agreeing with the Law of God, the unbelieving Gentiles have a "useless mind" (ἀδόκιμον νοῦν; 1:28) which constantly and willingly opposes God and which gives approval when what they know of God's will for right and wrong conduct is violated. There is no division between willing good and doing evil in 1:18-32. The Gentiles are portrayed as having "senseless hearts" (ἡ ἀσύνετος

¹²Günther Bornkamm, "Faith and Reason in Paul's Epistles," New Testament Studies 4 (1957-58):96-97, points out, "Paul does not appeal to men's reason or to their consciences in order to lead them to a theoretical understanding of the nature and being of God and of his Nomos and thereby towards their own destiny and dignity, but rather in order to arrest them in and leave them no escape from their lost condition in the face of the will of God."

αὐτῶν καρδία; 1:21)¹³ which "have been filled with all wickedness" (v. 29; see vv. 29-31).

When Paul directs his attention toward those who judge others (2:1), he charges them with "being disobedient to the truth" (2:8). Those who condemn others have "unrepentant hearts" because they fail to recognize their own sinfulness (2:5). In 2:12-16 Paul points out that this accusation applies even to those who do not know the revealed Torah. The fact that those "without the Law" (2:12) are able to do "the things of the Law" (2:14) is evidence that "the work of the Law is written in their hearts" and on their "conscience" (2:15). Paul asserts that their hearts and consciences will turn to accuse them on the day of judgment when they will perish.

In 2:17 it becomes evident that Paul is speaking primarily of Jews who know the revealed Torah but are without the righteousness of faith. They are charged more specifically with failing to acknowledge their own transgressions of the Law (2:23). While being quick to admonish others on the basis of the Law, they fail to instruct themselves about their own disobedience (2:21-24). In addition, their view of circumcision is merely physical and their approach to the Law is bereft of the Spirit (2:28-29; contrast 7:6,14). As a result, their possession of the revealed Law, while poten-

¹³ Ibid., 95, notes, "Paul's terminology with reference to man shows such peculiarities as the replacement of the Greek concept νοῦς with the biblical word καρδία." This phrase is one example which portrays the Old Testament background of Paul's anthropology.

tially of great value (3:2), has become a means of deception used by sin to cloud their own sinfulness from them (2:24; 3:9-18; compare 7:7-11). This also stands in sharp contrast to the "I" of 7:14-25 who openly admits his own continuing sinfulness (vv. 14,17-18,20).

Paul's main concern in this opening section (1:18-3:20) is to drive home a recognition of that which is absent in all those who have failed to acknowledge their need for the *δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ πίστεως*. He contends that all people have sinned (3:23), that all Jews and all Greeks are under sin (3:9), and that the Law was given to make this fact apparent (3:9,20). His point is that whether a person knows the revealed Law of God or not, the outcome for all those apart from the righteousness of God which comes by faith in Christ is the same, God's judgment and condemnation.

When Paul later turns to discuss the effects and functions of the Law at length in chapter 7, something significant must be noted. The attitude toward the Law depicted by the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 is utterly different from that of any unbeliever in Romans 1:18-3:20. Unlike the Gentile of 1:18-32, the "I" in 7:14-25 acknowledges the Law of God as good (7:16), joyfully agrees with what it says (7:22), and strives to accomplish that which it commands (7:15,18-19,21). Unlike the "moralist" (2:1-16) or the Jew who relies upon the Law and boasts in God (2:17-3:18), the "I" in 7:14-25 perceives that he is unable to accomplish what the Law requires and to

refrain from what it forbids. This Law-based recognition of one's own sinfulness and its consequences are the very things which the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 repeatedly confesses of himself, albeit in a qualified manner (7:14,17-18,20). Even though he rejoices with the Law of God "according to the inner man" (7:22), he is distressed because he recognizes that that same Law convicts him of sin. Due to the sin which dwells in his members, he confesses that his body is a "body of death" (7:23-24).

As Paul continues in chapters 5-8, he makes a number of descriptions of the pre-faith life of those who have now come to receive the righteousness of God. At that time, he says, we were "helpless" (5:6), "enemies" of God (5:10), "enslaved to sin" (6:6), and under the dominion of sin and death (5:17,21; 6:16-17,20). Then sin was able to use even the Law of God to arouse sinful passions leading to death (7:5; compare 7:13). Romans 8 describes those who do not have the Spirit of Christ (8:9) as ones who live "according to the flesh" (*κατὰ σάρκα*; 8:5). They set their minds on the things of the flesh and their end is death (8:6,13). Paul concludes,

For the mind of the flesh (*τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*) is hostile to God; it does not subject itself (*οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται*) to the Law of God, indeed, it is not able [to do so] (8:7).

How does the picture of unbelievers in Romans 5-8 compare with the "I" in 7:14-25? At first glance they appear similar. The "I" confesses, "I am fleshly, sold under sin" (7:14). However, as the "I" proceeds, this statement is clarified.

The "necessary qualification"¹⁴ of this "sold under sin" condition is that it is restricted to the "sin which dwells in me, . . . this is, in my flesh" (7:17-18; compare v. 25). Sin is at work "in my members" (7:23) and that makes the body of the "I" a body of death (7:24). Sin continues to have its domain in 7:14-25, but it is limited to sin's presence in the flesh, its activity in the "I"'s members, and its opposition to his will and mind.

In contrast, the will, the inner man, and the mind of the "I" are exhibiting traits which are clearly not characteristic of a mind which is set on the flesh (8:6). Far from being enslaved to sin (6:6), controlled by sinful passions (7:5), at enmity with God (5:10), and hostile to his Law (8:7), the "I" in 7:16 agrees with the Law of God and his inner man "rejoices" in it (7:22). His $\nu\omicron\theta\varsigma$ willingly enslaves itself to God's most excellent Law and intends to live according to it (7:16,18,23,25). This clearly is not the same condition as that of the unbeliever portrayed by Paul in the context surrounding 7:14-25.

When Paul discusses the specific situation of the Jewish people (Rom. 9-11), he points out that they have stumbled

¹⁴C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979), 1:360; see also above, p. 156, n. 347.

(προσκοπτω; 9:32-33).¹⁵ They stumbled because in "seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to God's righteousness" (10:3). Instead of receiving the righteousness which comes by faith (9:30; 10:6), they attempted to pursue a righteousness by works of the Law (ἐξ ἔργων; 9:32).

This, again, stands in sharp contrast to the view of the Law which is present in the "I" in 7:14-25 and makes it difficult to comprehend how Paul could be using the first person singular there to depict a pious Jew.¹⁶ Even though the "I" in 7:14-25, like Israel in 9:30-10:5, has zeal for God and his Law (10:2), the "I" in chapter 7 understands that the Law is not a means to righteousness for him. The Law continues to identify sin by pointing out the good which the "I" fails to do and by condemning the evil he accomplishes (7:15-20). The Law continues to provoke sin in my "members" (7:23; also vv. 8,13) and to enslave his flesh to sin (7:25; also v. 14). Even though the "I" agrees with the Law and wills to accomplish it, he has no doubt about the futility of pursuing righteousness by means of the Law. The "I" realizes that the Law continues to condemn the "sin which dwells in

¹⁵In view of sin's ability to work in the flesh, Paul concludes that it is "not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants" (9:8). The works of the Law done in the flesh are unable to attain righteousness (9:31).

¹⁶As maintained, for example, by Käsemann, 202-3. Kümmel, Römer 7, 111-17, recognizes that the "I" cannot be a pharisaic Jew or even Paul the Pharisee. The "I" is certainly not a "relying upon the Law" Jew as depicted by Paul in 2:17-25.

me" (7:20). He recognizes that seeking to establish his own righteousness by works of the Law is an impossibility because of this sin. The "I" in 7:14-25, therefore, does not reflect the attitude toward the Law which Paul attributes to Israel in Romans 9:30-10:5.

In conclusion, the statements made by the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 cannot be equated with the picture Paul paints of unbelievers throughout Romans. This is especially evident in regard to the attitude toward the Law which the "I" exhibits. The unbelieving Gentiles do not agree with the Law and their will is not determined to live according to it. Those Jews who boast in the Law apart from the righteousness which comes by faith fail to recognize that the Law continues to place them under, and even lead them into, sin because their flesh is enslaved to sin. Rudolf Bultmann and others attempt to evade this conclusion by contending that what Paul reveals in Romans 7:14-25 is a predicament which the unbelieving "I" does not recognize as his own.¹⁷ They propose that Paul's rhetorical "I" offers us an objective description of man under the Law from the viewpoint of Christian faith. However, an objective characterization of unbelievers based upon the Law and from the vantage point of Christian faith is precisely what Paul is giving throughout much of Romans.¹⁸ The

¹⁷See above, pp. 51-53, 237-38, 240-41.

¹⁸James Dunn, Romans 1-8, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a, eds. R. Martin, D. Hubbard, and G. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 394, states: "The illogicality of arguing

objective description he gives outside of 7:14-25 excludes the interpretation that the "I" there is an unbeliever.

As we turn to examine Paul's portrayal of unbelievers elsewhere, the conclusion we have reached becomes even more evident. Paul expresses his convictions quite consistently throughout his letters when he speaks about 1) the mind of unbelievers, 2) the motivation for and quality of their deeds, and 3) their spiritual status before God.

First, Paul speaks of the mind of unbelievers and the mental reasoning of Christians *prior to faith's* coming in a number of passages. What he says in them corresponds with, and further clarifies, his statements in Romans. As in Romans 1, Paul points out that creation itself witnesses to the existence of God and alludes to his goodness (Acts 14:17; 17:23-26). However, while Paul allows for the possibility that people might seek after God, God remains "unknown" to them until he reveals himself through his proclaimed Word (Acts 17:27,28).

Apart from the Spirit and faith, people are completely unable to comprehend the things of God and cannot become acceptable to him. By its own "wisdom," the world cannot come to "know" God (1 Cor. 1:21).¹⁹ The rulers of this age

that the passage here expresses with Christian hindsight the existential anguish of the pious Jew -- which as a pious Jew [Paul] did not actually experience and which as a Christian he still does not experience! -- is usually not appreciated."

¹⁹The relational sense of $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ is present in Paul's use of $\gamma\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$ here; see above, n. 301, p. 146.

are also "doomed to pass away" because they do not understand the Gospel (1 Cor. 2:6,8).²⁰ Furthermore, Paul declares that "the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving" (ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων; 2 Cor. 4:4). The unbeliever's cognitive powers stand in opposition to God and to his will as revealed in the Law. Those who belong to this crooked and perverse generation (Phil. 2:15) are enemies of the cross with "minds set on earthly things" (οἱ τὰ ἐπιγεια φρονοῦντες; Phil. 3:19). The unbelieving Gentiles are "led astray to the dumb idols" (1 Cor. 12:2; see Acts 14:15; 1 Thess. 1:9). Before coming to faith, Gentile Christians "were once alienated and hostile in understanding (ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ), doing evil deeds" (Col. 1:21). In writing to Titus, Paul characterizes unbelievers in this manner:

To the pure ones all things are pure, but to those who have been corrupted and are without faith nothing is pure, but both the mind and the conscience (ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις) of them have been corrupted. They profess to know God, but with [their] works, they are denying [him]; they are detestable and disobedient and unfit for any good deed (1:15-16).

When Paul speaks of the mind of those Jews who only know the Law apart from faith, he says that they read the Law as a "written code" which kills (2 Cor. 3:6).²¹ Because of the deception worked by sin through the Law, "their minds

²⁰This passage may be a specific reference to the Jews and their leaders since it adds, "For if they had [understood this], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 1:8b).

²¹Romans 9:30-10:5 explains why this is so; see also 7:7-11.

were hardened" (ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν; 2 Cor. 3:14). In referring to the veil worn by Moses to hide the fading brilliance of his face from the Israelites (Ex. 34:29-34), Paul asserts that for unbelieving Jews "to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts" (2 Cor. 3:15). In Acts 13:27 he similarly declares,

For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither this one [Jesus] nor the voices of the prophets which are being read every Sabbath, they fulfilled [these] by condemning [him] (see also 28:26-27 where he cites Is. 6:9-10).

Paul speaks of those who have fallen away from or rejected the faith in a comparable manner. They have "repudiated" both faith and a good conscience (ἀπωθέομαι; 1 Tim. 1:19) and are "holding on to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1). Such ones have, in fact, "turned aside after Satan" (1 Tim. 5:15). Paul describes false teachers as men who have been rejected concerning the faith and with "minds having been corrupted" (κατεφθαρμένοι τὸν νοῦν; 2 Tim. 3:8; see also 1 Tim. 6:5; Tit. 3:11). As God gave the unbelieving Gentiles over to greater and greater depravity (Rom. 1:24,26,28), so also in these latter days Paul announces that God sends a "working of falsehood" (ἐνέργειαν πλάνης) upon those who "did not receive the love of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:10-11). As a result, those who have rejected and now oppose the Gospel are in "the snare of the devil, having been captured by him to do the will of that one" (2 Tim. 2:26).

These passages make it clear that for Paul all those who do not have the Spirit of God, or who have rejected the Spirit, have a mind united with the sinful flesh which stands in complete opposition to God. Any such person is unable to know God in a relational way (ἄγν') or to comprehend the things of God.²²

But a natural (ψυχικός) man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are Spiritually discerned (πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται; 1 Cor. 2:14).

The implications of 1 Corinthians 2:14 for identifying the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 are far greater than merely parading the "I"'s recognition of the Law as Spiritual (7:14). In Romans 7 the "I" not only acknowledges that fact, he also joyfully agrees with the good Law (7:22). As a result, the determined desire of his will is to accomplish what the Spiritual Law commands and to strive to abstain from the evil it forbids (7:15-20). The "I" serves the Law of God with his mind (7:25) and even identifies the Law of God as "the Law of my mind" (τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοῦς μου; 7:23). It is impossible to equate the statements made about the Law by the "I" in

²²Althaus, Paulus und Luther über den Menschen, 35, advances a non-Christian interpretation of the "I" in Rom. 7:14-25, but admits, "It is true that Paul has not elsewhere in his epistles spoken in this way about [the unbeliever's] νοῦς, 'reason.' It is rather true that a whole series of passages show that νοῦς, or 'the heart,' is drawn into man's ruin ("Es ist wahr: von dem νοῦς, der 'Vernunft', hat Paulus sonst in seinen Briefen nicht so geredet. Vielmehr zeigt eine ganze Reihe von Stellen, daß auch der νοῦς oder das 'Herz' in das Verderben des Menschen mit hineingezogen ist").

Romans 7:14-25 with the way in which Paul depicts the mind and attitudes of unbelievers toward the Law.

Second, Paul not only views the cognitive powers of unbelievers as impotent in the things of God, he contends that their fallen mind exhibits itself in actions which follow the dictates of their sinful flesh and further separate them from God. In a number of places Paul lists those deeds which dominate the will of unbelievers and which characterized the existence of Christians before faith came (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5-7; 1 Thess. 4:5; 2 Tim. 3:2-5). The acts which Paul enumerates are explicitly contrary to the Law of God.²³ Paul describes these as the passions, deeds, and works of the flesh which, in effect, prohibit one from entering the Kingdom of God. Paul charges, "For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8). Paul then contends that the Law is laid down "for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane" (1 Tim. 1:9).²⁴

Though God's Law was intended to identify sin as sin

²³For example, in 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Paul lists the following deeds which are prohibited by the commandments noted parenthetically: the immoral (6th), idolaters (1st), adulterers (6th); homosexuals (6th), thieves (7th), greedy (9th and 10th), drunkards (5th?), revilers (4th and 8th), robbers (7th).

²⁴For them the Law is to accomplish what Paul has explicitly stated in Romans. It provides the one who practices such things with a recognition of his sin (3:20; 7:7). In addition, the Law is used by sin to provoke more sin and to increase God's wrath against sin (4:15; 5:20; 7:8-13).

against God (Gal. 3:19; Rom. 3:20; 7:7) and then to restrain sin (1 Tim. 1:9), in Romans Paul concedes that the Law has been misused by sin not only to provoke further sin (4:15; 5:20; 7:7-10), but also to deceive sinners into attempting to obtain a righteousness before God by keeping the works of the Law (Rom. 7:11; 9:30-10:5). Paul rebukes the latter approach to the Law in Galatians by stating, "Now that no one is justified before God by the Law is evident" (Gal. 3:11; see Ps. 142:2).²⁵ Paul demonstrates why this is so from the Law itself. He cites Deuteronomy 27:26 which pronounces a curse upon "everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, to do them" (Gal. 3:10).

The conduct of unbelievers in relation to God's Law also stands in contrast to that of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. Unlike those unbelievers whose will and actions are devoted to carrying out the desires of the flesh, the will of the "I" is determined to live according to the most excellent Law (7:16). He hates his own deeds which transgress against both his will and the Law (7:15). Unlike those who attempt to use the Law as a means to righteousness, the "I" recognizes that he does not and cannot perform all the things required by the Law. Because of the sin which dwells in his flesh, the "I" acknowledges that he continues to fall into

²⁵See also Gal. 2:16; 3:10,21-22; 6:13-14; compare Rom. 3:19-20. Paul's argument in Galatians will be crucial for an understanding of Paul's purpose in Romans 7; see below, pp. 402-8.

sin and fails to do the good required by the Law (7:15-21).

Finally, how does Paul's evaluation of the spiritual status of unbelievers compare with his portrayal of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25? Paul's letters provide a number of statements which convey his appraisal of the spiritual life of any person whose mind is separated from God's Spirit and whose deeds are united with the sinful flesh in opposition to God's Law. According to Paul, the lives and activities of those outside of faith and apart from God's Spirit are dominated by their own flesh which subjects them to sin and death.

Paul depicts the former life of Gentile believers as an existence which was outside of the covenant and alienated from Christ (Eph. 2:11-12). As Gentiles they lived in darkness as "sons of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6,8; see also Col. 5:6). In view of this, Paul then exhorts them as Christians by pointing to the total depravity of the mind, deeds, and spiritual condition of those Gentiles who remain outside of Christ:

Therefore, this I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer live just as the Gentiles live in the futility of their mind (*ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν*); they have been darkened in their understanding (*τῇ διανοίᾳ*), alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance (*ἄγνοιαν*) which is in them, on account of the hardness of their heart; such ones, having become callous, gave themselves up to unrestrained living for the working of all impurity in greediness (Eph. 4:17-19).

The complete alienation of these Gentiles from God can hardly be equated with the statements of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. Not only does such a comparison fail to account

for the will of the "I" which desires to live according to God's Law, it also overlooks the struggle which is there taking place between the θέλω and the σάρξ. In Romans 7 there is a battle being waged by the will of the "I" against the works and desires of the flesh. The will of the "I," his mind, and inner man are aligned with God's Law and engaged in fighting against the sin which continues to dwell in his own flesh. The "I" knows all too well that sin still has a foothold in his members and he is frustrated by his inability to eradicate it. Paul does not portray the will of unbelievers as being capable of agreeing with God's Law or as engaged in a struggle against their flesh. For Paul there is no inner conflict taking place in those without the Spirit. Before the Gentile Christians whom Paul addresses in Ephesians belonged to Christ, there was no agreement with God's Law that was being overpowered by the sinful flesh (Rom. 7:15-20). Instead, there was total and complete slavery to the passions of the flesh and to sin. Paul does not place unbelievers into categories which indicate that some can attain a higher level in relation to God than others.²⁶ In fact, he refuses to allow any "germ of good in human nature, [any] genuine

²⁶Ridderbos, 129, suggests, and then dismisses, the supposition "that in Romans 7:14ff. Paul is no longer speaking simply of the 'ordinary' non-Christian, but of the one who stands 'on the highest plane attainable by pre-Christian man'"; citing W. Gutbrod, Die Paulinische Anthropologie (1938), 53.

desire to do what is right."²⁷ Werner Kümmel concludes,

As a matter of fact, it is clear that Paul knows of no human inner life related to God but only the complete man, who is *σάρξ, σῶμα, ψυχή*, etc., and stands completely against God.²⁸

According to Paul, prior to the time God "made us alive" (*συνεζωοποίησεν*) together with Christ, "we were dead through our trespasses" (Eph. 2:5; so also Col. 2:13).²⁹ He has described this existence quite definitively in the preceding verses:

And you being dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit which is now working in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also formerly lived in the desires of our flesh doing the will of the flesh and the thoughts (*ποι-
ούντες τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν*), and we were by nature children of wrath as also the rest (Eph. 2:1-3).

Paul tells these Gentile Christians that previously they

²⁷As asserted by William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 181. However, something similar to this is necessary for all those who would interpret the "I" of Rom. 7:14-25 as an unbeliever. For example, see also C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962), 150-51.

²⁸Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen, 183, "dass Paulus in der Tat kein Gott verwandtes menschliches Innenleben kennt, sondern nur den ganzen Menschen, der *σάρξ, σῶμα, ψυχή* usw. ist und als ganzer Gott gegenüber steht."

²⁹Note the sense of *νεκρούς* which corresponds to that adopted in Rom. 7:8 (see above, pp. 118-21). Here these unbelievers were in some sense alive, yet spiritually and in their relationship to God they were dead. So also sin, before the Law came, was in a sense alive, yet in its ability to provoke and effect transgression of God's Law it was *νεκρά*.

were undisturbed in their spiritual death. At that time "the will of the flesh and the thoughts" of the mind were united (2:3). This condition is in no way congruous with the disparity present within the "I" of Romans 7:14-25. The "I" there cannot be a Gentile unbeliever.

Paul then adds that "we also formerly lived" among these Gentiles by following the "desires of our flesh" (Eph. 2:3). It is certainly significant that Paul switches to the first person plural in verse 3. It signals that he will not allow one to restrict the application of passages such as Ephesians 2:1-3 to those unbelievers who do not know the revealed Law of God. In Romans 2:1-3:20 Paul demonstrated why "there is no distinction, for all sinned" (Rom. 3:22b-23a). So also in Galatians 3:22 he declares, "The Scriptures locked up all things under sin." In 1 Corinthians Paul concludes, "Thus no flesh can boast before God" (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ; 1:29a). Apart from the righteousness of God which is received through faith, all Jews and Gentiles are ultimately in the same condemned position before God.

As a result, those Jews who delighted in the Law as a means to gain or maintain their righteousness before God cannot be identified with the "I" portrayed by Paul in Romans 7:14-25. Paul charges those Jews with failing to recognize their own sin and characterizes them as being deceived by sin's perversion of the Law (Gal. 2:15-16,21; 3:10-24; also Rom. 2:1,21-24; 7:11; 9:30-10:5). However, the "I" in Romans

7:14-25 is far from being deluded into attempting to obtain a proper standing before God by his own works of the Law. He repeatedly recognizes his own sin and is frustrated by his inability to accomplish what the Law requires. Paul has eliminated the possibility of anyone being able to rely on the Law in order to boast before God (as in Rom. 2:17; see 3:19-20; 1 Cor. 2:19; Gal. 2:1). It is only by believing in the forgiveness of sins proclaimed in Jesus Christ that anyone is justified "from all [the] things from which you were not able to be justified by the Law of Moses" (Acts 13:38).

So, then, an unbelieving Gentile, a Jew who knows the Law apart from faith, and a former Christian who has fallen away or lapsed from the faith into unbelief or false doctrine are all placed in the same condition. In Galatians Paul depicts those outside of faith as being confined under the Law (3:23) and as being enslaved "by the elemental spirits of the world" (4:3) and "to the beings which by nature are not gods" (4:8). For Paul they all, in both mind and action, stand under the complete bondage he describes in Titus 3:

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, being deceived, being enslaved to various desires and pleasures (δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικιλίας; 3:3a).

Admittedly, Romans 7:14-25 depicts a slavery to sin in the flesh. But this slavery is restricted to the sin which dwells in the flesh of the "I" and works "in my members" (7:23; also vv. 17-18,20). This "sold under sin" condition is both regretted and protested by his will, mind, and inner

man. These passages have shown that, for Paul, before faith came there was no recognition of or battle against "the Law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23). Apart from faith there can be no true joyful agreement with the Law of God (Rom. 7:22). It is only when one is made alive with Christ that a battle is inaugurated between the fleshly desires of the body and the now Spirit-renewed mind. This is the battle present in Romans 7:14-25. For Paul, the complete slavery to sin and the domination of death is only disturbed by the presence of the Spirit of God.

Rom 7:14-25, if understood of the non-Christian, represents not just (in Kümmel's terms) a 'formal deviation' or 'relative departure' from Paul's view of the natural man as found elsewhere, but a radical difference, a direct contradiction.³⁰

It can, therefore, be concluded that the "I" in those verses is not an unbeliever. The disparity in the "I" is not compatible with Paul's portrayal of either Jews or Gentiles outside of faith.

Paul's Description of the Christian Life
and the "I" in Romans 7:14-25

Can Paul be describing the life of the Christian in Romans 7:14-25, or is such an interpretation excluded by Paul's view of the life inaugurated by faith? Does the state

³⁰Ronald Fung, "The Impotence of the Law: Toward a Fresh Understanding of Romans 7:14-25," in Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation, eds. W. Gasque and W. LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 35-36; he affirms this, 36, in spite of "the overwhelming support [the non-Christian interpretation] currently enjoys."

of the "I" there stand in contradiction to what Paul says of the believer's life elsewhere? A number of the arguments against interpreting the "I" as a believer were presented in chapter one.³¹ However, the exegetical bases for these conclusions were refuted in chapter two.³² This study now turns to examine this question from the perspective of Paul's understanding of the Christian life as he expresses it in Romans and then throughout his letters and in Acts.

In Romans, when Paul finally discusses how the "righteousness of God" is received, he declares that it comes "freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus . . . For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of [the] Law" (3:24,28). What part does the Law play in a person being justified? Paul's answer is, "None." Christ's death has paid the once-for-all ransom price (*ἀπολυτρώσεως*).³³ How does a person who is righteous through faith maintain that righteousness? Already here Paul hints at the answer to the dilemma of the "I" in 7:14-25. It is

³¹See above, pp. 46-48.

³²For example, see above, pp. 143-44,153-55,158-60,170-72,182-90,195-96.

³³On this term, see Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (London: Tyndale Press, 1955); reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1956), 29-59, especially 41-42; and David Hill, Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, no. 5 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1967), 49-81.

because Jesus is also the *ἰλαστήριον* (3:25).³⁴ His blood continues to be held forth as that which "covers" the sins of believers of all time (3:25-26; compare 8:34).

Abraham was not accounted righteous by his work but by his faith (4:5,11). So also the promise to his descendants did not come through the Law but through faith (4:13). The reason for this is "in order that the promise might be confirmed to all [his] descendants" (4:16).

Those who follow in the footsteps of Abraham (4:12) are also justified through faith and by that faith have peace with God and continued access to his grace (5:1-2). Paul also states that the one who believes has been acquitted of sin, is now reconciled to God, and possesses true life (5:10,18). One who has been declared righteous by faith in Jesus Christ has, therefore, been freed from slavery to sin and death by the One who has overcome that which Adam brought into the world (5:12-21). None of this, including the maintaining of this state of peace with God and access to him, is based upon the Law. It is only certain through faith in the promise (4:16).

Even though the believer's existence is no longer deter-

³⁴On this term, see Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross, 167-74; idem., "The Meaning of *ἰλαστήριον* in Romans 3.25," New Testament Studies 2 (1955-56):33-43. *ἰλαστήριον* is used to translate the כַּפֶּרֶת or "mercy seat" of the tabernacle and temple 21 of the 27 times it is used in the Septuagint. It is also used for the lip of the altar of burnt offering and, in both cases, denotes a place where atonement for sin was granted on a recurring basis.

mined by the consequences of Adam's sin, Paul affirms that the believer remains a fleshly descendant of the first Adam through whom sin and death were brought into the world (5:12).

The new has not yet wholly swallowed up the old, there is still a significant degree of continuity between man's state prior to faith and his state under faith.³⁵

As a result, Paul places the final fulfillment of this hope into the future (5:2b-5). There is yet a day ahead when we "will be saved" (5:9,10). Then "we will also be united with him in a resurrection like his" (6:5).

Until then, shall we continue to sin (6:1)? Some of the statements which Paul makes in Romans 6 seem to stand in contradiction with the state of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. Paul declares that as Christians our "old self" has been crucified with Christ (6:6) and we have been "freed from sin" (6:18,22). This can hardly be the same state as that of the "I" who confesses, "I am fleshly, having been sold under sin" (7:14). Or is it?

Does Paul mean that the Christian is totally free from sin and from all its enticements?³⁶ If so, the question of

³⁵Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 271; see also Nelson, 19, who cites this statement of Otto Piper, The Christian Interpretation of Sex, (New York, 1941), 16: "The two periods overlap to a certain extent; the Old 'Aeon' has not yet been fully annihilated, and the New 'Aeon' has not yet reached its consummation."

³⁶This seems to be what Kümmel, Römer 7, 75, implies when he defines a Christian as one who is "no longer under the Law, also he no longer lives in sin" ("nicht mehr unter dem Gesetz, auch nicht mehr in der Sünde leben"). Paul would agree that a Christian is no longer under the dominion of sin or the Law; however, he does not state that it is possible

6:1 merely requires a simplistic answer and the exhortation in verses 12-19 is unnecessary. But the manner in which Paul does respond indicates that

it should not be inferred from [such statements] that there is no more sin for the believer; certainly sin still seeks to enslave, but its *dominion* is absolutely excluded for the believer.³⁷

As pointed out previously, for Paul it is a matter of reigning and dominion.³⁸ Before faith, sin and death reigned over all people (5:12,14,17,21). Now that the Christian has died with Christ, his old self has been crucified "so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin" (6:6).³⁹ The Christian is now freed from sin's power to reign in death (5:21; 6:11, 17,20; as is also the force of 6:18,22).⁴⁰

Therefore, what Paul means is that the true identity

for Christians to live without sinning.

³⁷Bottorff, 428.

³⁸See above, pp. 76-78,81-85. Some of the antitheses which Paul sets up throughout Romans 5-8 are death reigning -- life reigning (5:18); condemnation -- life (5:18); sin reigning -- grace reigning in righteousness (5:21); old self -- new life of the Spirit (6:6; 7:6); slaves of sin -- slaves of righteousness (6:17-22); in the flesh -- in Christ (7:5; 8:1). Bottorff, 428, properly concludes that these point to "the new situation that the believer enters which may be characterised as the new dominion. . . . The actualisation that the Holy Spirit accomplishes on the basis of Christ's resurrection is the ever-present breaking of the power of sin so that one is not lorded over by sin but stands under the domination of grace (cf. Rom. 6:14)."

³⁹As Nelson, 19, points out, "The condemnation of the 'body of sin' (Rom. 6:6) . . . took place in the crucifixion of Christ."

⁴⁰Regarding 6:18,22, see above, pp. 82-84, and especially n. 40, p. 82.

of the Christian, the "inner man" as seen by faith together with that which determines his will and governs his mind, is free from the domination of sin. Sin no longer rules over a Christian. As a result, his existence is no longer *determined by the flesh* (6:19; 7:5) and even "death no longer exercises lordship over him" (6:9). Believers have been set free from slavery to sin (6:17,18,20,22) and Paul assures them that the end of the Christian life is eternal life (6:22).

But this does not mean that believers cease to exist in the flesh, that sin no longer plays a role in the Christian's life, or that the prospect of death is eliminated.⁴¹ On the contrary, Paul acknowledges that Christians continue to live in "mortal bodies" (ἐν τῷ θνητῷ σώματι; 6:12) where sin continues to work. Paul speaks of "the weakness of the flesh" (τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκός; 6:19) and urges believers not to allow their members (τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν) to be used as slaves of sin. Rather, "present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification" (6:19).

God reckons the believer "to be justified from sin" by faith in Jesus Christ (6:7). Therefore, Paul urges the believer to consider himself (λογίζεσθε) dead to sin and to combat sin's attempt to reign once again (6:11-12).

⁴¹As Robert Banks, "Romans 7.25a: An Eschatological Thanksgiving?" Australian Biblical Review 26 (1979):40, states, "For although in this whole section, Romans 5-8, logically, chronologically and theologically absolute distinctions exist between sin and righteousness, law and grace, flesh and spirit, death and life, *empirically* sin, law, flesh and death still affect the Christian in his ongoing life."

Paul does not teach that conversion-initiation brings a complete ending of or release from the flesh, or an immediate and lasting victory over the power of sin (as might have been deduced from a shallow reading of 6:1-11 or 7:1-6). On the contrary, it is spiritual warfare which is the sign of life.⁴²

Paul recognizes that the believer is now engaged in a conflict against that which once possessed him completely. His battle is against sin, which no longer reigns, but which strives to do so by utilizing the fleshly "members" of the believer as instruments of wickedness (6:13). Paul warns Christians that if they yield themselves "as slaves" to the flesh, sin, and death, they are in the same condemned position before God as they were before "being justified freely by his grace" (3:24; 6:16). Therefore, he urges resistance and warfare against sin.

At the same time, Paul sharply contrasts the role sin and death used to play when they dominated and reigned with the current effect they are able to have upon the believer. Sin's role is limited. It no longer reigns. Yet, sin keeps working in the members of the believer in an effort to regain dominion. Death also once reigned totally and completely. Now death's power is limited to its ability to make this body a mortal one.

But what about the role the holy and Spiritual Law plays before and then during the Christian life (7:12,14)? This is the question which prompts Romans 7. The Law was

⁴²Dunn, Romans 1-8, 412; see also Barrett, 146.

given in order for people to recognize their sin (3:20; 7:7). In so doing, the Law brought God's wrath (4:15) and served to increase transgressions (5:20; 7:8,13). Sin was even able to deceive and kill through the Law (7:10-11). But then "you were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ" (7:4). As a result, the Law, like sin and death, can no longer exercise lordship over the Christian (7:1,6). But what role does God's Law now play? This question is the one which engages Paul in 7:14-25.⁴³

The "I" as a believer acknowledges the Law as Spiritual (7:14). He agrees with and even rejoices in the Law of God and identifies it as "the Law of my mind" (7:23; see also vv. 16,22,25). The will of the "I" is positively aligned with the Law and consistently strives to accomplish the good mandated by the Law and to refrain from the evil it forbids (7:15-21,25). For Paul, only the believer is free from the Law's lordship and enabled to serve it willingly (7:4,6).

However, the Law, together with sin and death, continues to have a negative effect upon the "I" because of his flesh (7:14,18). Even though the "I" wills to accomplish the good as directed by the Law, evil lies close at hand (7:21). In fact, sin still "dwells in me, . . . this is, in my flesh" (7:17-18,20). It is in this limited, "fleshly" sphere that

⁴³The purpose of his discussion there will be detailed in chapter five of this thesis. Here it is sufficient to note that just as sin and death are able, in a limited way, to continue to affect the fleshly life of those who have been justified by faith, so is the Law.

the "I" remains sold under sin (7:14).

In 7:14-25, then, Paul displays the Law's double effect upon the believer. Although it no longer reigns, the Law continues to identify the evil which the "I" does and hates, and to point out the good he fails to accomplish. The Law, like sin, continues to work "in my members" making this fleshly body a body of death (7:23-24). The "I" recognizes that he cannot eradicate sin's ability to work in his flesh. As a result, the Law of God remains a Law of sin which identifies, provokes, and announces God's condemnation on sin. So the "I" cries out for deliverance from "this body of death" (7:24) while knowing full-well whence this deliverance comes, "our Lord Jesus Christ" (7:25).

Understood in this way, the argument of Romans 7, including the portrayal of the "I" in verses 7-25, fits squarely within the scheme Paul has developed thus far in Romans 5-7.⁴⁴ Paul first points out what sin, death, and the Law used to accomplish before faith. Second, he describes how their dominion has ended and declares that they no longer rule. Third, Paul details the continued, but limited, negative effect of sin, death, and the Law upon the believer.

Chapter 8 continues, but also concludes, this discussion by pointing to the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit who directs

⁴⁴See Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 295-96. Nelson, 19, concludes, "In Romans 7:14-25 Paul's experience of inner conflict is a good illustration of the Christian's double situation due to his participation in two aeons."

the mind of the believer (8:5-6) and who battles together with the Christian against the inroads sin attempts to make into his life through the flesh (8:12-17). It is the Spirit who intercedes and pleads for the believer (8:25-26) and whose testimony guarantees that believers are truly heirs of God who can await with confidence "the glory to be revealed" to them (8:17-18).

Until then, Paul comforts believers with the assurance that both Jesus and his Spirit continue to intercede for them before the Father (8:26,34). Why is this intercession necessary? It is because the "sold under sin" flesh continues to wage war against, and at times even captivates, the believer whose "body is dead on account of sin" (8:10; 7:23). As in 7:14-25, the Spirit-renewed mind of the believer is set against the desires of the flesh (8:5-6). As in 7:14-25, the believer recognizes that his fleshly body is dead "because of sin" (8:10) and he groans inwardly while awaiting the redemption of his mortal body (8:23; compare 7:23-24). Since this is the case, Paul both announces and exhorts, "We are not debtors to the flesh to live according to the flesh" (8:12; as in 7:5).⁴⁵ At the same time, the Spirit-renewed believer is alive because of righteousness (8:10) and his mind is directed toward life and peace (8:6).

Although Paul does not use the same word for "mind"

⁴⁵For the distinction between *σάρξ* and *σῶμα*, see above, p. 186, n. 478; also below, n. 75, pp. 353-54.

in 8:6 (*φρόνημα*) as in 7:14-25 (*νοῦς*; vv. 21,23,25), the subject of his discussion is clearly the same. In both sections the "mind" is renewed by the Spirit and is determined to live according to God's will and the Spirit's leading.⁴⁶ In both instances the "inner man" is distraught by sin's presence in his flesh and his own existence in a mortal body (7:21,24; 8:10). He is crying out (7:24) and groaning inwardly (8:23) for the day of its redemption when all creation will be restored. It is only then that "the one who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive" (8:11). Until that day, the flesh no longer determines the existence of the believer. But it still proves to be an unavoidable obstacle because of sin's ability to work through it. For Paul, the solution to this dilemma is not the Law's command (7:14-8:3a), but the work of Jesus Christ and the presence of his Spirit (8:3b-39).

In view of these similarities, it is difficult to comprehend how such a deep wedge could have been driven between Romans 7:25 and 8:1. The difference between the two sections is not at all the spiritual condition of the subject. Rather,

⁴⁶Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 388, properly argues that only a Christian can envision serving God's Law as the "I" does in 7:14-25 and as Paul portrays the Christian doing in chapter 8. Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, tr. J. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 233, recognizes this as the fundamental difference between 7:7-11 and the verses to follow. See also Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 3 vols., *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar*, Band 6, eds. J. Blank, R. Schnackenburg, and U. Wilckens (Zürich: Benziger Verlag and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 2:85, n. 344.

in 7:14-25 the believer is viewed from the perspective of his struggle to live in accordance with the Law. In chapter 8 we see the same believer from the perspective of the assistance provided by the Holy Spirit who has already guaranteed the outcome of the believer's struggle in this world against sin and the flesh. C. E. B. Cranfield concludes,

It is possible to do justice to the text of Paul . . . only if we resolutely hold chapters 7 and 8 together, in spite of the obvious tension between them, and see in them not two successive stages but two different aspects, two contemporaneous realities, of the Christian life, both of which continue so long as the Christian is in the flesh.⁴⁷

Although they provide less material that is directly pertinent,⁴⁸ Romans 9-16 are by no means irrelevant to the topic under consideration here.⁴⁹ As Paul turns to address practical and ethical issues in chapters 12-13, his statements in chapters 5-8 clearly serve as the integral basis. Paul begins Romans 12 by urging Christians to yield their bodies to God (12:1; as in 6:19). They are only able to do so be-

⁴⁷Cranfield, 1:356.

⁴⁸A few points from the chapters which will not be discussed extensively may be noted. In 10:4 Paul asserts that "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one who believes" (10:4). In 14:9 Paul concludes that Christ has died and risen again in order that he, and not sin, death, or the Law, might exercise lordship (*κυριεύω*) over all and especially over those who belong to him. In 15:14 Paul reveals that his addressees are not borderline or "lapsing" believers. On the contrary, he writes, "And I have been persuaded, my brothers, even I myself, concerning you that you yourselves are indeed full of goodness, having been filled with all knowledge, and being able to admonish one another."

⁴⁹As Kümmel, Römer 7, 27, claims regarding chapters 12-16; see above, p. 213.

cause, like the "I" in Romans 7:14-25, they have been inwardly transformed by the renewal of their mind (τοῦ νοῦς; 12:2; also 7:21,23,25).⁵⁰ Even though sin is an ever present reality in their flesh which will repeatedly hinder them, Paul urges these Christians to live in accordance with God's good, holy, and acceptable will (12:2) as it is revealed to them in the Law (2:20; 7:12; 13:8-10).

Paul's exhortations throughout chapters 12-13 are prompted by his recognition that sin is still able to work in the fleshly members of these believers, even through the Law. So he urges, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh" (13:14). This verse makes the clearest application of the situation portrayed in Romans 7:14-25, and it is one made to Christians. Their flesh is "sold under sin" (7:14). As a result, they must give no forethought to its desires which are readily manipulated by sin and directed toward evil. They are to struggle against the sinful flesh as the "I" does in 7:14-25. But notice that Paul does not direct these Christians to their own "renewed minds" for a solution to this dilemma. Neither does he point them to the Law's command which they are striving to fulfill (13:8-10). Rather, they are to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (13:14). Why? Because while the Law does inform their will, it also continues to identify them as sinners in the flesh. Therefore Paul directs them to look

⁵⁰ See Dunn, Romans 1-8, 388.

in faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, to clothe themselves with his righteousness, and to rely upon the Spirit which he gives.

Within the context of the book of Romans, the "I" of 7:14-25 can be understood as depicting one valid aspect of the life of a believer who has been justified by faith and who still lives in this world in the flesh. While the "I" in 7:14-25 remains a sinner, the crucial difference between Paul's "blanket condemnation" of all people in 1:18-3:20 and the discussion in chapter 7 is the intervention of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (3:21-26), a death in which the "I" has participated by Baptism (6:3-6).⁵¹

In Paul's other letters he makes numerous statements about the Christian life. The vast number of references Paul makes to the believer's life renders a complete survey impossible. The purpose here is to conduct a brief sketch of Paul's view of the Christian life specifically with the issues surrounding the "I" of Romans 7:14-25 in view. This survey asks whether or not the statements of the "I" can be placed within the Christian life as Paul portrays it elsewhere.⁵²

Though some Pauline passages present a challenge to identifying the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 as a Christian, none

⁵¹Ibid., 394; see the more detailed conclusions below, pp. 339-42.

⁵²This, once again, is a unique approach which has been alluded to but not fully explored; see above n. 6, p. 303.

of them excludes it.⁵³ On the other hand, a number of passages support and confirm the conclusions made above. In Romans 7:14-25, Paul is utilizing warfare imagery to describe the on-going battle of the Christian life. This fits a *Christus Victor* motif which recognizes that,

In the Christ-event, the decisive battle was fought and the gifts of the age to come were bestowed. Therefore, the final victory is assured. But the enemy did not disappear immediately; there are still battles to be fought. Yet it is only a matter of time until the final *coup de grace*.⁵⁴

As a result, the passages most relevant to Paul's discussion in Romans 7:14-25 are those which utilize similar imagery

⁵³This "challenge" is often due to Paul's use of antinomous models to describe the believer's existence. The presence of these different models throughout the New Testament is detailed in an unpublished essay by James Voelz, "The Kingdom of God and Biblical Eschatology," obtained as a handout in EN-420 "Romans," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, Winter 1989-90. Voelz, *ibid.*, 4-6, identifies these three biblical motifs: 1) the "*Christus Victor* motif" which is prominent in the Synoptic Gospels and often utilizes battle imagery (as Rom. 7:14-25); 2) "the essential Pauline 'in Christ' (ἐν χριστῷ) viewpoint" (2 Cor. 1:20; 5:17); and 3) the "hidden reality" motif common in Johannine literature (note also 2 Cor. 5:7; Col. 3:4). The presence of these antinomous models in Paul's thought is also recognized by E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977) who distinguishes, 495, between Paul's use of "forensic" and "participatory" categories. He concludes, 502-8, that while the two may overlap, the latter contains "the real bite of his theology." The participatory model, for example, is utilized almost exclusively when Paul discusses ethical issues; see *ibid.*, 439-40. Identifying which of these different "categories" or "models" is being utilized by Paul in a particular section is very helpful for interpretation. One should resist the temptation to synthesize all of Paul's expressions by coalescing these various models. The tensions which exist between them should be allowed to stand.

⁵⁴Voelz, "The Kingdom of God and Biblical Eschatology," 4.

and/or the same motif.

In his letters, Paul's conception of the Christian life begins with the believer's stance *coram Deo*.⁵⁵ "For the one who commends himself, that one is not approved, but the one whom the Lord commends" (2 Cor. 10:18). A repeated emphasis is that it is God who has saved the believer through the Gospel Paul proclaims. This "good news" is God's redemption of the world through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁵⁶ The Gospel Paul preaches not only announces, but also delivers, the forgiveness of sins which is received by the believer wholly and only through faith.⁵⁷

The Christian's holiness or sanctification also comes from God and is based upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This was ingrained in Paul by Christ himself. In his defense before King Agrippa, Paul relates Jesus' commissioning words to him:

I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith

⁵⁵ Kümmel, *Das Bild des Menschen*, 179, states, "Thus Paul also, like Jesus, sees the person exclusively as a being standing over against God" ("Auch Paulus sieht also wie Jesus den Menschen ausschliesslich als Gott gegenüberstehendes Wesen"); see also 196-97. This is further indicated by Col. 1:22; and 1 Thess. 3:13 as cited below. The same applies to unbelievers as well.

⁵⁶ 1 Cor. 1:18,21; 15:2; 2 Cor. 4:6; 13:4; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:5,13; 2:5-9,13,19; Col. 1:12-13; 2:6,10-13; 3:1; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Tit. 3:4-5.

⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 4:7 asks, "What do you have that you did not receive?" See also Acts 16:31; 2 Cor. 9:14; Gal. 3:25

in me (Acts 26:17b-18).

So Paul announces, "God reconciled you in the body of [Jesus'] flesh through death to present you holy and without blemish and without accusation before him" (Col. 1:22; see also Eph. 5:25-27; Tit. 2:14). It is Jesus who strengthens the hearts of believers so that they will be "blameless in holiness before our God and Father" (1 Thess. 3:13). It is God's efficacious will which effects sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3). It is God who has called you "in holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7). This is Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians:

And may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit, soul and body be kept complete, blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23).

Paul even identifies Jesus Christ as our "righteousness, holiness (*ἀγίασμός*) and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). All of this shows that the holiness which Paul ascribes to the believer comes from outside of himself. It is not based upon his own holy conduct, but accomplished by God in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:11) and received by faith. The Christian is holy because he possesses the holiness of Christ, not because he lives a holy life in obedience to God's Law. This allows for the possibility that the believer whom Paul describes as holy can also be in the situation depicted in Romans 7:14-25.

Paul's understanding of the life which a Christian possesses is succinctly summed up in Ephesians 2. It was in Christ that God made us alive (2:5). "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not from yourselves,

[it is] the gift of God" (perfect passive periphrastic of σωζω; Eph. 2:8). The saving act accomplished in Christ comes to and remains with a believer by God's effective grace. This new life begins at the point of conversion, but Paul does not speak of the Gospel in terms of one shot of forgiveness.⁵⁸ The forgiveness promised in the Gospel and received by faith covers all of the believer's life, past, present, and future, so long as he remains in faith. Since our righteousness before God lies in Christ, Paul can conclude that even "if we are faithless, he [Christ Jesus] remains faithful; for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13). The believer receives all of this as the gift of God διὰ πίστεως. Paul expresses this vividly in his thanksgiving prayer for the Thessalonians,

But we ought to give thanks to God always concerning you, brothers having been loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation in [the] sanctification of [the] Spirit and by faith in the truth (2 Thess. 2:13).

This last passage reveals that the Holy Spirit has a decisive role in the saving and sanctifying work of God. Since no one can confess "Jesus is Lord" apart from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3), the Spirit alone enables one to receive the word of the Gospel with joy (1 Thess. 1:6). Paul tells the Corinthian Christians, "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

⁵⁸As indicated already in Rom. 3:24-25 (see above, pp. 325-26) and 8:26,34 (see pp. 332-34).

and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). To Titus he declares that God "saved us . . . by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:5). It is by the washing of Baptism that the Holy Spirit now dwells in the Christian whom Paul can call the very temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Gal. 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:14).⁵⁹ For Paul the Spirit is also the seal and solid guarantee of the believer's salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

The grace of God in Christ goes even further. God's strength also works to preserve, strengthen, and protect those in Christ. It gives those in Christ "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation" and enlightens their hearts (Eph. 1:17-18). "The same Spirit of faith" with which we believe (2 Cor. 4:13) teaches, guides, and directs the lives of those in whom the Spirit dwells (1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:16,18,25; 2 Tim. 1:7). God leads them to know the hope of their calling, the richness of their inheritance, and the incomparably great power he has exerted in Christ (Eph. 1:18-20a). Paul also prays that God would strengthen those in Christ by his power to grasp and to know the depth of Christ's love which even "surpasses knowledge" (Eph. 3:16-19). So then the "eternal encouragement and good hope" of believers comes from God who encourages their hearts and establishes them "in every good deed and word" (2 Thess. 2:16-17).

⁵⁹In 2 Cor. 13:5; Col. 1:27, Paul states that it is Christ who "dwells in you" and in Col. 3:16 he urges believers, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you."

Because of God's saving action in Christ and the sanctifying work of his Spirit, Paul prays that believers may be, and even speaks of them as, pure, blameless, and holy (Phil. 1:10; Col. 1:22; see also Phil. 2:14-16a; Col. 4:12; 1 Tim. 5:22). Since God has made them holy, when Paul turns to exhort Christians to live a holy life, he is in essence saying, "Be what you already are."⁶⁰ This is the motivation behind Paul's ethical directives to Christians. Their holiness is not based upon their own actions but upon God's. "Be what you already are" is a proper interpretation and application of the relationship between the indicative and the imperative which forms "the basic structure of Pauline ethics."⁶¹

⁶⁰This phrase is borrowed from Martin Scharlemann, "Exodus Ethics," Concordia Journal 2 (1976):169.

⁶¹This is the title of Dennison's article which gives a historical overview of the development of the relationship between the indicative and imperative moods in Pauline studies. Ridderbos, 253, defines the relationship as follows, "What is meant is that the new life in its moral manifestation is at one time proclaimed and posited as the fruit of the redemptive work of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit -- the indicative; elsewhere, however, it is put with no less force as a categorical demand -- the imperative."

Dennison, 57-58, points out that Paul Wernle, Der Christ und die Sünde bei Paulus (Freiburg i. B. und Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung von J. C. B. Mohr, 1897), first formulated this concept but saw the imperative as a contradiction since sin is no longer a factor in the Christian's life. The indicative/imperative relationship was interpreted as the basis for Pauline ethics by Rudolf Bultmann, "Das Problem der Ethik bei Paulus," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 23 (1924): 123-40; an English translation is available in The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, 7-32; see also *idem.*, Theology of the New Testament, 2:332-33; Victor Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul, especially 9, 207-27.

Paul uses the imperative to direct believers to be what God has already made them, that is, to exhibit the actual

Paul understands exhortations to be directly related to the basic soteriological conception of Christ's death and resurrection -- they cannot be divided.⁶²

It is evident that the Gospel underlies Paul's pleas for holy living when he writes,

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us purify ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1).

Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live in him, having been rooted and being built up in him, being established in the faith just as you were taught, increasing in thanksgiving (Col. 2:6-7).

This explains Paul's view of how sanctification exhibits itself in daily life. Both as it comes into and then flows from the lives of believers, it is God's doing. Paul is confident concerning the Philippians that God "who began a good work in you will carry it on toward completion until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). On this basis his pleas for holy living also look toward the future. He further exhorts them, "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is working in you both to will and to work in behalf of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). It is God's power which fulfills "every work of faith" in the believer (2 Thess. 1:11). So Paul also charges Timothy

state of their present existence by faith. The indicative expresses what believers are in reality, not merely "in principle" as suggested by Hermann Jacoby, Neutestamentliche Ethik (Königsberg i. Pr.: Verlag von Thomas und Oppermann, 1899), 316-17; cited from Dennison, 58, notes 11,13. Bornkamm, "Baptism and New Life in Paul (Romans 6)," 84, demonstrates that "all the imperatives of Paul have their basis in what has happened to us through Christ in baptism."

⁶²Dennison, 69.

to keep "this command without stain [or] reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6:14; also Phil. 1:10).

Since God has done and continues to do all of this, Paul can speak of those in Christ as lacking nothing. He tells the Corinthians,

You were enriched in every way in him, in every word and in all knowledge, just as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift (1 Cor. 1:5-7a).⁶³

In contrast to unbelievers, "the one who is Spiritual appraises all things" (1 Cor. 2:15).⁶⁴ Because they are the Lord's, believers are enabled to abound "in everything, [in] faith and speech and knowledge and all eagerness" (2 Cor. 8:7).

The manner in which Paul describes Christians, as seen above, has convinced many that the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 cannot be a Christian.⁶⁵ However, Paul nowhere asserts that the Christian only does good or that it is even possible for a believer to do so. Rather, his point in these passages is that all of the good which a Christian does springs from the

⁶³One can possibly recognize a sarcastic tone when Paul makes similar assertions in 1 Cor. 4:7-8. There he compares the Corinthians' standing with that of the apostles. However, nothing detracts from the genuineness of his statement here.

⁶⁴See D. W. B. Robinson, "St. Paul's Spiritual Man," The Reformed Theological Review 36 (1977):78-83, who concludes, 83, that in this passage "Paul's 'spiritual man' is one who, his own spirit being receptive to the Spirit of God, is guided and governed by the truths of divine revelation."

⁶⁵See above, pp. 46-48.

forgiveness, the holiness, and the hope which God has planted within him. That is, a believer has been transformed and enlightened by God so that he desires to do "every good deed and word" (Eph. 1:17-18; 2 Thess. 2:16-17). The picture Paul paints of the Christian is comparable to the manner in which he describes the will, the mind, and the inner man of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 who earnestly strives to do the good as laid down in God's Law ($\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ in 7:15,18,19; $\nu\omicron\theta\omicron\varsigma$ in vv. 23,25; $\tau\omicron\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\nu$ in v. 22).⁶⁶ The absence of a specific reference to the Holy Spirit in Romans 7:14-25 has also been pointed to as indicating that the "I" there cannot be a Christian.⁶⁷ Yet in 7:6 Paul speaks of believers as those who serve the Law "in [the] newness of the Spirit" and the "I" in verse 14 acknowledges that "the Law is $\pi\nu\epsilon\nu\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$." The "I" is able to appraise the Law as Spiritual, something which is impossible for unbelievers according to Paul (1 Cor. 2:15), and to serve it willingly.⁶⁸ In addition, when one considers the progression of the argument in Romans 5-8, the reason why Paul withholds a detailed treatment of the Holy Spirit's activity in the life of the believer for

⁶⁶But why does Paul present only those occasions in which the "I" fails to do what his will desires in Rom. 7:14-25? A recognition of Paul's purpose in Romans 7 explains this; see below, pp. 390-95,411-19.

⁶⁷See above, pp. 46-47.

⁶⁸See above, pp. 313-19.

chapter 8 also becomes apparent.⁶⁹

Another vital factor in Paul's teaching on the Holy Spirit was prominent in Romans 8. Not only does the Spirit seal and guarantee that we are now God's children (Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:5); the Spirit is also is "a downpayment" or "pledge" concerning what is to come (*ἀρραβών*; 2 Cor. 1:22 and 5:5).⁷⁰ The Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance as heirs which awaits us at the day of redemption when Christ returns (Gal. 4:7; Eph. 1:13; 5:18; Tit. 3:13).⁷¹

There is clearly, then, both a "now" and a "not yet" aspect to the present Christian life.⁷² For example, in Ephesians 1 Paul speaks of redemption in two ways. In verse

⁶⁹See above, pp. 326-35.

⁷⁰On this, see especially Geerhardus Vos, "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," in Biblical and Theological Studies (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 211-259, who contends, 241, "The present Spirit is an anticipation of the future Spirit."

⁷¹Similarly in Acts. 20:32, Paul announces that it is God and the Word of his grace "which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

⁷²For the key developments in this recognition, see E. Earle Ellis, Paul and His Recent Interpreters (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1961), 32-34. See also Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, tr. W. Montgomery (New York: Seabury Press, 1968); *idem.*, Paul and His Interpreters, tr. W. Montgomery, A Crossroad Book, (New York: Macmillan, 1950); C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom of God (London: Nisbet, 1950); and Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968); *idem.*, Salvation in History, tr. S. Sowers and the editorial staff of SCM Press (London: SCM Press, 1967).

Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 264-65, contends that the tension between the two "underlies the whole of Paul's soteriology."

7 he affirms that in Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (also Rom. 3:34; Col. 1:14). Yet in verse 14 the Holy Spirit "is a downpayment of our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession" (as in Rom. 8:23).⁷³ There is both a present life and a life to come (1 Tim. 4:8). Paul even points out that without the guaranteed promise to be fulfilled at Christ's return, believers are most pitied (1 Cor. 15:19), trapped in world that is passing away (1 Cor. 7:31), and, along with that world, destined for wrath (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). As a result, an element of eager anticipation permeates the Christian's life as we await Christ's return with great hope (Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:5; 1 Thess. 1:10; Tit. 1:2; 2:13). Is this not similar to the situation of the "distressed 'I'" in Romans 7:14-25 who acknowledges Christ as Lord but also cries out for a deliverance yet to come (vv. 24-25)?

In the midst of the "not yet," the Gospel gives this assurance: "God both raised the Lord and he will also raise us through his power" (1 Cor. 6:14). Though Christians are already alive before God by faith even while in this world, they await a resurrection with Christ in which they will share fully in his glory (1 Cor. 15:49-51; Col. 3:4; 2 Tim. 2:10-11). The "I" in Romans 7 similarly yearns for that day

⁷³Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 265, n. 41, points out that this is also the case in regard to justification (compare Rom. 5:1 with Gal. 5:5) and salvation (compare Rom. 5:9-10; 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:8-10 with 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 2:5,8).

(7:24) when "the surpassing riches of his grace" are revealed (Eph. 2:7). Then, Paul says, we will bear his likeness (1 Cor. 15:49), reign with him (2 Tim. 2:12), and receive the citizenship and crown of righteousness which are stored up for us in heaven (Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:8).

Until the day of Christ's return, Christians run as in a race (1 Cor. 9:24). Although their salvation and sanctification come totally from God and are not dependent upon the actions of their present Christian life, believers are depicted by Paul as ever-progressing (1 Tim. 4:15). Their faith is growing and their love increasing (2 Thess. 1:3). They are striving for unity, maturity, and "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13; also 2 Tim. 3:17). In short, they strive to discern "what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph. 5:10). Yet even this growth in the sanctified life is seen by Paul as the work of God. He consistently uses the passive voice to express what God is working in them. Those in the Spirit "are being transformed" (2 Cor. 3:18) and their "new self . . . is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the One who created it" (Col. 3:10).

The Gospel according to Paul, then, declares that God has won salvation for his elect in the blood of Jesus Christ and delivered it to them through the Gospel message. He has sanctified and sealed them with the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit God then enables believers to stand firm in faith and has guaranteed their inheritance in heaven. All this comes

from God and is received through faith. The life of the believer is, by God's power, to be one of progressive striving to live in accordance with God's holy will. But does this exclude the possibility that the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 is a Christian? In a number of ways Paul indicates that this is not the case.

Paul repeatedly emphasizes that no one, including believers, can rely on themselves for their holiness before God precisely because he understands that Christians are not yet perfect. In writing to the Corinthian congregation, Paul contends that their knowledge is not yet what it ought to be (1 Cor. 8:2). They need to excel further in spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:12). They are thinking as infants (1 Cor. 14:20; also 3:1-3). Yet these descriptions cannot be limited merely to the "weak" believers in Corinth. Paul also is waiting for Christ to be formed in the Galatian Christians (Gal. 4:19). All believers need "admonishing" and "teaching" (Col. 1:28). The Thessalonians' faith is not yet complete (1 Thess. 3:10) and the Philippians continue to have differences in their thinking (Phil. 3:15). So in Ephesians Paul looks ahead to the day when

we will no longer be infants, being driven by the waves and carried around by every wind of teaching in the fraud of men, in every trickery to the scheming of deceit; but speaking the truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him who is the Head, Christ (Eph. 4:14-15).

Paul speaks of this continuing progress in the sanctified life in the following manner: "But if our outer man is decay-

ing, the inner [man] is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). This is the same condition as the "inner man" of Romans 7 who joyfully agrees with God's Law and strives to live according to it (v. 22).

The fact that Paul is aware that Christians have not yet reached complete maturity is also evidenced by his many prayers that God would work to accomplish this in them (1 Thess. 3:10). He asks God to give believers "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1:17; also Col. 1:9). He prays that God would further enlighten their hearts to know the hope to which God has called them (Eph. 1:18-19). Paul pleads that God would grant them "to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16). This phrase, which again recalls the description of the "I" in Romans 7:22, indicates that it is not just the outer fleshly existence of believers which is not yet perfect or mature. So Paul prays that the Spirit's power would enable believers to grasp the love of Christ and to be filled with God's fullness (Eph. 3:17-19). To the Colossians he reveals,

From the day we heard, we have not stopped praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding and that you may live worthy of the Lord in every pleasing thing, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened in all power according to the might of his glory into all endurance and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father who qualified you for a share of the inheritance of the saints (Col. 1:9-12a).

It was God who has already qualified the Colossians for their

heavenly inheritance. On this basis, the purpose of Paul's instruction and admonition is "so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ" (Col. 1:28). He strives for this by asking God to encourage them, to unite them in love, and to make their understanding of the mystery revealed in Christ more complete (Col. 2:2-3).

Why are believers not yet complete or mature in their thinking and living? First of all, it is because they continue to live in this present evil age (Gal. 1:4; Phil. 2:15). Although Paul urges Christians to separate themselves from the uncleanness of this world (2 Cor. 6:17-18), he does not command them to attempt to withdraw from the world (1 Cor. 5:9-11). Instead, the believer is to remain in the earthly situation he was in when God called him (1 Cor. 7:17,20). As long as the Christian is in the world, Paul sees him engaged in a constant, life-long struggle "against the powers of this dark world" (Eph. 6:12).⁷⁴ Paul contends not only that the world entices the believer to become preoccupied with its affairs (1 Cor. 7:33), but also that in this world "all those who are determining to live godly [lives] in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12; also 2 Thess. 3:3). Yet he views the world's opposition, when exhibited as persecution of believers, as an opportunity for them to share in the sufferings of Christ. In addition, Paul recognizes that

⁷⁴Here Paul emphasizes that our struggle is not merely "against flesh and blood."

God can use this to produce patient endurance in the believer (2 Cor. 1:5-7; compare Rom. 5:3-5). Finally, these persecutions and trials also comfort the believer by providing

evidence of the righteous judgment of God so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, in behalf of which you are indeed suffering (2 Thess. 1:5; see v. 4).

For Paul it is ultimately a privilege to suffer such "momentary, light affliction" in this world for the sake of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 1:29).

In addition to looking at the world around him to discern what is battling against the will of God, the Christian must also look at himself. There he can even more clearly see what prohibits him from reaching maturity, perfection, or completeness in this life. This is the area in which Paul speaks of Christians in a manner that most directly parallels his description of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25. As in Romans 5-8, Paul declares that the believer's existence is no longer enslaved and dominated by the flesh. Paul tells Christians that in Christ "you were also circumcised with a circumcision not made by human hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11; see also Gal. 5:24). Yet this does not tell the whole story. The believer continues to live in the flesh (2 Cor. 10:3; Philemon 16; see also Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:22) and must struggle against it.⁷⁵ Why is this so?

⁷⁵Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 266-67, contends that *σάρξ* is rarely, if ever, used by Paul "in a merely physical, non-pejorative sense. . . . That is to say,

First, Paul portrays the fleshly body as being weak and hindering even those in whom the Spirit dwells from attaining the fullness of life with God. He speaks of this lowly body (Phil. 3:21) as a jar of clay in which we are afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down (2 Cor. 4:7-11). He portrays this earthly body as a tent in which "we groan, while being burdened" (2 Cor. 5:4; also vv. 1-3).

Second, the fleshly body in which the believer lives is mortal (*ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκί*; 2 Cor. 4:11; compare 5:4; Rom. 6:12). The believer's body remains a perishable one, "sown in dishonor, . . . sown in weakness, . . . sown a natural body" (*σῶμα ψυχικόν*; 1 Cor. 15:42-44). This is the same manner in which the "I" views his "body of death" in Romans 7:24. For Paul, the believer's body will remain so until "the last trumpet" (1 Cor. 15:52). Then, at the resurrection of the dead, the fleshly body will be changed by Jesus Christ himself (1 Cor. 15:51-54). Then and only then will Christ clothe this body and make it an imperishable, immortal, spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 53-54). It is only on that day, when "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54; citing Is.

even when *sárx* is used in a physical sense, there is almost always a moral overtone present." This cannot be the case, however, when Paul uses *σάρξ* of Jesus' existence in the flesh (for example, Rom. 1:3; 2 Cor. 5:16; 1 Tim. 3:16). This shows that the problem with man is not his creatureliness, but his sinfulness. Yet when Paul uses *σάρξ* of men in general, Dunn's appraisal is closer to the truth than those, such as Kümmel, Das Bild des Menschen, 180, who neatly divide between *σάρξ* when used in a purely neutral manner to denote natural man in his corporeality and when *σάρξ* is used to speak of man as a sinner.

25:8), that what is mortal in the flesh will be "swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. 5:4). This is the day for which the "I" yearns in Romans 7:24. σάρξ, then, is often used by Paul even of Christians to denote the "mortal body, [the] body dominated by weakness and corruptibility."⁷⁶

In the third place, Paul pictures the σάρξ as evil and actively engaged in a struggle against that which the Spirit of God wills in the believer. The desires of the sinful flesh provide a constant foe to be battled. For example, Paul reminds Christians that they were taught to put off "the old man (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον) which is being corrupted according to the desires of deceit" (κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης; Eph. 4:22; compare Rom. 6:6). He implores the Colossians,

Put to death, therefore, the members (τὰ μέλη) which are upon the earth, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire (ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν) and greed, which is idolatry (Col. 3:5; for τὰ μέλη, compare Rom. 7:23; 6:13).

How is the believer to fight against the desires of the flesh? Paul points out that ascetic regulations and angel worship are of no value against the "indulgence of the flesh" (πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός; Col. 2:23). Rather, as is revealed in the transition from Romans 7 to Romans 8, Paul directs the Galatians to make use of the power of the Spirit within them.

For you were called for freedom, brothers; only [do] not [use] freedom for an opportunity (ἀφορμὴν) in the flesh

⁷⁶Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 266.

. . . . But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not complete the desire of the flesh (*ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκός*). For the flesh desires [what is] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. For these are opposing one another, with the result that you do not do the things which you will (*θέλητε*; Gal. 5:13,16-17).⁷⁷

These passages reveal that the desires of the flesh, even in the Christian, are always directed toward evil in opposition to the believer's *θέλω* which is led by God's Spirit. For Paul, Christians are engaged in a constant struggle against the flesh until their death or the resurrection of the dead at Christ's return (1 Cor. 15:54; 2 Cor. 5:4). As long as a believer remains in the natural, mortal, and perishable body (1 Cor. 15:42-44), the flesh and its desires will always direct him toward evil and strive to keep him from doing the good which he wills (Gal. 5:17). Although the sinful flesh cannot be completely defeated, it must be constantly opposed.

Although his purpose in the various passages we have examined may vary, the descriptions Paul makes of the Christian's life in the flesh are certainly comparable to the situation of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25.⁷⁸ This brings us close to a determination of the point Paul is making in Romans 7. Since the sinful flesh is able to make the believer do

⁷⁷Fung, 37, contends that this section of Galatians "irresistibly recalls that of Romans 7."

⁷⁸For example, Kümmel, *Römer 7*, 105-6, argues that Gal. 5:17 is not a legitimate parallel to Romans 7:14-25; see above, pp. 47-48. Paul's purpose may not be the same in both sections, so Kümmel is in a sense correct. Nevertheless, the two passages certainly illuminate each other, particularly in regard to the role of the flesh and its implications for Christian living.

what is contrary to his will (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:15-16,19,21), Paul excludes the possibility that even the Christian might base any assurance before God on his own flesh. Indeed, Paul defines those who possess a circumcision which is valid before God as

The ones who are worshipping by the Spirit of God and who are boasting in Christ Jesus and who have not put confidence in the flesh (Phil 3:3).

According to Paul the disparity between will and action, which is so characteristic of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25, is completely absent in unbelievers. Their mind or will and their flesh are united in serving themselves and doing evil.⁷⁹ However, a conflict between the Spirit-renewed mind and the sinful flesh is an unavoidable one for believers. The mark of the Christian is the indwelling and renewal of the Holy Spirit⁸⁰ who continually renews and works within the will or inner man of the believer to battle what previously reigned (Rom. 7:16,22; 2 Cor. 10:4; Gal. 5:17). This struggle is, in fact, a sign of the Spirit's presence and of the life which the Spirit brings as Paul makes clear in Romans 8.

Spiritual conflict is the sign of life -- a sign that the Spirit is having his say in the shaping of character. Since life now must be life in this body of flesh, the Spirit can be present only as paradox and conflict.⁸¹

⁷⁹See above, pp. 305-9,313-24.

⁸⁰As recognized by Kümmel, Römer 7, 104.

⁸¹Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 272; he concludes, "Consequently it is this paradox and conflict which is the mark of healthy religious experience - not its absence." See also Cranfield, 1:342,359.

In a general way, then, Paul urges Christians who are engaged in this battle to be what God has already made them. The basis of Paul's exhortations to Christians is God's saving and sanctifying action. His use of

the imperative expresses the total redemption of the believer because it is first grounded in the indicative and, secondly, through the Spirit of God the believer is obedient by rebelling against sin.⁸²

God has made the believer pure and holy in Christ. So Paul says to Timothy, "Keep yourself pure from sin" (1 Tim. 5:22). In Ephesians 5:8 Paul also makes this evident: "For you were formerly darkness, but now [you are] light in the Lord. Live as children of light." And again in writing to Titus,

For the grace of God appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires (*κοσμικῶς ἐπιθυμίας*) [and] to live sensibly and righteously and godly in the present age (Tit. 2:11-12).

Although it is not in any way a part of it, the believer's determined desire and ability to strive to live a godly life flow from what God has done for him in Jesus Christ. Christ "died for all, in order that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died and was raised in their behalf" (2 Cor. 5:15).

Paul then holds up the goal that the conduct of believers be worthy of the Lord Jesus and of the God who has called

⁸²Dennison, 73; he concludes, ". . . in the process of sanctification which reflects its definitive starting point." However, "the total redemption of the believer" certainly reflects much more than the "starting point" in a believer's life for Paul. While there is to be progress in sanctified living, Christians do not become holy by any "process".

them (Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12). The method to accomplish this is to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:18) whose directive is this:

Seek the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things above, not upon the things of the earth (Col. 3:1-2).

The believer also joins Timothy in fighting "the good fight of faith" by following the instruction of God's prophetic Word (1 Tim. 6:12; see also 1:18).

The ability to do "the will of God from the soul" (ἐκ ψυχῆς; Eph. 6:6)⁸³ comes only through the gift of the Spirit by whom Paul encourages Christians to

be made new in the Spirit of your mind (τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοός); and to put on the new man, the one created in accordance with God in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Eph. 4:23-24).

So it is that the will, mind, and inner man of the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 desire to live in accordance with the Spirit-filled Law as it directs him away from evil and toward what is "holy, just, and good" (7:12,14).

Paul is clearly cognizant of the enduring battle of the Christian life. In this struggle the desires of the flesh are always directed toward evil and against the good. The sinful nature continues to inhere in the flesh. It is unreformable and, in fact, "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). But the Spirit has renewed the mind of the believer who now strives to do "the will of God from the soul" (Eph. 6:6;

⁸³This is something only the believer can do. Thus the "I" of Romans 7:14-25, who wills the good, must be a Christian.

Rom. 7:18,19,21) and who fights against these fleshly desires. Paul, therefore, acknowledges that moral perfection is not the ultimate goal of the Christian life, nor is it attainable in this world.⁸⁴ But does he envision that believers will repeatedly stumble by falling into sin and failing to do good as they should? Will they continually fall short in their efforts to accomplish the good laid down in God's Law and to abstain from the evil it forbids? In other words, can the results of the believer's desire to live according to God's will be what is portrayed in Romans 7:14-25?

Although the believer does not always fail,⁸⁵ in a number of passages Paul recognizes that sin is still active among believers in the church and at times even gains the upper hand in their lives. This is especially evident in the Corinthian letters. It is not, however, a scenario exclusive to them (see Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). For example, in Galatians Paul discusses the implications of the following:

But if seeking to be justified in Christ, even we ourselves are found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? May it never be! (2:17).⁸⁶

He later warns them, "But if you keep on biting and devouring

⁸⁴This is recognized by Kümmel, Römer 7, 101-2.

⁸⁵See above, pp. 153-54,165. A determination of the reason why Paul only reveals those instances in which the "I" of Romans 7:14-25 does that which is contrary to his will be discussed below; see pp. 390-95,411-19.

⁸⁶A variety of interpretations of this verse have been made. For an overview, see Jan Lambrecht, "The Line of Thought in Gal. 2. 14b-21, New Testament Studies 24 (1977):484-95.

one another, watch out lest you be consumed by one another" (5:15; see also 6:1). Paul inquires of the Colossians, "Since you died with Christ from the elemental principles of this world, why, as if living in the world, do you submit yourselves [to them]?" (2:20). Among the Thessalonian believers he hears of some who are idle busybodies (2 Thess. 3:11).

In his first letter to Corinth, Paul openly and extensively deals with the presence of sin within the congregation. Yet Paul does not generally question the faith of these believers.⁸⁷ On the contrary, he exalts and praises it (1 Cor. 1:2-9). But concerning their instruction in the faith and their living it out in daily life he must add,

And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as spiritual but as worldly, as infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able [to receive it]. But you are still now not able. For you are still fleshly (*σαρκικοί*). For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not fleshly and living according to [the ways of] man? (1 Cor. 3:1-3).⁸⁸

Paul rebukes them for their quarrels (1 Cor. 1:11) and their tolerance of immorality and other vices within the congregation (5:1-2,9-11). He denounces the presence of legal disputes among them which are being taken before civil judges (6:1-7), and their cheating and doing wrong (6:8). He condemns

⁸⁷The only exception is the immoral and unrepentant man who should be "delivered over" to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5). In 5:13 Paul applies Deut. 13:5 to this "so-called" brother in commanding, "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."

⁸⁸According to Murray, 1:260, this passage proves that "*ἐγὼ σαρκινός*" in Rom. 7:14 can be a description of the Christian.

their conduct in meeting together to share the Lord's Supper (11:17-34) and the teaching of those among them who deny the resurrection of the dead (15:12). In a sense Paul writes to shame them: "Come to your senses righteously and stop sinning; for certain ones have ignorance of God, I say [this] to your shame" (15:34; also 6:5). Yet he also states, "I am not writing these things to shame you, but to warn you, as dear children" (4:14).

In 2 Corinthians, these believers have turned away from some of their gross failings (2:5-17; 7). Yet Paul is still aware that they might be deceived and led astray from pure and sincere devotion to Christ (11:3). He writes,

For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish . . . [there may be] strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbance (12:20b).

However, the following verse reveals the key reason why Paul is distraught. He adds,

I am afraid that when I come again . . . I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensual living which they have practiced (12:21).

Paul will not spare those who have not repented (13:2).

Conclusion

Because of the believer's presence in this world and due to the sinful nature of his own flesh, Paul is aware that continued sin is an inescapable fact of Christian life and that sin may even rear its head publicly within the Christian congregation. Paul's view of the Christian life allows

Romans 7:14-25 to be understood as a presentation of the continued, but embattled, influence of the sinful flesh in the Christian's life.⁸⁹ A disparity between will and action is present in a person "not as a result of creation (or the fall), but primarily as the result of redemption."⁹⁰ So the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 can only be representing the Spirit-renewed mind or will of a believer who strives, in accordance with God's Law, to refrain from evil and to do good.

The previous chapter of this thesis concluded that the referent of the "I" in Romans 7:7-25 is Paul. On the basis of the content of the other references Paul makes to his pre-Christian life, it was determined that verses 7-11 recount the events of his life prior to his conversion from the perspective he gained after his encounter on the Damascus road. At the same time, the content of those passages indicates that the "I" in verses 14-25 is not Paul's description of himself prior to his conversion. This chapter agrees with that conclusion. The manner in which Paul portrays the "I" in Romans 7:14-25 is incompatible with the characterization he makes of unbelievers in Romans and throughout his letters. On the basis of Pauline theology as a whole, it is impossible to believe that he would attribute to any unbeliever, including

⁸⁹Why Paul only portrays those instances in which the "I" fails to accomplish good and to refrain from evil is due to his purpose in those verses and will be discussed in the chapter to follow; see below, pp. 390-95,411-19.

⁹⁰Dunn, Romans 1-8, 394.

himself, the conflict present within, and recognized by, the "I" in these verses.

An examination of the sense of those passages in which Paul speaks about his own life as a Christian pointed toward, but did not decisively prove, the conclusion that Romans 7:14-25 describes an aspect of his own Christian life. This prompted a more general analysis of Paul's view of believers. Does Romans 7:14-25 fit within that picture? When one considers Paul's view of the Christian life in this world as he expresses it elsewhere, the situation depicted in Romans 7:14-25 can be understood as existing within it. Those objections which have arisen against a Christian interpretation and have consistently been regarded as insurmountable can, in fact, be resolved. The statements of the "I," therefore, are to be understood as expressing Paul's present Christian existence, "not all of it, but just that part of it which is germane to the subject at hand."⁹¹

Finally, what is "the subject at hand"? What is Paul attempting to accomplish in Romans 7? What prompts him to characterize his own life before and then after conversion the way he does in verses 7-25? The remainder of this thesis will evaluate Paul's purpose in Romans 7.

⁹¹Packer, 626; he concludes that "the subject at hand" is "the function of the law in giving knowledge of sin." This is essentially correct but does not fully assess Paul's purpose in pointing this out. Barrett, 153, similarly recognizes that 7:14-25 "does not tell the whole story of the Christian life."

CHAPTER V

PAUL'S PURPOSE IN ROMANS 7

Pragmatic Issues

The second chapter of this thesis discussed the semantic content of what Paul writes in Romans 7. On the basis of a comparison of that content with what Paul says about himself elsewhere (chapter three) and with what he says about believers and unbelievers in general (chapter four), the referent of the "I" in verses 7-25 has been identified. That is to say, it has been determined who Paul is talking about through his use of the first person singular. While verses 7-11 depict his pre-Christian experience with the Law, the "I" in verses 14-25 represents one aspect of his Christian life.

With the questions about the referent of the "I" settled, this chapter moves on to consider how the content of those verses is intended to function. In so doing, it engages the "pragmatic" issues involved in Romans 7.¹ Paul is talking

¹See the discussion above, pp. 219-21; Wolfgang Schenk, Die Philipperbriefe des Paulus (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1984), 19, offers this definition: "Pragmatics describes the relationship between the signs and the people as users of signs. Here the question is addressed: What is to be accomplished with what is said? What is intended?" ("Pragmatik beschreibt die Relation zwischen den Zeichen und den Menschen also Zeichenbenutzern: R(Z,M). Hier wird auf die Frage geantwortet: Was sollte mit dem Gesagten erreicht werden? Was ist das Intendierte?").

about himself in verses 7-25, but Paul's interest is not *just* to tell us about himself and his own experience. Paul is doing that, but he does so with a specific purpose in mind. What, then, do the statements in these verses "count as"? How does Paul intend his statements of and about the "I" to function? What point does he convey by making reference to himself? Why does Paul use the first person singular so extensively in Romans 7? This chapter seeks to determine the function and purpose of the statements which Paul makes about himself in Romans 7.

The very fact that these questions are raised displays a recognition of the phenomenon that the same linguistic form, in this case the first person singular, is both able and intended to perform a variety of different functions in a variety of different settings.² It has been demonstrated

²For example, James Voelz, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Where Are We Now? Where Are We Going?," in Light for Our World, ed. J. Klotz (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1989), 239-40, points out, "Thus, the question 'You are going to do that again, aren't you?', given a certain setting, may 'count as' a statement expressing amazement, a question eliciting information, a musing or thinking out loud, a rebuke, and more." See also Kevin Vanhoozer, "The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture's Diverse Literary Forms," chap. two in Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon, eds. D. Carson and J Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1986), 85-104.

The opposite, of course, is also true. James Voelz, "Some Things Old, Some Things New: A Response to Wolfgang Schenk, Die Philipperbriefe des Paulus," Semeia 48 (1989): Reader Perspectives on the New Testament, 192, points out that "quite different forms may express quite the same function"; citing Anthony Thiselton, "Semantics and New Testament Interpretation," chap. four in New Testament Interpretations, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1977), 77.

that in the vast majority of cases in which Paul uses the first person singular, he is revealing some facts or information about himself.³ But, at the same time, he intends these personal statements to have a given effect. They are to function or "count as" something more.⁴

A number of passages in which Paul utilizes the first person singular and explicitly states his purpose in the immediate context illustrate this pragmatic aspect. For a variety of reasons, Paul regularly intends the references he makes to himself to function as an example or model. In chapter three of this thesis, 1 Timothy 1:12-16 was discussed.⁵ There Paul recounts how he was shown mercy by God (vv. 12-15). But he further contends that his own experience is to serve as an example (*πρὸς ὑποτύπωσιν*) of God's patience for

³ See above, pp. 241-54.

⁴ Vanhoozer, 89, stresses that proper interpretation "involves understanding not merely the meaning of the sentence but the force with which that meaning is to be taken." See also Thiselton, 76-78 and 95-98. In the latter section Thiselton discusses "transformational grammar" on the basis of the work of Noam Chomsky, Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (Cambridge, MA: 1965). Thiselton, 97, defines transformational grammar as an aspect of interpretation which "often seeks to make explicit elements of meaning which are implied, but not expressed, in a sentence"; see also Voelz, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Where are We Now? Where are We Going?," 240-44. This is the task being engaged in this section of this thesis. However, a determination of the intended function of a given text is by no means arbitrary. As Voelz, "Some Things Old, Some Things New," 162, points out, "The function of words and other textual units is signalled (one might add: particularly when they are special) for the reader (in a text in writing, in spoken discourse by extra-linguistic elements)."

⁵ See above, pp. 294, 297.

the comfort and assurance of all other believers (v. 16).

Philippians 3 has been a significant chapter throughout this thesis.⁶ In verses 1-14 Paul refers to himself in the first person singular again and again. He gives an appraisal of his own flesh (vv. 3b-6), of the impact which the righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ has on him (vv. 7-11), and of his outlook on life as a believer (vv. 12-14) How does Paul intend these statements to function? At the end of the section he tells the Philippians, "Therefore as many as are mature, let us think this way" (3:15; see also v. 17). The "I" in these verses is intended to serve as a pattern for the Philippian believers, as they, too, strive for maturity in the faith.

1 Corinthians 11:1 reveals that Paul's statements in the preceding verses (10:29-33) are by no means rhetorical in the manner Werner Kümmel contends.⁷ Rather, they reflect Paul's own conclusions regarding a topic which has engaged his attention since chapter 8, the eating of meat offered to idols. After stating his own convictions in the concluding verses of chapter 10, Paul indicates the reason why he does

⁶ See above, pp. 36, 38-40, 262-63, 270-71, 285.

⁷ Paul is not to be excluded as the referent of the first person singular as Werner Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929); reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 121, 122, contends by his rhetorical interpretation of this passage. [Hereafter, Römer 7.] On the contrary, the context and especially 11:1 demand that the "I" be Paul. See above, pp. 248-49.

so in 11:1.⁸ He exhorts, "Be imitators of me just as I also [am] of Christ." Paul's own resolution of the issue is to function as a model for the Corinthians to imitate.

In Acts 20 Paul utilizes the first person singular in order to describe the blameless manner in which he has carried out his own ministry (vv. 18-27,33-35). He then explicitly tells the presbyters (πρεσβυτέρους; v. 17) or overseers (ἐπισκόπους; v. 28) from Ephesus that his conduct is to be a pattern for them (vv. 28-32,35).

In other passages Paul explicitly reveals that he is using the first person singular in order to perform functions other than that of providing a model or example. For instance, in the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 9, Paul is talking about his freedom, his apostolic calling, and his relationship with the Corinthians (vv. 1-2). But what are these assertions intended to "count as" in this context? In verse 3 Paul reveals his purpose: "This is my defense (ἀπολογία) to those who are accusing me."

The first two verses of Colossians 2 offer another example. In verse one Paul refers to the great struggles (ἡλικὸν ἀγῶνα) he is enduring on behalf of believers. Why does he mention them here? What effect does he intend for his statement to have? Paul tells his addressees in verse two. It is "in order that your hearts might be encouraged."

⁸Unfortunately, the chapter division between 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 clouds the close relationship between the first verse of chapter eleven and what precedes.

In 1 Timothy 2:5-7 Paul recounts the Gospel message and declares that he was appointed an apostle and "a teacher (*διδάσκαλος*) of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (v. 7). The instructions he gives and expects to be obeyed in the verses which follow (vv. 8-14) are clearly based upon this authoritative appointment (*οὖν*; v. 8).

Finally, Paul's speaks of his own imminent death in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. Since he has "kept the faith" (v. 7), Paul knows that "the crown of righteousness" awaits him in heaven (v. 8). Yet Paul affirms his own certainty regarding this in order to declare that it is the certain outcome for "all those who have loved [the Lord's] appearing" (v. 8).

In the passages cited above, Paul explicitly tells his readers how he intends for his statements about himself to function. However, in the majority of instances in which Paul makes reference to himself, he does not specifically indicate the effect which he intends his "I" statement to have. Romans 7:7-25 belongs in this group. Can Paul's intention here be determined? What effect(s) are those verses supposed to have?

In most of the cases in which Paul does not explicitly state his intention, his "implied" purpose can be quite readily understood. The content and context of Paul's statement usually enable the reader to perceive how his reference to himself is intended to function. At times this is virtually

an explicit part of the meaning of the text itself.⁹ In other passages it is less directly related to meaning and must be discerned to a greater degree from the context. An examination of the pragmatic aspect involved in a number of passages where Paul refers to himself but does not specifically reveal his intention will help to answer the questions surrounding the purpose and function of the "I" in Romans 7.

Acts 23:6 provides a good example of an instance in which Paul speaks of himself and intends for his statement to perform a specific function without making it explicit. This is a particularly helpful example because the account in Acts proceeds to tell us the immediate reaction to Paul's "I" statement. In his defense before the Sanhedrin, Paul, knowing that the Jewish council was comprised of both Sadducees and Pharisees (v. 6a), declares, "Men, brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees, I am being judged concerning [the] hope and resurrection of the dead" (v. 6b). While this statement might seem somewhat innocuous in and of itself, Luke informs us of the sharp division between the Pharisees and the Sadducees on the question of the resurrection (v. 8). Because Paul brings up the contested issue after aligning himself with one party in the dispute, he, in all probability, intends for his statement to cause some sort of disruption. In fact,

⁹This is to be expected since, as Vanhoozer, 89, affirms, "What one *intends* . . . is not just randomly related to what the sentence *means*. . . . The speaker intends his hearer to recognize his intention *by virtue* of his sentence meaning." See also above, n. 4, p. 367.

Paul's reference to himself leads to a near riot and the cessation of his trial before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:7-10).

In dealing with Romans 7, as well as with most of Paul's references to himself throughout his letters, we do not have a historical account of the effect which his statements about himself had. At times this makes it quite difficult to determine Paul's unstated intention. His purpose in referring to himself remains somewhat ambiguous (for example, 1 Cor. 4:3-4). In some passages, this is because Paul intends his statements to perform multiple functions (1 Cor. 4:18-21; 2 Cor. 10:8).¹⁰ Elsewhere it is due to the limited amount of information we have about the relationship between Paul and his addressees. In these cases, it can be assumed that the original recipients were more accurately and immediately able to determine Paul's intention. Their personal relationship with Paul, or at least their acquaintance with others who knew him and his reputation,¹¹ would have made his purpose more readily apparent to them than it is to us today. But, aside from these instances, it is generally possible to discern Paul's purpose even when he does not explicitly reveal his intention(s). The function he wishes to perform by referring to himself is indicated by the content of the passage, by

¹⁰See especially the parenthetical note below, p. 373.

¹¹This is the case in the letter to the Romans. While Paul has not yet visited Rome (Rom. 1:11-13; 15:22-25), chapter 16 makes it clear that he is personally acquainted with a substantial number of the Christians residing there and that his reputation is well known and regarded.

its context, and by what we do know of Paul's relationship with the addressees.

What, then, are some of the ways in which Paul intends his statements about himself to function? What are they supposed to "count as"? The results of an examination of a majority of the passages in which Paul makes reference to himself are offered below. A few preliminary points should be made. First, some of the following decisions are admittedly open to question; others involve disputed matters of interpretation. In addition, it seems that Paul often has more than one purpose in mind or, more likely, he intends one effect to move his readers toward another. (This is indicated below by a parenthetical note to the letter of the other category or categories to which the statement may also be directed.) As was illustrated above, this is particularly the case when Paul uses himself as a model or example.¹² As a result, those instances have already been separated into categories which identify the reason why Paul utilizes himself as an example. Paul's intended function or purpose in referring to himself in the cited passages is to:

- A. Explain/give information,¹³ particularly about
 - 1. His apostleship and conduct: Acts 20:18-27, 33-35(E); 22:3-21(C); 24:10-21(C); Rom. 1:13-17; 15:22-29(M); 1 Cor. 3:10; 9:15-23; 11:34; 15:8-

¹²See the passages discussed on pp. 367-69.

¹³This category is an aspect involved in many of the others since Paul's words in reference to himself nearly always convey some information intended to enlighten his readers; see, for example, Eph. 5:32.

- 11(C); 16:5-8; 2 Cor. 1:17-24(C); 2:12-13; Gal. 1:18-2:14(C); Col. 1:24-29; 2 Tim. 2:11-12; Tit. 1:3; 3:12-13.
2. His own opinion on an issue: 1 Cor. 7:10,12,28,40; 2 Cor. 8:8,10(M).
 3. The Christian life: 1 Cor. 9:26-27(D); 10:29-33(E); Phil. 1:18b-26(D); 3:12-14; 4:11-13(E); 2 Tim. 3:10-12(K); 2 Tim. 4:6-8(D),16-18(D).
- B. Testify to the Gospel's power in his own life in order to proclaim its message: Acts 26:12-23(C); Rom. 8:18,39; 1 Cor. 15:8-10; Gal. 1:13-16(C); 2:18-21; 6:14 (D); Phil. 3:7-11; 1 Tim. 1:12-16; 2 Tim. 1:12.
- C. Defend
1. His apostleship: Acts. 26:4-23(B); 1 Cor. 4:3-5(?); 9:1-6(L); 2 Cor. 1:17-24(A); 10:1-2,8; 11:1-33(L); 12:11-18(L); Gal. 6:17; Eph. 3:2-4.
 2. The Gospel he preaches: Acts 22:3-21; 24:14-16; 26:22-23; 28:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:1-3,8-11(L); Gal. 1:10,11-24; 2:7-10; 5:11; Col. 1:23; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 2:8-13.
- D. Express his personal
1. Feelings about a matter: Rom. 9:1-3; 2 Cor. 2:1-4; 7:3-9(K); Gal. 1:6(I); 4:11(I),19-20(I); 5:20(L); 1 Thess. 3:5(K).
 2. Confession/revelation: Acts 21:13; 1 Cor. 9:26-27(A); 2 Cor. 12:1-10(L); Phil. 1:18b-26(A); 2 Tim. 4:6-8(A),16-18(A).
- E. Set himself forth as an example
1. Universally: 1 Cor. 13:1-3,11-12.¹⁴
 2. To be imitated by believers: 1 Cor. 4:3-4(?),6,16; 5:12; 6:12,14,15(hypothetical); 7:7-8; 8:13; 10:29-11:1; 14:6(hypothetical),11(hypothetical),14-15,18-19; 2 Cor. 6:13; Gal. 6:14(G); Phil. 3:3-15(I,J),17; 4:9,11-13; 1 Tim. 1:12-16(K); 2 Tim. 3:10-12(K).
- F. Identify with his audience: Acts. 22:3; 23:1,6.
- G. Direct attention away from himself: 1 Cor. 1:14-17; 2:2-5; Gal. 6:14.
- H. Raise awareness/appreciation: Acts 22:21; 26:16-18; Rom. 11:13-14; 15:15-20(M); Gal. 1:13-17(C); Eph. 3:1-4,7-9(C); Phil. 3:4-6(I,J); 1 Tim. 2:7(L).

¹⁴Compare his use of the first person plural in Gal. 4:3.

- I. Draw forth repentance: 2 Cor. 12:20-21; Gal. 1:6-9; 4:11,21; Phil. 3:4-6(H,J).
- J. Warn: Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 4:14,18-21; Gal. 5:2-3; Phil. 1:17; 3:2-6(H,J); Col. 2:4-5(K).
- K. Encourage/comfort believers: Rom. 8:18,38; 15:14; 16:19; 1 Cor. 1:4; 7:29-35; 11:2(L); 2 Cor. 2:1-4; 7:3-9,12-13,16; Gal. 4:12-14(L); Eph. 1:15-17; 3:12,14-19; 4:14-18; Phil. 1:3-8,12-14,27-30; 2:12-13,16-18; 4:1,15-20; Col. 1:24; 2:1-3(J); 1 Tim. 1:12-16; 2 Tim. 1:3-5,12; 4:6-8; Philemon 4-7.
- L. Obtain acceptance of and obedience to his instruction: Rom. 11:1; 12:1,3; 14:14; 15:15; 1 Cor. 1:10; 3:1-3; 4:15; 5:3; 6:12; 7:17; 9:1-2; 10:14-15,29-33(A); 11:2-3,17-18,34; 12:1-3,31; 14:5; 2 Cor. 2:2-11; 7:12; 10:1-2,8; 11:1-12:9; 13:3-4,10; Gal. 4:19-20; 5:2-4(J),16; 6:17; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; 2:12-16; 3:17-18; 4:9; Col. 4:18; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Thess. 3:17; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2:8,9,12; 5:21; 6:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 2:1-2; 4:1; Tit. 1:5; 3:8; Philemon 8-15,17-22.
- M. Obtain support for his missionary work (money, prayers, and so forth): Rom. 1:8-12; 15:16b-19,30-32; 2 Cor. 8:8,10; 9:1-5; Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:3-4.
- N. Commend others so that they might be received and respected: Rom.16:1,4,21; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:3-4,10-11; Eph. 6:21-22; Phil. 2:19-24,25-30; 4:2; Col. 4:7-9.
- O. Hypothetically assume the role of another: Rom. 3:7; 11:19; 1 Cor. 1:12-13; 3:4; 12:15-16,21.¹⁵

The results of this survey illustrate that the pragmatic

¹⁵Gerd Theissen, Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology, tr. J. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 252-54, proposes that Paul assumes the role of others elsewhere. Theissen contends that Paul assumes the role of the servant of Isaiah 49:1 in Gal. 1:15-16, the role of an athlete who has forgotten all of what lies behind him in Phil. 3:12-14, and even the role of Christ in 1 Cor. 9:19-23. While this may be the case, Paul is still not excluded as the primary referent. For example, while the role of Christ can be discerned in the "I" in 1 Cor. 9:19-23, the "I" is even more clearly and, at least initially, Paul. This is similar to the occasions when Paul calls upon believers to imitate him just as he imitates Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

possibilities open to Paul when he utilizes the first person singular are almost endless.¹⁶ Yet the categories enumerated above can be narrowed down considerably. In essence, they comprise two general purposes. These are 1) to inform and 2) to command, that is, to elicit some type of action or response.¹⁷ Categories A, B, and D provide instances where Paul's purpose in speaking about himself is basically to provide information. Virtually all of the other categories are aimed at drawing forth a specific response from the readers (categories E, G through N).¹⁸ An examination of these two broader categories reveals the manner in which even they are able to interchange functionally with each other.¹⁹

¹⁶The frequency with which he employs the first person singular is, in part, explained by the numerous functions these statements are able to perform. Certainly the nature of the documents as personal, written correspondence also contributes to this.

¹⁷The only categories which do not seem to fit are C, F, and O. However, even those passages can be understood as fitting within one of these two broader categories. The passages cited previously (see above, pp. 367-69) demonstrate that when Paul uses himself as an example he often has an indirect purpose in mind. The same is the case when he defends the Gospel or his apostleship (category C) and when he assumes the role of another (category O). Paul's ability to accomplish his goal in this more indirect manner is further demonstrated below, pp. 377-79.

¹⁸The content of these categories reveals that the term "command" is perhaps too strong. What Paul aims to attain is prompted by his pastoral concern for the recipients of his letters.

¹⁹One might also identify a third category. This would recognize that in a number of instances Paul is not merely giving information, but also expressing his own feelings or emotions. This "affective" aspect is especially prominent in category D (for example, Rom. 9:1-3; Gal. 4:19-20). It is

How does Paul accomplish his purpose of "informing" or "commanding?" At times he does so *directly*. The initial verses of 1 Corinthians 15 and 16 illustrate how Paul, through his use of the first person singular, accomplishes both of these purposes in a direct manner. In the first four verses of chapter 15, Paul explicitly *informs* the Corinthians that he has faithfully handed the content of the Gospel message over to them (*παρέδωκα*; 15:4). In the initial verses of chapter 16, Paul issues a direct *command* (*διέταξα*; 16:1) that each one of them "lay aside" (*τιθέτω*; 16:2) something on the first day of the week to go toward the collection for the saints so that it is ready when he arrives.

At other times Paul accomplishes his purpose in an *indirect* manner. First, Paul can give some *information* in order to give further *information* indirectly.²⁰ He tells the Corinthians, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not beneficial" (1 Cor. 6:12). Paul here describes his own freedom in the Gospel and also recognizes that even though all things are permissible for him, they are not all helpful. His statement serves to convey the same information to the Corinthians. Paul affirms that they, too, are now free in Christ from all things. But not all things are beneficial for them, as Paul proceeds to describe (1 Cor. 6:13-20).

Second, Paul can use one *command* in order to issue

also important to note its presence in Rom. 7:24.

²⁰For other examples, see Rom. 14:14; 1 Cor. 3:1.

another *indirect command*. The concluding verses of Philemon illustrate this quite well. He directs Philemon, "At the same time also prepare (ἑτοιμαζε) a guest room for me" (v. 22a). Whether Paul actually visits or not, his directive to Philemon to get space ready for his coming functions as an indirect command for Philemon to receive Onesimus back as a brother in Christ.

Third, Paul often utilizes the first person singular in order to give *information* about himself that is *indirectly* intended to *command*, that is, to elicit some type of response. In 2 Corinthians 9:2 Paul relates how he has already boasted to the Macedonians about the generosity of those in Achaia in contributing to the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. This, by itself, serves as an exhortation for the Corinthians to give generously. Furthermore, Paul's concern that his boasting not be in vain and his sending of others ahead of him are additional incentives which urge the Corinthians to make certain that things are prepared when Paul comes (2 Cor. 9:3-5). In Philippians 3:4-6 Paul enumerates the reasons why he could put confidence in the flesh, but then concludes that he counts all of these as loss and as dung in light of the righteousness which comes by faith in Christ (Phil. 3:7-9). In light of verses 2-3, Paul's statements serve to challenge or to warn. He is dissuading others from putting con-

fidence in their flesh. In addition to these examples,²¹ nearly all of the passages cited above in category C function this way. Paul defends his apostleship so that his readers will respond to him favorably and obey his instruction. In similar fashion, Paul's defense of the Gospel he proclaims is indirectly intended to lead his readers to firmly believe its message. This latter goal is also Paul's aim when he testifies to the Gospel's power in his own life (category B). His own example serves as an exhortation for others to believe. For instance, after Paul's recitation of the events and effects of his conversion during his defense before King Agrippa, the King perceives that Paul's purpose is to persuade him to believe (Acts 26:2-24,28). Paul himself affirms this as his aim for "all those who hear me" (Acts 26:29).

In conclusion, this examination has demonstrated that when Paul utilizes the first person singular with himself as the referent, he conveys personal information to his addressees. But at the same time and usually without explicitly stating it, his statements are also intended to have (a) desired effect(s) upon his readers. Paul's use of "I" is to function or "count as" something more than personal revelation. What he says about himself through the "I" is often intended to give information beyond what is explicitly stated

²¹See also Gal. 1:12; 4:20; 6:14. At times Paul's command is evident from the context, as in 1 Cor. 6:15 in light of verse 18; 10:29-31 with 11:1 (discussed above, pp. 368-69); 15:31-32 with verse 33; possibly also 1 Cor. 4:3-4 in light of verse 5.

in the text and, more important, frequently intended to elicit some specific action or response from the readers.

Romans 7 has been intentionally omitted from consideration up to this point. It has been established that Paul is telling us about himself in that chapter. He is the referent of the "I." But how are the statements of and about the "I" intended to function? Do they fit into one or more of the previous categories? Is Paul giving information about himself in order to relate in an indirect manner some facts which are also true of the Roman Christians? Is Paul utilizing these statements about himself in order to effect a change in their beliefs or actions?

Paul's Purpose in Romans 7:7-11

Paul is describing his own experience with the Law prior to his conversion in verses 7-11 and he does so from the perspective he gained after his encounter on the Damascus road.²² But, as in the other passages discussed above, Paul's purpose is not merely to convey the events of his own life to his readers.²³ An extension of the "I" here to others

²²See above, pp. 261-78.

²³So Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, tr. C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 278, concludes that this is not just a "subjective confession." C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962), 143, points out that Paul is "at least using [the events of his own life] to bring out his point." See also Andrew Bandstra, The Law and the Elements of the World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, n.d.), 138.

who were or are under the lordship of the Law, which is the overall topic of chapter 7 (Rom. 7:1), is certainly intended.²⁴ But these verses do *not* simply offer a description of those who are under the Law's lordship from either an objective or subjective standpoint.²⁵ Instead, Paul desires that all people would arrive at the same realization he has reached, and here reveals. His general purpose, then, is to use his own example in order *to inform* his addressees in an indirect manner about the interrelationship between the Law, sin, and death.²⁶ Viewed in this way, there is no excluding or diminishing the fact that Paul sees himself as the actual, initial, and primary referent of the "I" in verses 7-11. As Henry Alford concludes,

We must dismiss from our minds all exegesis which explains the passage of any other, in the first instance, than of Paul himself: himself indeed, as an exemplar.²⁷

It is in applying the manner in which Paul is an "ex-

²⁴Nils Dahl, Studies in Paul (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), 93, states, "The 'I' form . . . would hardly be meaningful unless both the speaker and his audience can in some way identify with the experience of the . . . 'I'."

²⁵See those who advocate this position and the objections raised to it above, pp. 51-53, 57-58, 240-41, 312-13.

²⁶But see below, pp. 384-86, for how these verses are also intended to elicit a response.

²⁷Henry Alford, The Greek New Testament, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1865), 2:377. Douglas Moo, "Israel and Paul in Romans 7.7-12," New Testament Studies 32 (1986):129, somewhat more weakly proposes that "Paul himself must be included in any acceptable interpretation of Romans 7."

emplar" that the allusions made by various commentators to the account of Adam in Genesis 3, whether actually prominent in Paul's mind or not, find their proper place.²⁸ The most that can be said in this regard is that "Adam is not the *subject* of the conflict in Rom. 7:7ff. but rather its *model*."²⁹ Paul, through the use of the first person singular, starts *with his own previous existence* under the Law's lordship.³⁰ However, in so doing, the "I," at least by implication, confesses *not* that he himself is Adam, but that he is a child of the one man through whom sin came into the world and spread to all people (5:12).³¹ Paul, in effect, says,

²⁸See above, pp. 17-18, 228-35.

²⁹Theissen, 203. He bases this, 208-211, on the four motifs common to both Genesis 2-3 and Romans 7, the motifs of life, death, deceit, and the letter.

³⁰This initial referent must be maintained. Barclay Newman and Eugene Nida, A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans, Helps for Translators, vol. 14 (London: United Bible Societies, 1973), 134, adequately propose that Paul "begins by interpreting his own experience in the light of Genesis 3." However, it is going too far to conclude with John Espy, "Paul's 'Robust Conscience' Re-examined," New Testament Studies 31 (1985):169, that the terms in the text should not be "defined according to the context of Genesis 1-3." Theissen's conclusion, 260, also borders on this.

³¹According to Newman and Nida, 135, Paul here reveals and confesses "that Adam's experience and his own are similar: [*in that*] *the commandment which was meant to bring life, in my case brought death.*"

James Dunn, Romans 1-8, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a, eds. R. Martin, D. Hubbard, and G. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 382, concludes that the "vivid 'I' form of Jewish Psalm tradition" is comparable to and, 390, provides the "nearest parallels" with the "I" in Romans 7:7-25. He cites Ps. 69; 77; Psalms of Solomon 5; 8; and 1 QH 3; 11. For the latter two sources, see R. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. J. Charlesworth, 2

I am like Adam in that I am subject to sin's misuse of the Law whose lordship over me accomplishes my death.³² I am a son of Adam and, therefore, imprisoned by sin's entrance into the world (5:12), by my own transgression of God's commandment (7:7-8), and by the death which has resulted (vv. 9-11).

Indeed, so are all sinners when they are confronted with the full impact of the Law. This is a connection which Paul would not only not deny, but clearly intends his readers to make.³³

vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1983,1985), 2:656-57,658-60; and Geza Vermes, ed. and tr., The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, 2nd. ed. (New York: Viking Penguin, 1975), 157-60,185-88. On the relationship with the Qumran Hymns, see particularly Herbert Braun, "Römer 7, 7-25 und das Selbstverständnis des Qumran-Frommen," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 56 (1959), 1-18; Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, tr. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1969), 231-32; Dahl, 92-93; Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, tr. and ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 201-2; Richard Longenecker, Paul (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 88-89; and Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Römer, Kritischer-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 13th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966), 171, who conjectures that the "I" in the Qumran Hymns might be "the Teacher of Righteousness himself" ("der Lehrer der Gerechtigkeit selbst"). No one doubts that the "I" is the actual speaker in these passages while, at the same time, recognizing that the scope is intended to be broadened. This should also be understood in Romans 7; see also below, n. 75, p. 398.

³²Theissen, 203, is perhaps not far off here in suggesting, "The I assumes the role of Adam and structures it in the light of personal experience of conflict." However, Käsemann, 195, starts at the wrong point in stating, "Adam remarkably lives on in 'my reality.'" He attempts to solve the problems here by applying the concept of the corporate personality and stresses the logical continuity between Romans 5 and 7; similarly also Moo, 128-29.

³³If Paul is alluding to Adam, Theissen, 255, concludes that the role of Adam "served him as a way of presenting his personal conflict with the law as a general human conflict." In any event, the result is assuredly a malady common to all people, including Paul, in light of 5:12-21. So also Moo,

In verses 7-11, then, Paul's use of the "I" is intended to relate his experience under the Law as an example. In so doing, the first person singular functions as a creative and personal way to *inform* his addressees that all descendants of Adam are similarly affected detrimentally by God's Law.³⁴ However, these verses are also intended to *command* or to evoke a particular response. They are "aimed at dispelling a reader's possibly false notion concerning the law."³⁵

128, perceives that "Paul sees a basic similarity in the situations of Adam . . . and Israel confronted by the Law." Yet he fails to begin with Paul and, only then, to apply this description of Paul's experience to the situation of all other people confronted with the Law.

In the case of Paul's readers who had formerly been Gentile unbelievers and had then come to know the Law through the synagogue before conversion to Christianity, many of the difficulties involved in determining when or in what manner the "I" was alive "apart from the Law" and then experienced a coming of the commandment readily vanish (v. 9). Moo's argument, 125-28, that the "narrative sequence" of these verses refers to the coming of the Law at Sinai would then be somewhat parallel. Yet in light of 2:12-16 this cannot be pushed to its extreme, either. It was admitted that the interpretation adopted here did not take the most literal sense of *χωρὶς νόμου* in verses 8-9 (see above, n. 228, p. 130; also pp. 120-21). If the literal sense is insisted upon, the meaning of this phrase could be applied literally to Paul's Gentile readers whose role Paul is at least partially adopting through the "I" (note the comparable suggestions of Theissen, 252-54; cited above, n. 15, p. 375). However, this conclusion has been rejected here because it excludes Paul as the primary referent.

³⁴Certainly the commands of the Mosaic Torah are most specifically in Paul's mind here. Whether a person has been confronted by the revealed Torah or "the work of the Law" written in the heart will determine the standard of judgment, but makes no ultimate difference (Rom. 2:15). See the discussion of 2:12-16 above, pp. 71, 118-20.

³⁵Brice Martin, "Some Reflections on the Identity of *ἐγώ* in Rom. 7:14-25," Scottish Journal of Theology 34 (1981): 41; he is referring to the entirety of verses 7-25.

For example, if there are those among Paul's addressees who are being deceived by sin into relying upon the Law (see 2:17-29), as he did prior to the Damascus road event (7:11), Paul's words are intended *to raise their awareness* and *to warn* them about the true nature and effects of the Law upon sinful man.³⁶ The "I" here is not a description of a typical or pious Jew.³⁷ What the "I" realizes is precisely what is absent in Paul's other portrayals of unbelieving Jews. Rather, verses 7-11 express what Paul wants anyone who relies upon the Law to recognize. The intended effect of Paul's words about himself is to move such a person to the same point of despair Paul was in when confronted by the risen Jesus Christ.³⁸ If the reader is basing confidence upon his flesh and living comfortably under the lordship of the Law, Paul reveals that that person, like him prior to that confrontation, is in reality being deceived into thinking the Law does not kill the sinner (v. 11).

On the other hand, for Paul's Christian addressees who, together with him, now realize that the identification, provocation, and condemnation of sin are one aspect of the Law's function, Paul's words serve *to warn* them about how

³⁶See above, categories H and J, pp. 374,375.

³⁷As suggested by Käsemann, 195; Robert Gundry, "The Moral Frustration of Paul Before His Conversion," in Pauline Studies, eds. D. Hagner and M. Harris (Exeter, England: Pater-noster Press, 1980), 232; see above, p. 29.

³⁸See above, category I, p. 375; and pp. 267-70.

the Law's command can be misused by sin (vv. 7-8,13).³⁹ If a believer begins to rely upon his observance of the Law as the basis for his life, he, too, is being deceived.

So, then, while the effect(s) may vary, Paul's words are pertinent both to believers and unbelievers. He assumes that "what he says has relevance for all men in all periods of history."⁴⁰ The purpose of Paul's description of himself in verses 7-11 is that every sinner would realize what the Law in fact accomplishes in him and how this affects his standing before God (Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:7-8,13).

If Paul intended all along to reveal a generally applicable truth about how sin is able to misuse the Law to provoke sin, to deceive and to kill, why does he employ the first person singular at all? As concluded in chapter three, Paul here discusses very poignantly "the problem of his own life."⁴¹ Yet Paul's use of the first person singular is

³⁹See above, category J, p. 375.

⁴⁰Newman and Nida, 134; however, they precede this by contending "that every other man's experience is similar to [Paul's] own." Dunn Romans 1-8, 383, similarly concludes, "The typicality of the experience of everyman expressed in the archetypal language of Gen 2-3 presumably therefore should be allowed to embrace a wide and diverse range of particular experiences." So also Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 280, states, "For what Paul says about himself is equally true of every man and of mankind as a whole." None of these is accurate. Those who try to avoid the Law or who are deceived by sin into depending upon the Law do not experience or recognize what the "I" states here. Rather, Paul's words are written to the end that all of his readers would come to realize that which Christ's appearance revealed to him.

⁴¹Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 279; see above, pp. 272-75.

both creative and effective. It enables him to demonstrate, from the experience of his own life, that even a man who meticulously observes the Law in a manner so far surpassing others that he considers himself blameless according to the righteousness of the Law (Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4b-6) is, in actuality, being deceived by sin's misuse of the Law (Rom. 7:11). Paul could have made his point here by writing

in calm didactic fashion: 'No the law is not sin but helps make the sinner conscious of his sin'. . . . [But] when Paul uses himself as a *corpus* for dissection he lifts us above the abstract into actual life, into viewing our own actual life and experience.⁴²

What Paul writes in Romans 7:7-11, therefore, is not intended to be a portrayal of his personal religious crisis or of his inner psychological development.⁴³ It only becomes that when the description in those verses is removed from the *coram Deo* level. But Kümmel very correctly points out that the terms in these verses "must be understood as expressions concerning the existence of the person in his relationship to God."⁴⁴ Verses 7-11 reflect and strive to drive home a recognition of what one's standing is *coram Deo* on

⁴²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Commentaries on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 459-60,462.

⁴³See the discussion above, pp. 275-77.

⁴⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 124, "muß diese Termini als Aussagen über das Sein des Menschen in seiner Beziehung zu Gott, . . . verstehen." See also Longenecker, Paul, 91.

the basis of the Law and apart from Christ.⁴⁵

Paul's Purpose in Romans 7:14-25

Verses 14-25 do not discuss the role of the Law in the life of the unbeliever (see 7:1,5,7-11).⁴⁶ The "I" here is not in the same situation as in verses 7-11. F. F. Bruce observes,

There sin assaulted the speaker by stealth and struck him down; here, he puts up an agonizing resistance, even if he cannot beat back the enemy.⁴⁷

The deception sin worked upon Paul through the Law is ended (7:11). In Romans 7:14-25 Paul is portraying the "double effect" which the Law has upon him as a believer who is actively engaged in the struggle against his own sinful flesh.⁴⁸

In part, Paul utilizes his own experience as an example in order to *inform* his readers about the role and activity of the Law in the Christian life. Paul reveals that the Law of God hits the believer in two diverse ways. First and primarily, the Christian agrees with and rejoices in the

⁴⁵Espy, 167, concludes that we have here "the man apart from Christ, sinning under the Law though the Law is not at fault." Here the Law's commands have also worked the recognition that one is unavoidably accountable for the wages of sin which is death (3:20; 6:23).

⁴⁶As demonstrated in chapter four, pp. 305-24.

⁴⁷F. F. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1963), 143; see also Lenski, 491; and Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 286.

⁴⁸See above, pp. 176-80; also pp. 305-63, especially 353-56.

Spirit-filled Law which directs his will away from evil and toward good (7:16,18,19,20,21,22,25). On the other hand, because believers continue to live in the sinful flesh, sin also dwells in them and fleshly desires continue to spring up (7:14,17-18,20). When this is the case, the Law is used by sin to provoke evil against the resolve of the renewed will (7:15,16,18,19,20,21,23). Then the Law proceeds to identify sin as such and pronounces its sentence of death (7:23,24,25; 8:2b). As a result, so long as a believer remains in this body as it is, he is trapped in a mortal body. And so he cries out together with Paul, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:24).

Although Paul affirms that believers are now free from the Law's lordship and enabled by the Spirit to serve it willingly (7:4,6), he here utilizes the experience of his own Christian life in order to point out and explain why they still cannot fulfill the Law in the flesh.⁴⁹ Even though a Christian's will rejoices in the good as revealed in the Spiritual Law (7:14,16,22), the sin which dwells in his flesh continues to wage war against his sanctified mind (7:23). It is able to prevent the believer from doing the good he wills and continues to lead him into the evil he hates (vv. 15-21). Even his sanctified and altogether proper intention to live in accordance with the Law's command is inevitably met with futility and even despair.

⁴⁹Nygren, Commentary on Romans, 303.

*With a specific purpose in mind,*⁵⁰ verses 14-23 present only those repeated and inevitable instances in which sin, dwelling in the flesh, succeeds in taking the "I" captive (7:23). The fact that the sinful flesh is able to continue to enact evil and to prohibit the good required by the Law is sufficient to make Paul's point. It is not that a believer engaged in this struggle is once again a slave to sin or utterly powerless against sin.⁵¹ Rather, he, like Paul, is distraught by his inability to eradicate sin completely from his flesh. There is "a foreign element that has yet to be dislodged and expelled."⁵²

There are only two ways to avoid this condition as an ever-present reality for the believer. The first is to lessen the perfect holiness required by God and, thereby, to overlook the total obedience demanded in his Law. The second is to contend with Albert Schweitzer that "believers are raised above all the limitations of the being-in-the-flesh,"⁵³ so

⁵⁰For the details of this purpose, see below, pp. 392-95; 411-19.

⁵¹As argued, for example, by Rudolf Bultmann, "Romans 7 and Paul's Anthropology," in The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, tr. K Crim (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1957), 38; Kümmel, Römer 7, 125,133,136-37; and Herman Ridderbos, Paul, tr. J. De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1975), 127, who characterizes this as "the absolute impotence of the I to break through the barrier of sin and the flesh in any degree at all." See also above, pp. 153-54.

⁵²Lenski, 480.

⁵³Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, tr. W. Montgomery, A Crossroad Book (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), 167.

that it is possible for them to refrain from sin completely. The latter position is essentially Kümmel's conclusion, when he asserts that the "Spirit, whom every Christian possesses (Rom. 8:9), enables the Christian at all times to put to death the deeds of the body."⁵⁴

Paul, however, refuses to allow either of these alternatives to stand. He insists that the Law requires the doing of all the things which are written in it (Rom. 10:5; see also Gal. 3:10-12,19-23). At the same time, the ability to accomplish these is excluded for each and every person since the fall into sin (Rom. 1:18-3:20; especially 3:19-20,23; 5:12; Gal. 2:16; 3:11). Paul recognizes that, prior to the death of the believer or Christ's return, Christians inevitably remain in this world. In Romans 7:14-25 Paul acknowledges that "sin still holds sway over the world to which 'I' still belong as a man of flesh."⁵⁵ Here, the desires of the flesh are always directed toward evil in opposition to the good

⁵⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 104, "dieses πνεῦμα, das jeder Christ besitzt (Röm. 8,9), ermöglicht es dem Christen jederzeit τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦσθαι." As a result, he, *ibid.*, 108, wonders "'how is it to be explained that our Christianity deviates so far from the pauline that we once more find ourselves in the form of the pauline non-Christian?'" ("wie ist es zu erklären, daß unser Christentum von dem paulinischen soweit abweicht, daß wir uns im Bilde des paulinischen Nichtchristen wiederfinden?"). Kümmel, *ibid.*, finally must conclude "that our Christianity is indeed different from the eschatologically determined Christianity of the pauline congregations" ("daß unser Christentum von dem eschatologisch bestimmten Christentum der paulinischen Gemeinden recht verschieden ist").

⁵⁵Dunn, Romans 1-8, 408.

which God reveals in his Law.⁵⁶ Therefore, even though the believer's sanctified will, mind, and inner man dominate his existence,⁵⁷ he remains "sold under sin" in so far as he is still flesh (7:14). His will determines to do the good and strives to abstain from evil in accordance with the Law. But when the "sold under sin" flesh gains the fore, the Christian repeatedly does the evil which he hates and is prohibited from exercising the good that his will determines to do.

Once we admit that sin persists in the believer, the tension of 7:14-25 is inevitable and it is not the way of truth to ignore it.⁵⁸

Romans 7:14-25, then, offers no easy excuse for sin,

Only an excuse for sin experienced as *defeat*, as a wretched captivity and slavery to sin. Paul can and does readily conceive of believers being frequently defeated by sin (v 23) . . . , but he cannot conceive of believers treating such defeats as a matter of little consequence.⁵⁹

Yet, Paul also intends these verses to function as more than a detailing of the role of the Law in the Christian life. His use of the "I" not only serves to inform; it also "counts as" a *command*. It is intended to have an impact. Here, Paul aims to dispel a Christian "reader's possibly false notion concerning the Law."⁶⁰ These verses, which express

⁵⁶ See chapter four, pp. 353-56.

⁵⁷ See above, p. 159; also pp. 158-60, 170-72, 182-83.

⁵⁸ John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1959, 1965), 1:258.

⁵⁹ Dunn, Romans 1-8, 412.

⁶⁰ Martin, 41.

one aspect of Paul's own Christian life,⁶¹ are intended to raise the awareness or alertness of his hearers and, then, to warn them against basing their continued relationship with God upon the Law.⁶² Paul's goal is to prohibit himself and all other believers from attempting to maintain their justified status, to any degree, upon their own Law-based striving for perfection or any supposed "moral victory."⁶³ This is because every Christian who stands before God from the perspective of the Law must admit with Paul, "So then I myself in my mind am enslaved to [the] Law of God, but, on the other hand, in the flesh, [I am enslaved to the] Law of sin" (Rom. 7:25b).

As with sin and death, Paul declares that the Law no longer reigns over him or other believers (7:1,6).⁶⁴ Yet, as a Law of sin and death (7:23,25; 8:2), it continues to have a limited, negative effect. It continues to provoke and identify sin in the flesh, thereby making this fleshly body one of death (7:24). If a believer places himself under the lordship of the Law once again, he is under the reign of sin and death (7:1,5).⁶⁵ However, so long as he remains dead to

⁶¹See above, pp. 278-298, and the conclusion on p. 364.

⁶²See categories H and J above, pp. 374,375.

⁶³Gundry, 240; cited also above, p. 38.

⁶⁴See above, pp. 90,96-99; but also p. 285; 1 Cor. 9:20.

⁶⁵See Rom. 8:2 and 6:16 along with the discussion above, pp. 327-32. Paul makes this very clear in his letter to the Galatians, see the discussion below, pp. 402-8.

the Law ἐκ πίστεως (7:4,6; see also 3:22,26,28), the Law's condemnation is no longer valid. It has already been removed by Jesus Christ (8:1,3).

The initial verses of Romans 8, then, provide the vital key to 7:14-25. In the initial verses of chapter eight Paul draws his conclusions regarding what he has just illustrated in the preceding section. He has demonstrated why it is impossible for the Law's command to be the basis of his life and freedom, even while he is "in Christ Jesus" (8:1). It is because of sin which continues to dwell in the flesh and to work in his members (7:14,17,18,20,23). And "the law (spiritual and good as it is) is powerless to deliver him from his bondage to indwelling sin" (8:3).⁶⁶ To be sure, Paul affirms that every believer is free from the Law's condemnation of his sin and its pronouncement of eternal death (8:1-2; 7:6). But a believer does not stand justified from sin (6:7) because of the Law's command or because of his own ability to fulfill the Law. Rather, he has been freed, even from that under which he continues to exist, because God, by his Spirit, has brought freedom and life by fulfilling the promise of the Torah (8:2; 4, especially vv. 23-25). God accomplished this by "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin" (8:3).

⁶⁶Ronald Fung, "The Impotence of the Law: Toward a Fresh Understanding of Romans 7:14-25," in Scripture, Tradition and Interpretation, eds. W. Gasque and W. LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 40; see also 40,43,45.

In Jesus Christ, God has done what the Law was unable to accomplish because of our weak flesh (8:3). He has fulfilled the legal requirements laid down by God's Law in our place (8:4). The presence of the Spirit now enables believers willingly to determine to live according to the Law (8:4; as in 7:15-25). But when they fail, the Spirit also assures them that through faith God has given them, and continues to cover them with, what Christ has accomplished in their behalf.⁶⁷

As a result of all of this, Paul's description of himself in Romans 7:14-25 has two additional functions. His personal attestation to the fact that an ongoing struggle against the "sold under sin" flesh is an inescapable aspect of the Christian life serves both *to encourage* and *to comfort* believers who continue to live in the flesh in this world.⁶⁸ On the one hand, Paul's own express inability to fulfill the Law as he fervently desires prohibits believers from becoming complacent and "too easily satisfied with the disposition and frame of their own hearts."⁶⁹ When they examine their own

⁶⁷See the discussion above in ch. four concerning 3:24-25 (pp. 325-26) and 8:26,34 (pp. 332-34). So we do not here have a picture of "the believer failing to reach final (complete) salvation" or of a liberation which "has begun, and begun decisively, but is not yet complete" as Dunn contends, Romans 1-8, 396, 407; see also idem., "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," Theologische Zeitschrift 31 (1975):271.

⁶⁸See above, category L, p. 375.

⁶⁹James Fraser, The Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification (Edinburgh: R. Ogle, 1830), 418; he continues, "But, if with sincere and earnest desire to advance in holiness, they looked

lives before God's Law, as Paul does here, the Law points out when and how they continue to fall into sin by failing to accomplish the good and by doing evil. But Paul's example also urges them to strive to live in accordance with God's will as revealed in the Law with the same resolve Paul displays in verses 14-23.

On the other hand, since the Christian's confidence before God is not based upon the flesh (Phil. 3:3-11), the conflict present in verses 14-25 is no cause for complete and total despair.⁷⁰ Paul comforts believers by giving thanks "to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" in spite of the ongoing disparity between his will and action (Rom. 7:25). Because of the presence of the Spirit who inaugurated this struggle,⁷¹ Paul knows that he will be delivered from "this body of death" at the day of Jesus' return (Rom. 7:24). This mortal, natural, and perishable body will then be changed to be like Jesus' glorified body (Rom. 7:24; 1 Cor. 15:42-44,51-53; Phil. 3:20-21). But even now Paul asks, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33a). Even though believers remain in the sinful flesh (Rom. 7:14,17-18,20), no one can. "God is

more closely into the law, as it is spiritual, and into their own hearts, they would see, to their great benefit, more of these motions of sin in them, by which they do what they would not, and are unable to do, in manner and degree, as they would."

⁷⁰Recognized by Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," 272-73.

⁷¹See above, p. 357.

the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns?" (Rom. 8:33b-34a). Even though the Law remains a Law of sin and death to the believer who continues to live in a mortal body (Rom. 7:23-24; 8:2), no one can.

Why can the Law no longer condemn the believer? It is *not* because the believer is now able to fulfill the Law (Rom. 7:14-23). On the contrary, the Law continues to point out the believer's failure to do so. It is rather because "Christ Jesus [is] the one who died, and much more was raised, who is, indeed, at the right hand of God, who also intercedes in our behalf" (Rom. 8:34). And so those who believe in him can already now join Paul in giving thanks to the God who has given them victory over the death which the Law pronounces upon sin (Rom. 7:25a; 8:2b-3; also 1 Cor. 15:57). Already now there is "no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

The "I" is able to perform a number of functions most effectively in Romans 7:14-25. But why does Paul choose to use that form of expression in these verses?⁷² In the first place, it is a natural continuation of the first person singular which he employed in reference to himself in verses 7-11.

⁷²Espy, especially 169-70, suggests that the singular is necessary because a person is only guilty under the Law as an individual. This is not the case. A person becomes guilty of *transgressing* the Law as an individual once the Law comes. But the person is still guilty, is condemned, and perishes as an individual apart from the Law (2:12; 5:12-21, especially vv. 12,18,19).

Second, and as a direct result, the first person singular serves to maintain the *coram Deo* level of Paul's discussion about the Law.⁷³ This factor explains how Paul can be describing his own Christian life in what appears to many to be a very dismal manner.⁷⁴ Paul is not speaking of his own conduct before men but picturing his current standing before God on the basis of his performance of the Law.⁷⁵ This also resolves the apparent contradiction between Romans 7:14-25 and passages such as 1 Corinthians 4:3-4.⁷⁶

A third aspect is related. The first person singular enables Paul to make his point unmistakably clear. How was Paul seen by others? Paul's letters reveal that when one viewed him from a human point of view, there was some weakness.⁷⁷ But to these Roman Christians he was, no doubt, the great Apostle who had been chosen and visited by the risen Lord Jesus himself, who had been at the forefront as the church spread throughout Asia Minor and into Europe, and who was now finally planning to come and visit the Roman

⁷³See above, pp. 386-88.

⁷⁴See above, pp. 46-48.

⁷⁵Dahl, 93, similarly observes, "When we confess our sins before God, our self-evaluation is very different from what it normally is when we communicate with other people." He compares this with the Hymns of Qumran; see above, n. 31, pp. 382-83.

⁷⁶See above, pp. 290-91, 295-96.

⁷⁷See, for example, 1 Cor. 2:3; Gal. 4:14; also above, pp. 291-94.

church on his way to spread the Gospel in Spain. Within and among the churches, Paul himself stresses that his conduct faithfully adhered to his calling and was above reproach.⁷⁸ This is congruent with the manner in which Paul addresses the Roman Christians, particularly in Romans 1:1-15 and 15:14-22. Those who did not know Paul personally had certainly heard about him from those in their midst who had met Paul (Romans 16). In all likelihood these Roman Christians pictured Paul as an unconditionally determined Apostle who endeavored with all his life to spread the Gospel which had been delivered to him directly by Jesus.

Yet Romans 7 reveals that this man, this great theologian, church leader, and missionary, realizes that he dare not base his standing before God in any way upon the Law. He now acknowledges that this was true prior to his conversion when the Law pointed out his sin, provoked sin, deceived him, and pronounced a sentence of death upon him (Rom. 7:7-11). But verses 14-25 disclose that Paul also knew this was true of him as a Christian.⁷⁹ He was not only inept at becom-

⁷⁸See, for example, Acts 20:18-35; elsewhere Paul declares that he has been faithful to his calling (Acts 26:19); he has faithfully carried out the task given to him (2 Tim. 1:3); he has fought the good fight and preserved the faith (2 Tim. 4:6). See the complete discussion above, pp. 286-90.

⁷⁹Maurice Goguel, The Birth of Christianity, tr. H. Snape (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 213, argues that verses 14-25 describe Paul immediately after his conversion. On the basis of 1 Cor. 9:24-27, Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 144-45, responds, "Even at the height of his apostolic career, [Paul] made it his daily business to discipline himself so as not to be disqualified in the spiritual

ing righteous by means of the Law (vv. 7-11), he could not even maintain that righteousness by his observance of the Law (vv. 14-25). To attempt to do so, would be, as he warned the Galatians years earlier, to fall from the grace of God in Jesus Christ (Gal. 5:2-4; see below, pp. 402-8). Verses 14-25 illustrate why Paul could not fulfill the Law as God required. It is because he, too, was hindered by sin which still resided in his flesh and was at work in his members (vv. 14,17-18,20,23). The continued presence and activity of sin rendered his body a body of death (v. 24).

Paul's use of *himself* as an example serves to warn his readers most effectively.⁸⁰ Even the great Apostle is not able to rely on his own performance of the Law before God. They would conclude, "If this is true of Paul, how much more so of me?" No matter how far a believer might progress in the sanctified life in this world, even as far as Paul, he will always be plagued by the sinful flesh.⁸¹ Paul's portrayal

contest." Dunn, Romans 1-8, 407, points out that the "deceived" Pharisee Paul "knew no such frustration or self-deprecation in his preconversion days"; citing Phil 3:4-6. However, as a humble believer, he is aware, as never before, of the power of sin in his own life. Compare William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 183, who attempt to apply verses 14-25 to Paul as a Pharisee, but must contend that "Paul was not an ordinary Pharisee."

⁸⁰See above, category J, p. 375; also pp. 392-95.

⁸¹Dunn, Romans 1-8, 389, "It is precisely the saint who is most conscious of his own sinfulness." C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols., The International Critical Commentary,

of the ongoing and all-too-often contradictory tension between his will and his actions serves to point out that such a disparity is an unavoidable aspect of present Christian existence.⁸²

Of course, this situation does not stop Paul from urging himself and others to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, to "be what you already are," to live a life of faith active in love.⁸³ Rather, this disparity between intention and performance is what prompts Paul's exhortations. Of greater significance, however, is the fact that the solution which Paul holds out to this disparity is not the Law. The Law's command is unable (Rom. 8:3). The answer is the Gospel which declares and already effects its verdict of no condemnation (8:1).

A final factor involved in Paul's choice of the first

vol. 32, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975,1979), 1:358, contends that "the more seriously a Christian strives to live from grace . . . the more sensitive he becomes to the fact of his own sinfulness." See also Lenski, 439-40; Murray, 1:258; and Espy, 173-74, who argues that we do not have a weak Christian here, but a Christian at his best. As D. MacFarlane, The Presbyterian Pulpit (1961), 20, states, "Believers are perfect as to their justification, but their sanctification is only begun. It is a progressive work. When they believed in Christ, they knew but very little of the fountain of corruption that dwells in them. When Christ made Himself known to them . . . the carnal mind seemed to be dead, but they found out afterwards that it was not dead. So some have experienced more soul trials after conversion than when they were awakened to a sense of their lost condition. 'O wretched man that I am! . . .' is their cry till they are made perfect in holiness. But He that hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"; cited from Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 147.

⁸²See above, category A,3, p. 374.

⁸³See Gal. 5:6,22-23; see also above, pp. 343-45,358-59.

person singular is related to the topic of the excursus below. In contrast to the situation when Paul wrote Galatians, in Romans he has no crisis situation to address. There was not, apparently, an overt controversy among the Christians in Rome regarding circumcision and the observance of the Law as there had been years earlier in Galatia. There are no specific opponents to refute openly. As a result, when Paul addresses the same issue he had earlier dealt with in his letter to the Galatians, the role of the Law in the Christian life, he employs the first person singular.

Excursus: Confirmation from Galatians

Paul's letter to the Galatians is the best commentary on his epistle to the Romans and *vice versa*.⁸⁴ Paul's purpose in Romans 7:14-8:3 is to give a proper evaluation of the role of the Law in the Christian life. He illustrates its actual functions, effects, and limitations. If, as has been maintained here, Paul addresses an issue vital to his theology in Romans 7, one would expect it to be a point of discussion elsewhere in his letters and, particularly, in Galatians. This is, in fact, the case.⁸⁵ The situation which prompted

⁸⁴Some of the similarities will be stated in the discussion here (for example, n. 89, p. 405); see also C. H. Dodd, The Epistle to the Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Fontana Books, 1959), 23; Fung, 42; Michel, 25.

⁸⁵The discussion to follow disproves the contention of Paul Althaus, "Zur Auslegung von Röm. 7,14ff," Theologische Literaturzeitung 77 (1952):479, who asserts that if Rom. 7:14-25 is applied to the Christian those verses "would be completely isolated and without analogy among all the letters

Paul's letter to the Galatians necessitated that he discuss the issues surrounding the Law and the Christian life in even greater depth. In Galatians Paul speaks even more directly to this topic and clearly draws forth its implications. In so doing he clarifies, amplifies, and confirms the interpretation of Romans 7:14-25 adopted here.

In Galatians Paul is sharply responding to his opponents who have been identified as "Jewish Christian judaizers from Jerusalem who were forcing the Galatians to be circumcised and to keep the Law."⁸⁶ As he speaks to the Galatian Christians⁸⁷ Paul scolds them: "I am astounded that you turned away so quickly from the one who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel" (1:6). Yet, as the letter continues, one observes that the Galatians are not so much abandoning faith in Jesus Christ as they are attempting to add something to it. At the urging and even insistence of these agitators, they are on the verge of submitting to circumci-

of Paul" (wäre völlig isoliert und analogielos unter allen Paulusbriefen"). However, even if Althaus was correct, this would not present an insurmountable objection. The fact that an interpretation of a section makes those verses unique among Paul's letters is not a sufficient criterion to reject that interpretation.

⁸⁶G. Howard, Paul: Crisis in Galatia, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 35 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 19; see also Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 466. For a complete discussion of the various theories, see Howard, 1-19.

⁸⁷His addressees were comprised of both Jewish and Gentile Christians as indicated by Gal. 3:28; 5:1-6; 6:12-15; Acts 13:42,48; 14:1,27.

sion and obedience to the Law as a necessary requirement for completing or maintaining their justified status before God (for example, 3:3).⁸⁸

For Paul this amounts to an abandonment of the Gospel. Paul vehemently argues that any gospel which includes obedience to the Law is really no Gospel at all. In order to prove this, he not only speaks to the issue of how one becomes righteous before God, he also addresses how one maintains this justified status. Paul's point is that reliance upon the Law, even as a means to maintain a proper standing with God, is futile and even damning (compare Rom. 7:1-8:4).

How does one become right with God? These Christians should know

that a man is not justified by works of the Law, but only through faith in Jesus Christ, we have also believed in Christ Jesus, in order that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the Law, because by works of the Law no flesh will be justified. . . . For if righteousness [were] through the Law, then Christ died for no purpose" (Gal. 2:16,21b).

In the intervening verses Paul employs the first person singular in a manner which parallels Romans 7:7-11 in content as well. Paul affirms that he has "died to the Law" (Gal. 2:19a). Concerning that Law he asserts, "For if I again

⁸⁸James Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," The John Rylands University Library Bulletin 65 (1982-83):107-10, theorizes that Paul is attacking the view that God's acknowledgment of covenantal status is bound up with and dependent upon the particular observances of circumcision and Jewish food laws. These were merely, *ibid.*, 107, "identity markers" or "badges of covenant membership." However, the manner in which Paul deals with the problem in Galatia and its ramifications reveal that Dunn's interpretation is too weak.

build these things which I have destroyed, I prove myself [to be] a transgressor" (2:18).

What then has "bewitched" the Galatians (*βασκαίνω*; 3:1)? Though they received the Spirit by faith (3:2), Paul identifies their particular problem by asking, "Having begun by the Spirit, are you now completing yourselves by the flesh?" (3:3). If they attempt to do so, Paul charges that their faith may indeed have been in vain (3:4). Why is this so? It is because those who are under the Law are under a curse. It has been written, "Cursed [is] everyone who does not abide by all the things which have been written in the Book of the Law to do them" (3:10; citing Deut. 27:26). Since no one is able to "do" the commands of the Law as God demands within the Torah, no one can be justified by them (2:16; 3:11-12; citing Lev. 18:5). On the contrary, the Scriptures condemn all people by locking all things up under sin (3:22).⁸⁹ Because of sin the Law is unable to give life to those under the Law (3:21-23; compare Rom. 7:10; 8:3). Just the opposite, it was added "for the sake of defining transgressions" (Gal. 3:19; compare Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:7-8).

But Paul declares that Christ has come and redeemed us from the curse which the Law placed upon us. He did this by becoming a curse for us on the tree of the cross (Gal. 3:13, 24). Now that faith has come believers are no longer under

⁸⁹Note the similarities with Romans 2:12-3:20; also Paul's use of Hab. 2:4 in Rom. 1:17 and Gal. 2:11; and Lev. 18:5 in Rom. 10:5 and Gal. 3:12.

the Law (3:25). Those who are righteous *ἐκ πίστεως* are, and always have been, those who receive the promise as true sons of Abraham (3:7-9,17-18).

Paul more sharply focuses his debate with the Galatian Christians who desire to stand before God on the basis of the Law by asking, "Tell me, those [of you] who wish to be under Law, do you not hear the Law?" (4:21). What is the problem with a believer who has been justified by faith in Christ wanting to be under the Law? Paul declares, "And I testify again to every man who allows himself to be circumcised that he is obligated to do the whole Law" (5:3; also 3:2,10). However, Paul has already excluded this as a possibility even for those who are justified and now alive before God (2:16; 3:10-11; compare Rom. 7:14-23). This is also true of the "agitators," about whom Paul concludes,

For those who allow themselves to be circumcised do not themselves keep the Law, but they are determined for you to be circumcised in order that they might boast in your flesh (6:13).

It is impossible for a believer to rely upon the Law as the means to maintain or complete his righteous standing before God. This is because the Law is not *ἐκ πίστεως* (3:12; compare Rom. 9:30-10:5). Rather, it demands doing, a doing which no one can accomplish to the extent the Law requires. Even the Spirit-led believer is hindered from fulfilling the Law as he is determined to do by the sinful desires of his own flesh (5:16-17). This is precisely the point Paul demonstrates in Romans 7:14-25.

In both Romans and Galatians Paul concludes that the Law is unable to give life because of sin (Gal. 3:21; Rom. 3:19-20; compare Rom. 7:10; 8:3). In Galatians Paul openly declares that the Law also places a curse upon those who possess righteousness through faith and who would again place themselves under the Law. To do so is to forfeit life. If any Galatian Christian submits to circumcision, he thereby obligates himself to do all that the Law commands (5:3). Paul draws out the consequences of this very sharply:

Behold, I, Paul, am telling you that if you allow yourselves to be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. . . . You have been separated from Christ, those of you who would be justified by the Law, you have fallen away from grace. . . . You were running well; who hindered you with the result that you are not persuaded by the truth? This persuasion [is] not from the one who called you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump (5:2,4,7-9).

The "little leaven" to which Paul refers is the attempt of Christians, who have been justified *by faith*, to now draw the Law into the arena of justification. They do this by submitting to the requirement of circumcision in order to demonstrate their membership in God's covenant. They do this by promoting the necessity of adhering to the commands of the Law in order to maintain their status as justified people. But Paul responds that to place oneself under the Law (4:21) is to submit once again to the lordship of the Law and, thus, to fall from God's grace.

Along with this stern rebuke, Paul encourages the Galatian Christians by directing them, first, to the Holy Spirit whom they have received (3:1-2). He affirms, "If you are

being led by the Spirit you are not under the Law" (5:18; compare 3:24-25). If the Spirit has worked faith in a person, the Law cannot effect its condemnation upon his inability to do all that the Law requires because of "the desires of the flesh" (5:16,17). Second, Paul points them to Christ. These Galatians are to follow Paul's own example:⁹⁰

But may it never be that I boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to [the] world (6:14).

Paul's use of "I" in this last passage prompts the question, "If Paul is addressing the same topic as he does in Romans 7:14-25, why did he not use the first person singular in Galatians as well?" First, Paul does do so briefly in Galatians 2:18-21. However, of greater significance is the fact that Paul is constrained to address an actual situation in writing to the Galatians. He is engaged in a critical argument with real-life believers whom he has brought to faith in Jesus Christ. His converts are on the verge of placing themselves under the Law's lordship and, thereby, are in danger of falling away from the Gospel. As a result, Paul employs the third person in order to rebuke his opponents and also heavily utilizes the second person to speak directly to the Galatian Christians.

⁹⁰See above, categories E,G, p. 374.

CONCLUSION

The third and fourth chapters of this thesis have determined the referent of the "I" in Romans 7:7-25. This was accomplished by comparing the sense/content of those verses, as determined in chapter two, with the sense/content of the other statements Paul makes about himself throughout his letters and in Acts, as well as with the more general statements he makes about believers and unbelievers. Chapter five has demonstrated the pragmatic aspects involved in Paul's use of the first person singular in Romans 7. We now return to the focus of chapter two. In light of the issues resolved in the intervening chapters, the conclusion of this thesis will summarize the semantic content of Romans 7. What is the sense or meaning of what Paul is saying in Romans 7:7-25?

Paul announces and briefly describes the Gospel which he proclaims throughout his letter to the Romans in the seventeenth verse of chapter one. This Gospel is the one in which "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (1:17). Precisely what Paul means by the phrase *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν* is a matter of great dispute.¹ In any event the

¹C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols., The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979), 1:99-100, gives his usual thorough treatment

repetition of *πίστις* certainly underscores the place of faith. As Paul proceeds to elaborate upon the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* (1:16) in this Epistle, chapters 1-8 are properly evaluated as the primary exposition of Paul's teaching on the topic. But what is the place of chapter 7? What purpose does it serve within the entire book of Romans?

In Paul and Palestinian Judaism, E. P. Sanders defines the essence or function of a religion in terms of "*how getting in and staying in are understood.*"² Sanders applies this definition to first-century Judaism which, he contends, was characterized by "covenantal nomism."³ By this Sanders means that the predominant belief among the Jews of the time was that salvation was granted to them freely by God's election and that submitting to the commands of his Law was merely viewed as the required response or the means of "staying in" the covenant.⁴

of the options. He concludes, 100, that this phrase most probably has "much the same effect as the 'sola' of 'sola fide'." Compare the interesting use of *ἐκ* and *εἰς* in 2 Cor. 2:16.

²E. P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 17.

³According to *ibid.*, 75, "Covenantal nomism is the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression." He later adds, 420, "Obedience maintains one's position in the covenant, but does not earn God's grace as such."

⁴*Ibid.*, 141, 146-47, 420. He asserts, 420, that statements which "sound like" legalism are not to be taken as doctrine but as exhortations toward obedience which "main-

Whether Sanders's analysis of first-century Judaism is correct or not is a matter of dispute.⁵ But if his definition of the vital essence of a religion is appropriate, perhaps it gives an important insight not only into the phrase *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν* (Rom. 1:17), but also into the structure of Romans and, especially, the place of the seventh chapter within that letter.

Paul does not speak specifically in terms of "getting into God's covenant" in Romans.⁶ Rather, in somewhat broader fashion, he addresses the issue of how one can and cannot become righteous before God. Paul asserts that a person is not justified before God "by works of the Law" but by faith in Jesus Christ, the One in whom God has fulfilled his promise to Abraham (3:28; see also 2:1-4:25, especially 3:22,26; 4:13-16; 9:30-10:13). It is purely, totally, and completely *ἐκ πίστεως* that one receives what God has accomplished through

tains one's position in the covenant."

⁵See, for example, James Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," The John Rylands University Library Bulletin 65 (1982-83):95-122; Jacob Neusner, "Comparing Judaisms," History of Religions 18 (1978):177-91; A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Paul and the Law," Scottish Journal of Theology 38 (1985):613-22.

⁶In Galatians Paul speaks explicitly in terms of the covenant (3:15-18; 4:22-31, especially v. 24), but he does not do so in Romans until chapters 9-11. There he speaks in the plural of the "covenants" which belong to Israel (9:4). The only other occurrence of the term *διαθήκη* in Romans is in Paul's Old Testament citation in 11:27 (apparently a conflation of Jer. 31:33 and Is. 27:9). Perhaps his scant use of the term is indicative of Paul's view that the redemption accomplished through Christ has fulfilled the covenant and eliminated its nationalistic restrictions.

the death of his Son (3:21-26). This is the only way that God's eschatological verdict of "Righteous" can be attained and possessed with certainty already in the present age.

Does Paul, in Romans, address the issue of how one "remains in" the covenant or maintains his justified status? Once again, Paul does not speak specifically in terms of maintaining one's place in the covenant. But he does deal with the topic of how the believer's justified status is either retained or forfeited. One clear example of this is in chapter eleven. There Paul depicts Gentile Christians as the wild olive branches which God has grafted into his tree, Israel (v. 17). Paul warns these Gentile believers that their standing is not unalterable. Although God's calling is indeed irrevocable (v. 29), they should not become arrogant over against the people of Israel (v. 18). Indeed, if God did not spare the unbelieving and disobedient branches which by nature belonged to the tree, how much less will the grafted-in Gentiles be spared if they too fall away into unbelief (vv. 20,23, 30)? Paul concludes,

Behold, therefore, [the] kindness and severity of God; upon those who fell, severity, but upon you (σὲ), [the] kindness of God, if you remain in [his] kindness, otherwise you will also be cut-off (11:22).

In this argument Paul contends that an individual believer⁷ continues or remains (ἐπιμένω) in God's gracious kindness

⁷The second person singular form in Rom. 11:22 is interesting. It speaks to each individual believer as the first person singular in 7:7-25 is also able to do; compare also the second person singular in 8:2.

(*χρηστότης*) the same way in which he becomes righteous. A believer has been established righteous before God in faith and retains that righteous standing in the same way (*οὐ δὲ τῇ πίστει ἔστηκας*; perfect of *ἵστημι*; v. 20). It is *ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν* (1:17).

These insights support the conclusion that Paul uses Romans 7 to exclude the possibility of anyone attempting either to become righteous or to maintain a righteous standing before God by observing the Law. All those who are under the Law's lordship (7:1) or who rely upon the Law before God (2:17) are, rather, condemned by the Law. This is because God's Law requires man's "doing" (2:13,25; 10:5 citing Lev. 18:5; see also Gal. 3:10-12, citing Deut. 27:26 and Lev. 18:5) and no one, not even the believer, is able to fulfill the Law to the extent God requires (Rom. 3:19-20; 7:14-25; Gal. 2:16; 3:11). In Romans 7:7-25 Paul vividly illustrates why this is so from the experience of his own life. The Law's command had no positive role in his attainment of the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* (vv. 7-11); neither was Paul's continued justified status a matter of first faith and then obedience to the Law (vv. 14-25). His own life exemplifies why it is "impossible" (Rom. 8:3) to use the Law as a means to earn or maintain God's favor.

Why does Paul speak to this issue while writing to the Christians in Rome? Verses 7-13 are certainly applicable to unbelieving Jews who are addressed in a rhetorical manner

and characterized as relying on the Law throughout the Epistle (particularly 2:17-3:18; 9-11).⁸ However, Paul is *not* using verses 14-25 to attack those who attempt to *gain* a righteous standing before God by obeying the Law's commands.⁹ Rather, as Andrew Bandstra observes, "The Apostle was well aware of the threat of Christians returning to the bondage of the law" (7:1).¹⁰ Franz Leenhardt similarly proposes that Paul,

⁸The significance of his earlier struggles in Galatia may also be a factor; see above, pp. 402-8.

⁹This is often suggested. For example, F. F. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, rev. ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1963), 136-37, concludes, "In this section of Romans Paul tells us more clearly than anywhere else how he found the law so inadequate as a way to secure a righteous standing before God." According to John A. T. Robertson, Wrestling with Romans (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 85, Paul's point here is that the Law is powerless to "bring life." Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, tr. C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 296-97, also argues that the Law's position in the Christian life is "essentially negative, since even the Christian cannot attain to righteousness by way of the law." For Paul the believer already has life and has already "attained to righteousness" before God. Paul is addressing what the Law effects *within one who is already righteous*. His purpose is to eliminate the possibility of even a believer being able to rely on the Law to maintain his status before God. James Dunn, "Rom. 7,14-25 in the Theology of Paul," Theologische Zeitschrift 31 (1975):268, n. 56, properly critiques Nygren on this point.

¹⁰Andrew Bandstra, The Law and Elements of the World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, n.d.), 149. Ronald Fung, "The Impotence of the Law: Toward a Fresh Understanding of Romans 7:14-25," in Scripture and Tradition, and Interpretation, ed. W. Gasque and W. LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 42,45, contends that these verses speak of an immature or legalistic Christian. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 143, similarly contends, "Paul may have known believers who were nevertheless living in legal bondage because they had not appreciated or appropriated the fullness of gospel freedom." The last two statements, however, imply that there is some middle ground for Paul. Paul's

as in Galatians, is opposing "Judaizing temptations."¹¹ Paul's words in verses 14-25 serve to rebuke any Christian who tries to maintain or complete his salvation through the performance of works done in accordance with God's will as revealed in his Word.

Paul responds to that erroneous view of the Christian life particularly in Romans 7:14-25. There he endeavors to show why the Law, even though it is Spiritual and holy (7:14, 12), even though it informs and directs the will of the believer, can accomplish nothing *coram Deo* for fleshly man.¹² If there were Christians who believed that they maintained their justified status by living according to the Law, Paul soundly rebukes that approach. So also, if first-century Judaism did in fact contend that obedience to the Law's commands enabled one to "stay in" God's covenant,¹³ Paul similarly rejects that view. Paul's crucial point in Romans 7:14-25 is that the Law cannot be relied upon as that which *maintains* the justified believer's continued righteous, pure, and holy

discussion of this same issue in Galatians excludes this; see above, pp. 402-8; also n. 3, p. 300.

¹¹Franz Leenhardt, The Epistle to the Romans, tr. H. Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), 198; similarly, Matthew Black, Commentary on Romans, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1973), 100. See the discussion of Galatians above, pp. 402-8. Leenhardt, 198, adds, "This relapse into legalism and moralism is a failing characteristic of Christians." Perhaps it is a constant temptation and an enduring tendency, but to call it a "characteristic failing" is too extreme.

¹²Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 91.

¹³As Sanders contends; see above, n. 3, p. 410.

standing before God.

Is Romans 7 then a "defense of the Law"?¹⁴ The "I" is used by Paul in verses 7-25 to describe the actual effects which the Law's command had in relation to sin and death upon him as an unbeliever (vv. 7-11; see 1 Tim. 1:13) and, then, to portray the Law's "double effect" on him as a Christian (vv. 14-25).¹⁵ It is true that "above all *Hamartia* . . . is the object of Paul's attack in this chapter."¹⁶ But the fact that an interrelationship between the Law and sin exists is what necessitates Paul's statements in defense of the Law. Certainly, then, one of Paul's major concerns in this chapter, as revealed especially by his assertions in verses 12-13, is to exonerate the Law from blame. In addition, verses 14-25 affirm that the Spiritual Law informs the believer of God's will and directs him toward the good and away from evil. However, as the end of Romans 7 is reached, and as the initial verses of chapter 8 make even more clear, verses 7-25 ultimately "cannot be meant as an apology for the law."¹⁷ For while Paul defends and vindicates the Law, "at the same

¹⁴As suggested above, p. 85, n. 52.

¹⁵See above, point 2, p. 176; pp. 178-80, 388-90. Gerd Theissen, Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology, tr. J. Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 190, states, "Both section of the text make the point that the law leads into conflict, not in principle, but functionally."

¹⁶Black, 104; also Ernst Gaugler, Der Brief an die Römer, Prophezei, 2 vols. (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1945), 1:204-5.

¹⁷Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, tr. and ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 210.

time, as suggested by v. 6, the Apostle wishes to demonstrate the inadequacy of the law for salvation."¹⁸ As a result, Paul's praise of the Law in this chapter is neither unequivocal nor unlimited. Paul himself had been deceived and then killed by sin through the Law's command (vv. 7-11). And even now, as a Christian, though he joyfully agrees with the Law and willingly strives to carry it out, Paul cannot do so (vv. 14-25). This is because the Law is weakened "through the flesh" (Rom. 8:3; compare 7:14).

Romans 7 reveals an aspect of Paul's theology which dare not be neglected. His main point is to illustrate why no one can, in any way, depend upon the Law either for earning (vv. 7-11) or maintaining his righteousness before God (vv. 14-25). Through his use of the "I," Paul demonstrates precisely why a person is unable to rely upon his own observance of the Law. It is because sin, which reigns in the flesh of unbelievers, is able to misuse the Law's commandment in order to provoke sin, to deceive, and to kill (vv. 7-11,13). It is because sin, which continues to dwell in the believer's flesh and to work in his members, is able to prohibit him from doing what the Law requires (vv. 14-25). As long as the believer remains in this world, there is that within him, namely, his sinful flesh, which remains totally corrupted by sin. Paul's own example affirms that this is true even after a person has been justified from sin by faith in Jesus Christ

¹⁸Bandstra, 134.

and freed from the lordship of sin, death, and the Law (Rom. 6:7).

As a result, the content of what the "I" speaks in Romans 7:14-25 fits squarely within Paul's view of the Christian life. If a believer, indeed, even if Paul attempts to rely upon his observance of the Law for retaining his righteous standing before God, he is subject, once again, to the Law's condemnation and to the same accusations leveled against the Jew in 2:17-24.¹⁹ Paul is using the first person singular in order to make this point very clear to his readers: "Do not rely upon the Law for that which it is impossible for the Law to accomplish because of sin which dwells in the flesh."

At the same time, throughout his letters Paul urges believers to follow the lead of the Spirit who renews and directs their will, mind, and inner man to strive to fulfill the Law in their daily lives. However, even after being justified by faith, believers must remain aware that their actions fail to live up to the Law's demands. Since the desires of their sinful flesh prohibit them from fulfilling all of the requirements of the Law, they cannot base their continued status as a justified believer on their obedience to the Law.

But while the Law's command is "unable," the Gospel de-

¹⁹See *ibid.*, 144; earlier in Romans Paul has generally used the second person to draw out the tragic consequences for those Jews who are relying upon the Law (2:17-29; 3:19-20; see also vv. 1-16).

clares that God has fulfilled the just requirement (*δικαίωμα*) of the Law in Jesus Christ (8:3-4). The Law can no longer effect its condemnation against those who are "in" him (8:1). As a result, Paul exhorts Christians to be ever cognizant that the Gospel is what has made, and also keeps, them holy because it proclaims and continuously delivers the forgiveness and righteousness Christ has won for them. When they do fall away from the Spirit's leading, as the believer in this world will inevitably do, it is only the Gospel of Jesus Christ which can continue to cover them with God's grace.

In Romans 7 Paul decisively proves that his and our righteous standing before God is not and cannot be either earned or maintained by the Law's command. Rather, it must be and, in fact, has already been accomplished solely by God's action in Jesus Christ. Paul reveals this when he draws his conclusion regarding the Law in the initial verses of chapter 8: "For what was impossible for the Law in that it was weakened by the flesh, God [accomplished] by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (8:3a). Faith in Jesus Christ alone establishes *and maintains* a righteous standing before God. The *δικαιοσύνη* θεοῦ is received and retained ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (1:16-17).

APPENDIX ONE
A SURVEY OF INTERPRETATIONS OF THE "I" IN
ROMANS 7 IN SOURCES PRIOR TO 1900

The analysis conducted in chapter one covered the contemporary interpretations of the "I" in Romans 7:7-25. However, the introduction to this thesis noted that a division of interpretations has surrounded Romans 7 "from the earliest centuries until today."¹ For historical perspective it will be helpful to survey a number of the identifications which were made of the "I" in the centuries prior to our own.² These will be presented in the same format as was utilized in chapter one.

Romans 7:7-11

Paul

As early as Origen (circa 185-245), the difficulties

¹James Dunn, "Rom. 7,14 in the Theology of Paul," in Theologische Zeitschrift 31 (1975):257; cited above, p. 7, n. 20.

²For a more extensive survey, see Otto Kuss, Der Römerbrief, 3 vols. (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1963), 2:462-85, entitled "Zur Geschichte der Auslegung von Röm 7,7-25"; Werner Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929; reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament: Zwei Studien, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), especially 76-97, 109, 119-20.

involved in applying Romans 7:9 to Paul's own life were recognized. Origen contends that Paul was never alive apart from the Law of Moses ("*sine lege Moysi*").³ Yet he is able to resolve the issue in a manner which maintains Paul as the "I." When and how was Paul living "apart from the Law" (*χωρὶς νόμου*; 7:9)? Origen answers that Paul is not using *νόμος* here to refer to the Mosaic Law, but to the Law "which is written in the human heart."⁴ Origen then applies this phrase to the time when "both Paul and all men are certain to have formerly lived, that is, in early childhood."⁵

Augustine (354-430) further amplifies this line of interpretation. He proposes that Paul was living apart from the Law in his earliest years ("*ab infantia*") before his rational powers took hold ("*ante rationales annos*").⁶ According to Augustine, verse 9a "should be understood to mean, 'I seemed to be alive' [*vivere mihi videbar*], since before the

³Origen, "Commentaria in epistolam b. Pauli ad Romanos," Latin translation by Rufinius, in Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 14 (Paris: 1862), col. 1082.

⁴Ibid., col. 1080, "illa lex, quae in hominum cordibus scripta est."

⁵Ibid., 1082, "Sine hac lege et Paulum et omnes homines certum est aliquando vixisse, hoc est in aetate puerili."

⁶Augustine, "Contra duas Epistolas Pelagianorum," in Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 44 (Paris: 1865), 8.14, col. 558, "haec omnia potest videri apostolus de sua vita commemorasse praeterita, ut illud, quod ait, 'ego autem vivebam aliquando sine lege', aetatem suam primam ab infantia ante rationales annos voluerit intelligi."

command sin lay hidden."⁷ The coming of the commandment (v. 9b) then signifies that "sin began to make itself known, and moreover I came to recognize [*cognovi*] that I was dead."⁸

In his lectures on Romans from 1515-16, Martin Luther (1483-1546) clearly identifies the "I" in Romans 7:7-11 as Paul, but extends the application of these verses to the experience of others as well. Paul "is speaking of his own person and of all the saints."⁹ How does Luther then interpret this passage? In his gloss on verse 9 he writes,

*And I was once, just as anyone else, alive, not because there was no law, apart from the Law, apart from a knowledge of the Law and therefore also without sin, but when the commandment came, came to be known, sin, which previously had been dead because it was not known, revived.*¹⁰

The coming of the commandment denotes the occasion when "we recognize that we have been made subject" to the old man and

⁷Augustine, Augustine on Romans, text and tr. P. Landes, Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations, no. 23, Early Christian Literature Series, no. 6 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 14-15.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Martin Luther, "Lectures on Romans: Glosses and Scholia" (1515-16), Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 25, ed. H. Oswald, tr. W. G. Tillmanns and J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 61, in his gloss on verse 10; see also idem., "Der Brief an die Römer" (1516-17), D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimar Ausgabe, Band 56, ed. F. Ficker (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1938), 68, n. 2, "loquitur in persona sua et omnium sanctorum." It should be noted that this is "Early" Luther.

¹⁰Luther, "Lectures on Romans," 61; see also idem., "Der Brief an die Römer," 67, which speaks of the period when Paul was "*sine cognitione legis*."

to sin through the Law.¹¹

The question of when the "I" in verses 7-11 refers to Paul cannot be determined precisely from Luther's commentary.¹² On the one hand, it seems that Luther understands the "I" in Romans 7 as descriptive of the Christian Paul beginning already in verse 7. After citing 7:7, Luther states,

From this passage on to the end of the chapter the apostle is speaking in his own person and as a spiritual man and by no means merely in the person of a carnal man.¹³

Luther proceeds to detail twelve reasons which support this contention.¹⁴ However, none of the passages he cites in that section are from verses 7-11. This points toward an alternate possibility. Did Luther view verses 7-11 as applicable to Paul prior to his conversion? In his explanation of the manner in which sin lies dead apart from the Law (v. 8), Luther cites Augustine's reference to the time when a child's reason awakens.¹⁵ Luther says,

¹¹Martin Luther, "Lectures on Romans," 58, note 6.

¹²Kümmel, Römer 7, 77, suggests that "the opinion of the Reformers" ("die Meinung der Reformatoren") was that "the 'coming of the commandment' . . . signified the conversion" of Paul ("das 'Kommen des Gebotes' . . . bezeichne die Bekehrung"). This is not the interpretation of Luther, however. More appropriate to Luther is Kümmel's later statement, *ibid.*, 88, which contends that the Reformers, except for Bucer and Musculus, support interpreting verses 7-25 of Paul the Christian.

¹³Martin Luther, "Lectures on Romans," 327.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 327-36.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 337, after citing Augustine with approval; see *ibid.*, n. 8, which refers to Augustine, "Contra Julianum," Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 44

The Law revives and sin begins to make its appearance when the Law begins to be recognized; then concupiscence which had lain quiet during infancy breaks forth and becomes manifest.¹⁶

This description would certainly allow placing these verses in the period prior to Paul's conversion. But Luther then finds "a still deeper meaning" in verses 7-11 and applies what they describe to those "who are children in their understanding even if they are a hundred years old."¹⁷ Since Luther believed that the Christian's battle against the old man continues throughout his earthly life, verses 7-11 are also applicable to Paul after his conversion. According to Luther, then, these verses are descriptive of Paul *both* before *and* after his conversion.¹⁸

In his commentary on Romans, John Calvin (1509-64) proposes an interpretation of verses 7-11 which is similar to the one adopted in this thesis.¹⁹ Calvin contends that Paul begins with a "universal proposition" (vv. 7-8), but

(Paris: 1865), 2.4.8, col. 679; see also above, pp. 421-22.

¹⁶Martin Luther, "Lectures on Romans," 337.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸This is because Luther does not distinguish between the solely negative effect which the Law has upon the "I" in verses 7-11 and the "twofold servitude" of the "I" to the Law in verses 14-25. Luther, *ibid.*, 336, does specifically identify the latter.

¹⁹See above, pp. 261-78.

then proceeds "by his [own] example" (vv. 9-11).²⁰ Paul was living apart from the Law (v. 9a) when "he, being void of the Spirit . . . did please himself in the external show of righteousness."²¹ Though "Paul did mount higher than the common capacity of man is able to reach,"²² the Law finally came to him (v. 9b) as a "minister of death."²³ Then "the filthiness of [his] sin was revealed by the law."²⁴

Adam

Throughout history a number of exegetes have identified the "I" in Romans 7:7-11 with the experience of Adam. Those who advocate this position generally contend that Adam's experience is also, and generally, applicable to others. Methodius (died circa 311) identifies the time "without the Law" in verse 9 as the days in Paradise and then quotes Genesis 2:17 in reference to the coming of the commandment.²⁵ Theodore of Mopsuestia (circa 350-428) contends that through the "I" Paul is utilizing the experience of Adam as an example (ὁπρό-

²⁰ John Calvin, Commentary upon the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans, tr. C. Rosdell, ed. H. Beveridge (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 177.

²¹ Ibid., 178.

²² Ibid., 176.

²³ Ibid., 178.

²⁴ Ibid., 179.

²⁵ Methodius, "Ex libro de resurrectione," in Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 18 (Paris: 1857), col. 297.

δειγμα).²⁶ Theodoret (circa 390-457) also identifies the "I" with Adam who received the sentence of death after sin sprang to life.²⁷

The Jewish People

John Chrysostom (circa 374-407) disagrees with those who interpret the commandment in Romans 7:9b in terms of either the "natural law"²⁸ or the commandment given in Paradise (Gen. 2:17).²⁹ He asserts that νόμος must be a reference to the Mosaic Law.³⁰ Chrysostom then identifies the time before the Law's coming (7:9a) as the period before Moses.³¹ As a result, the "I" represents the experience of the Jewish people to whom the commandment came at Mount Sinai. This interpretation is adopted by Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). He contends that the first person singular pronoun in verse 9 denotes the "people of Israel who indeed lived before the Law, namely

²⁶Theodore of Mopsuestia, "Epistolam ad Romanos" (fragments), in Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 66 (Paris: 1864), col. 809; see also col. 811.

²⁷Theodoret, "Ἑρμηνεία τῆς πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐπιστολῆς," in Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 82 (Paris: 1864), col. 117.

²⁸See, for example, Origen, as discussed above, pp. 420-21.

²⁹See, for example, Methodius, as discussed above, p. 425.

³⁰John Chrysostom, "Ἑρμηνεία τῆς πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐπιστολῆς," in Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 60 (Paris: 1862), col. 502.

³¹Ibid., 501, "πότε, εἶπε μοι; πρὸ Μωϋσέως"

in Egypt."³²

A General Use of the "I"

Werner Kümmel suggests that Ambrosiaster (active circa 363-84) was the first to advocate a more general interpretation of the "I" which is similar to his own.³³ Ambrosiaster disputes that the first person singular in Romans 7:7-11 is used by Paul to refer either to the Jews or to Christians who are devoting themselves to live in accordance with the Law.³⁴ Specifically in regard to the last phrase in verse 7, he concludes that Paul "brings up his own person as a general case."³⁵ Augustine's initial interpretation of verses 7-25 is comparable.³⁶ He writes, "It appears to me that at this place the Apostle transfigures in himself a man placed under the Law, he is speaking of himself by [these] words from his own person."³⁷ Pelagius (circa 400) also advocates

³²Hugo Grotius, Annotationes in Novum Testamentum, Ed. nova. Tom. II. Erlangen: 1757, 267, "id est genus Israeliticum, vixit et ante legem, in Aegypto scilicet"; cited from Kümmel, Römer 7, 85.

³³Kümmel, Römer 7, 87.

³⁴Ambrosiaster, "Commentaria in XIII epistolas beati Pauli," in Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 17 (Paris: 1879), cols. 112-13, on Rom. 7:5.

³⁵Ibid., col. 114, "sub sua persona quasi generalem agit causam."

³⁶Circa 388-97; but compare his later interpretation below, p. 431.

³⁷Augustine, "De Diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum," in Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 40 (Paris: 1887), col. 103, "quo loco videtur mihi Apostolus

the view that "here in his own person [Paul] is speaking of man who receives the Law."³⁸ Johann Bengel (1687-1752) adopts a similar position. He contends,

Paul often puts forth an indefinite discourse through the first person, not only for the sake of clarity, but for a general application to himself. It is so in this place.³⁹

The "rhetorical" interpretation of the "I" in Romans 7:7-11 has been present throughout history. However, one should not identify this completely with Kümmel's view which asserts that the "I" is totally without any connection to Paul's own experience.⁴⁰ Those who previously advocated a more general interpretation of the "I" in verses 7-11 seem to be in closer agreement with Origen who identifies the subject in these verses as "Paul and all men."⁴¹

Romans 7:14-25

Kümmel points out that the issue which has received

transfigurasse in se hominem sub lege positum, cuius verbis e person sua loquitur."

³⁸Pelagius, "Expositiones XIII Epistularum Pauli," in Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum, ed. Adelberto Hamman, vol. 1 (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1958), 1142, "hinc in persona eius hominis loquitur, qui legem accipit."

³⁹Johann Bengel, Gnomon Novi Testamenti, 3rd ed. (Tubingae: Sumtibus Ludov. Frid. Fues., 1855), 560, "Saepe Paulus indefinitum sermonem proponit per primam personam, non solum perspicuitatis gratia, sed ex perpetua applicatione ad se ipsum. Et sic hoc loco."

⁴⁰See, for example, Kümmel, Römer 7, 84; also above, pp. 21-24.

⁴¹Origen, col. 1082, "Paulum et omnes homines." See the citations from Augustine and Pelagius above, pp. 427-28.

the greatest amount of attention in the history of the church is not whether the "I" portrayed in verses 14-25 is Paul or not, but whether the "I" there is a regenerate or unregenerate person.⁴² While the latter question has dominated the discussion of these verses, and continues to be a major point of contention, the issue of whether Paul himself is to be identified as the "I" has not been completely overlooked.

In the Name of Unregenerate Man

Origen questions whether the "I" in these verses is Paul and then suggests that Paul might be speaking of another.⁴³ On verse 25 Origen concludes that Paul is not, in fact, speaking "of his own person but from his apostolic authority."⁴⁴ Origen identifies the description in verses 14-25 as that of an unregenerate person and this view was adopted by "the mass of Greek Fathers," as well as by some of those in the West.⁴⁵ Among the latter, Augustine can be included, but only in his earlier years (circa 388-97). In

⁴²Kümmel, Römer 7, 76; he contends that Augustine was the first to apply these verses explicitly to Paul's own life and that Luther then championed this view.

⁴³Origen, col. 1085, "Nam Paulus qui in aliis dixit."

⁴⁴Ibid., col. 1089, "jam non ex illius person, sed ex apostolica auctoritate."

⁴⁵William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 184. Kümmel, Römer 7, 119-20, identifies Chrysostom and Theodoret in the East, as well as Ambrosiaster, Pelagius, and Julian in the West, among those who advocate a non-Christian interpretation.

his "Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans," Augustine writes the following concerning verses 15-16:

The man described here is under the Law, prior to grace; sin overcomes him when by his own strength he attempts to live righteously without the aid of God's liberating grace.⁴⁶

A number of those who agree with Augustine's initial view have attempted to define Paul's use of the first person singular in a variety of different ways. For example, Hugo Grotius refers to the verb μετασχηματίζω in 1 Corinthians 4:6 and contends that Paul is similarly applying the description in Romans 7 to himself in a figurative manner.⁴⁷

Paul and other Christians

Among the Greek Fathers, only Methodius appears to have held the position that Paul is speaking of his present Christian life in verses 14-25.⁴⁸ In the West this interpretation was more common. For example, Ambrose (circa 340-97) contends,

The Apostle himself, [as] a chosen vessel of the Lord, speaks: [cites Rom. 7:23]. But he himself was not able [to overcome] in this fight and therefore he flees to

⁴⁶Augustine, Augustine on Romans, 17. Ibid., 19, contends that Paul "begins to describe the man constituted under grace" in verse 25.

⁴⁷Grotius, 267; cited from Kümmel, Römer 7, 120. See also the other suggestions noted and then rejected by Kümmel, *ibid.*, 120-21.

⁴⁸Methodius, cols 299-301; he, col. 301, compares the state of the "I" with the experience of David by citing Psalm 18:13-14 (Septuagint). Kümmel, Römer 7, 90, contends that Methodius was the only one of the Greek fathers to hold this position; see also Sanday and Headlam, 185.

Christ saying: [cites v. 24].⁴⁹

However, Augustine's interpretation of these verses is the one which proves most interesting. In his later writings (circa 418-19), Augustine explicitly repudiates his earlier position⁵⁰ and contends that verses 14-25 depict Paul's present condition. He refers to these verses as a place where Paul,

by introducing his own person, instructs us saying, "For what I wish, this I do not perform, but what I hate, that I do," that is by concupiscence, because this [concupiscence] is also not willing to do, so that everything is perfected [only] in part.⁵¹

Thomas Aquinas (circa 1225-1274) refers to Augustine's two different interpretations and concludes that this, his second position, is "ever so much better."⁵²

⁴⁹Ambrose, "De Abraham Libro Duo," in Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 14 (Paris: 1882), 2.6.27, col. 490, "ipse apostolus, vas electionis dominicae, dicit: [cites Rom. 7:23]. Sedare hanc pugnam ipse nequiverat, et ideo ad Christum confugit dicens: [cites v. 24]."

⁵⁰See Augustine, "Retractionum S. Augustini," Books 1 and 2, in Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 32 (Paris: 1845), 1.23.1, cols. 620-21 and 2.1.1, cols. 629-30.

⁵¹Augustine, "De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia," Book 2, in Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: 1865): 27.30, col. 431, "et alio loco apostolus loquens velut ex suae personae introductione nos instruit dicens: 'non enim quod volo, hoc ago, sed quod odi, illud facio', id est concupisco, quia et hoc nollet facere, ut esset omni ex parte perfectus." Kümmel, Römer 7, 90-94, discusses the source and significance of Augustine's change in interpretation at length. A key point is that the desire toward evil is no longer understood in terms of sexual lust and adultery but is seen as rational desire or concupiscence as in the citation here.

⁵²Thomas Aquinas, Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura, ed. P. Raphaelis Cai, 13th ed., rev. (Rome: Marietti Editori, 1953), 101, "quamvis secunda expositio melior sit."

Martin Luther addresses this question specifically in response to Nicholas of "Lyra and others [who] say that the apostle is speaking regarding the person of some degraded man and not of his own person."⁵³ Luther contends that Paul

is speaking of his own person and of all the saints and of the abysmal darkness of our heart, by which even the saints and the wisest men have nothing but an imperfect concept of themselves and thus of the Law.⁵⁴

In an extensive discussion of these verses, Luther enumerates twelve points in favor of his interpretation that Paul here describes himself, as well as other Christians.⁵⁵ The "I" cannot be an unbeliever because this struggle against sin is "never heard of in the case of carnal man."⁵⁶ Luther concludes that the "I" must be a believer whom he defines as follows:

The saints at the same time as they are righteous are also sinners [*quod simul Sancti, dum sunt Iusti, sunt peccatores*]; righteous because they believe in Christ, whose righteousness covers them and is imputed to them, but sinners because they do not fulfill the Law, are not without concupiscence, and are like sick men under the care

⁵³Luther, "Lectures on Romans," 61, note 15.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵See *ibid.*, 326-36. Luther does not completely separate the two parts of a Christian which battle one against the other, but rather unites them together in the "I." He, *ibid.*, 332, concludes, "Therefore we must note that the words 'I want' and 'I hate' refer to the spiritual man or to the spirit, but 'I do' and 'I work' refer to the carnal man or to the flesh. But because the same one complete man consists of flesh and spirit, therefore he attributes to the whole man both of these opposing qualities which come from the opposing parts of him."

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 335.

of a physician.⁵⁷

Luther also identifies one of the effects which Paul's admittance of his own sinfulness might have upon his readers.

It is a comfort to hear that such a great apostle was involved in the same sorrows and afflictions as we are when we try to be obedient to God.⁵⁸

Calvin similarly refutes the "common error" which proposes that all of Romans 7 describes "the nature of unregenerate man."⁵⁹ He responds that in verses 14-25 Paul is speaking of the faithful in whom the Spirit flourishes. The Apostle is illustrating "the consent of a sound [believing] mind with the righteousness of the law, because the flesh cannot hate sin."⁶⁰

Augustine's later interpretation of the "I" as a regenerate man dominated for a number of centuries in this millennium due to the influential support it received from Aquinas and the Reformers. However, as illustrated in the first chapter of this thesis, the tide of current scholarly opinion has turned toward the conclusion that Augustine's earlier position, which identified the "I" in verses 14-24 as an unbeliever,

⁵⁷Ibid., 336; the Latin is cited from idem., "Der Brief an die Römer," 347.

⁵⁸Luther, "Lectures on Romans," 335; see chapter five of this thesis, pp. 395-97, 398-401. In the light of statements such as this, Kümmel, Römer 7, 95, concludes that the reason Luther adopted his interpretation of Romans 7 was largely due to his own religious experience.

⁵⁹Calvin, 185.

⁶⁰Ibid., 186.

was correct. Kümmel concludes that "this interpretation, generally widespread in the case of Catholics, has become the usual [one] among Protestant exegetes."⁶¹

Conclusion

While one or the other interpretation of the "I" in Romans 7:7-25 has prevailed at times, this brief overview illustrates that a variety of identifications have been made, and have persisted, throughout the history of the church. Since the earliest centuries of the New Testament era, interpreters have been aware of the difficulties presented by Paul's use of the first person singular in Romans 7:7-25 and these difficulties continue to confound exegetes in our own day.

This survey also reveals that the various identifications of the "I" which are currently being advocated are not, at least in their basic form, without precedent. Each of the interpretations discussed in the first chapter of this thesis has its source or, at least, a background and foundation within the history of interpretation.

⁶¹Kümmel, Römer 7, 95, "Seither ist diese Auslegung, bei den Katholiken allgemein verbreitet, auch unter den protestantischen Auslegern die übliche geworden." With "since then" ("seither"), Kümmel, *ibid.*, refers to Philipp Spener (1635-1705) who questioned whether verses 18-19 could be true of Paul and then identifies August H. Francke (1663-1727) as the one who adopted, and began to turn the tide back toward, the non-Christian interpretation of verses 14-25. *Ibid.*, 95-96, admits that the later Augustinian position is still defended in a variety of forms, citing, for example, Paul Feine, M. R. Engel, and Theodor Zahn.

APPENDIX TWO

THE TEXT OF ROMANS 7:24-25

The flow of the text in Romans 7:24-25 has prompted a number of speculative proposals. Some of these were identified in the first chapter of this thesis,¹ but it will be helpful to supplement that discussion with a more detailed treatment.

A rearrangement of the verses has been suggested which places verse 25b before verse 24. F. Müller suggests that Paul's intended order is 7:22,23,25b,24,25a; 8:2,1,3.² His argument is accepted by Otto Michel who concludes that 25b "must be placed between v. 23 and v. 24" and suggests that 8:2 should follow immediately after the thanksgiving in 25a.³ A rearrangement of these verses is also adopted in James Moffatt's translation,⁴ by C. H. Dodd,⁵ and considered by

¹See above, pp. 42-43,56-57.

²F. Müller, "Zwei Marginalien im Brief des Paulus an die Römer," Zeitschrift 40 (1941):249-54. He contends that 7:24-25a and 8:2 were originally written by Paul in the margin in order to connect 7:25b and 8:1. They were, however, misplaced very early.

³Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Römer, Kritischer-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 13th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966), 179-80, "dann müsste er zwischen V 23 und V 24 eingeordnet werden."

⁴James Moffatt, A New Translation of the Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), 194.

Matthew Black.⁶ Even though there is no textual evidence to support it,⁷ Dodd defends this position by concluding, "We cannot avoid trusting our own judgment against their evidence."⁸ F. F. Bruce responds, "It is precarious to rearrange the words of Paul in the interests of a smoother logical sequence."⁹

Verse 25b has also been evaluated as a later interpretive gloss.¹⁰ Rudolf Bultmann argues that it is a gloss and not a rearrangement of the original text because the "resolve" ("Absicht") to fulfill the Law which is present in 25b is

⁵C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Fontana Books, 1959), 132-33.

⁶Matthew Black, Commentary on Romans, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants Publishing, 1973), 108, concludes, "It is possible that there is some dislocation in these verses."

⁷Werner Kümmel, Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929); reprinted in Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament, Theologische Bücherei, Neues Testament Band 53 (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1974), 67, points out that the text at this point has no variants ("variantlos"). [Hereafter, Römer 7].

⁸Dodd, 132, concludes this is "surely right."

⁹F. F. Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, rev. ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1963), 148.

¹⁰In addition to those discussed below, this is also considered by Günther Bornkamm, "Sin, Law and Death," in Early Christian Experience, tr. P. Hammer, The New Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1969), 99; Günther Zuntz, The Text of the Epistles, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1946 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 16; Otto Kuss, Der Römerbrief, 3 vols. (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1963), 2:461; and noted as a possibility by Dodd, 132.

not in the earlier verses.¹¹ Ernst Käsemann agrees that "here if anywhere we have the gloss of a later reader which represents the first Christian interpretation of vv 7-24."¹² However, there is no textual evidence whatsoever for this proposal either.

Third, verses 24-25a or, at least, verse 25a is said to be an anticipatory interjection.¹³ This is essentially Werner Kümmel's conclusion regarding verse 25a. He states,

So it results that the entire section of 7:14-24 must be a premise for 7:25b, because v. 25b says nothing other than 7:14-24. Thereby the difficulty is only that v. 25a stands in between. But it is to be observed that v. 25a has, of course, given no answer to v. 24.¹⁴

The interpretation of both verses 24 and 25a as an "anticipatory interjection" is represented by Ernst Gaugler.¹⁵

¹¹Bultmann, "Glossen im Römerbrief," Theologische Literatur-zeitung 72 (1947):cols. 197-99; "αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῦ δουλεῶ νόμῳ θεοῦ" is said to be inconsistent with the description of the "I" in verses 15-23.

¹²Ernst Käsemann, Commentary on Romans, tr. and ed. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), 212.

¹³See also Ernest Best, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 84; Barclay Newman, "Once Again - The Question of 'I' in Romans 7:7-25," Bible Translator 34 (1983):135; Ronald Fung, "The Impotence of the Law: Toward a Fresh Understanding of Romans 7:14-25," in Scripture, Tradition and Interpretations, eds W. Gasque and W. LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 45.

¹⁴Kümmel, Römer 7, 65-66, "So ergibt, daß der ganze Abschnitt 7,12-24 Prämisse für 7, 25b sein muß, weil V. 25b nichts Anderes besagt also 7,14-24. Schwierig ist dabei nur, daß V. 25a ja keine Antwort auf V. 24 gegeben hatte."

¹⁵Ernst Gaugler, Der Römerbrief, Prophezei Schweizerisches Bibelwerk für die Gemeinde, 2 vols. (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1945), 1:232, "vorwegnehmende Interjektionen."

He proposes that, in Jewish fashion, Paul momentarily interrupts his argument and cites Romans 1:25 as a comparable "interjection."¹⁶ According to Käsemann, such a "flashback . . . would shatter not merely the logic but also the anthropology and the whole theology of the apostle."¹⁷ It is also difficult to imagine how the words in verse 25a are in any way merely anticipatory.

It has also been suggested that verse 25b is to be read as a question whose implied answer is "no longer."¹⁸ This involves reading ἀρα as the interrogative ἄρα, a suggestion which is unlikely, especially in view of the presence of οὐν together with ἀρα in verse 25b (as in 5:15; 7:3; 8:12; 9:16,18; 14:12,19).¹⁹

Finally, a number of scholars interpret the αὐτὸς ἐγώ of verse 25b to mean "I myself apart from Jesus Christ" or "I left to myself," possibly both before and after conversion.²⁰ A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Käsemann, 211.

¹⁸ As argued by Werner Keuck, "Dienst des Geistes und des Fleisches: Zur Auslegungsgeschichte und Auslegung von Röm 7:25b," Theological Quarterly 141 (1961):257-80, see especially 279.

¹⁹ Kümmel, Römer 7, 68; and R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Commentaries on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 491, reject this suggestion.

²⁰ William Sanday and Arthur Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 32 (New York: Charles

this phrase in terms of being "*thrown on one's own resources*."²¹ Bruce apparently adopts this view, though in a less decisive manner. He contends,

It is *I of myself (autos ego)* that experience death and frustration; but 'I', as a believer, am not left to 'myself'; the power of the indwelling Spirit makes an almighty difference.²²

In response to this suggestion, James Dunn charges that it "is determined more by a particular line of interpretation than by the force of the words."²³

Due to "the force of the words" and the unanimous support of the textual evidence, Dunn's evaluation of this final proposal is equally applicable to the other four hypotheses and, for the very same reason, makes them all suspect. If the text of verse 25 is allowed to stand as is, Käsemann honestly recognizes the ramifications for those whose theologi-

Scribner's Sons, 1902), 178; James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in The Expositor's Greek New Testament, vol. 2, ed. W. Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1897), 643; Charles Mitton, "Romans 7 Reconsidered," Expository Times 65 (1953-54):133-34; John A. T. Robinson, Wrestling with Romans (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), 89-91; see also above, pp. 64-65.

²¹Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2nd ed., tr. W. Arndt and F. Gingrich, rev. and augmented by F. Gingrich and F. Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 122[1f], citing only Rom. 7:25 and then comparing this with 9:3(!) and Mk. 6:31. On Rom. 9:3, see above, pp. 246-47.

²²Bruce, The Letter of Paul to the Romans, 148.

²³James Dunn, Romans 1-8, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a, eds. R. Martin, D. Hubbard, and G. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 397; see the discussion concerning Paul's use of *ἐγώ* above, pp. 243-49.

cal presuppositions lead them to conclude that the "I" throughout verses 14-24 must be a non-Christian:

The price which has to be paid for assuming authenticity should not be underestimated. For in that case it is not just our interpretation of the context that falls. All that Paul says about baptism, law and justification of the ungodly, namely, all that he says about the break between the aeons, will have to be interpreted differently.²⁴

²⁴Käsemann, 211.

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