

Spring 2019

Exegesis of Romans 8:12-13: The Epitome of Paul's Response to the Question in Romans 6:1

Timothy L. Nixon

Harding School of Theology, tnixon@harding.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hst-etd>

 Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Nixon, Timothy L., "Exegesis of Romans 8:12-13: The Epitome of Paul's Response to the Question in Romans 6:1" (2019).
Dissertations and Theses. 12.
<https://scholarworks.harding.edu/hst-etd/12>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Harding School of Theology at Scholar Works at Harding. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholar Works at Harding. For more information, please contact scholarworks@harding.edu.



EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 8:12-13: THE EPITOME OF PAUL'S RESPONSE
TO THE QUESTION IN ROMANS 6:1

A Guided Research Paper

Presented to Professor Richard E. Oster

Harding School of Theology

Memphis, Tennessee

As a Requirement in

BNEW 5399

Guided Research in the New Testament

By

Timothy L. Nixon

June 2019
(Revised August 2019)

Contents

Abbreviations	ii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Purpose and Scope of This Paper.....	1
Introduction to Romans.....	2
Chapter Two: Survey of Romans 6:1—8:17	9
Introduction.....	9
Romans 6:2-13	15
Romans 6:14	20
Romans 6:15-23.....	22
Romans 7:1-6.....	26
Romans 7:7-25.....	35
Romans 8:1-17	42
Conclusion	52
Chapter Three: Exegesis of Romans 8:12-13	54
Introduction.....	54
Romans 8:12	55
Romans 8:13a.....	64
Romans 8:13b	68
Conclusion	75
Chapter Four: Summary of Exegetical Findings	76
Chapter Five: Implications for Theology	79
Three Key Theological Tenets in Romans 6:1—8:17	79
Salvation by Commitment	85
Assurance of Salvation	89
The Concept of Commitment and Judgment according to Works.....	90
Chapter Six: Implications for Ministry	97
The Church’s Mission to Nonbelievers	97
The Church’s Ministry to Believers.....	101
Conclusion	106
Works Cited	107

Abbreviations

ESV	English Standard Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV 1984	New International Version 1984 Edition
NIV 2011	New International Version 2011 Edition
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version

Chapter One

Introduction

Does Romans 8:12-13 teach that believers in Christ can die eternally as a consequence of their postconversion lifestyle choice? Is the warning of death directed to believers or nonbelievers? If the warning of death is directed to believers, 8:12-13 calls into question some principles of Protestant theology such as justification by faith alone and the eternal security of saints.

Purpose and Scope of This Paper

This paper presents an exegesis of Romans 8:12-13, a passage within the larger unit of Romans 6:1—8:17. The broad subject of this unit is the postconversion lifestyle choice expected of believers in Christ. Chapter one presents an introduction to Romans. Chapter two is a survey of Romans 6:1—8:17. Chapters three and four present an exegesis of Romans 8:12-13 and a summary of findings. Chapters five and six suggest implications of the findings of the exegesis.

In brief, this paper finds that Paul's response to the question in Romans 6:1 is epitomized in 8:12-13, that the promise of life and warning of death in 8:12-13 are directed to believers, and therefore the eternal destiny of believers does indeed depend on their postconversion lifestyle choice. Believers must reject the sinful lifestyle and remain committed to the righteous lifestyle. The concept of commitment as defined in this paper bridges the gap between initial justification by faith and final judgment by postconversion lifestyle choice. The concept of commitment is defined and discussed in chapter five.

Introduction to Romans

Author, Date, and Place of Writing

There is wide consensus among scholars that Paul wrote the letter¹ and that he did so during his three month stay in Greece reported in Acts 20:1-4, which probably occurred between AD 56-58.² This fits very well with the information in Romans and in Acts concerning the movements of Paul and of Aquila and Priscilla, and with datable events such as the proconsulship of Gallio in Corinth (AD 51-52).³

Addressees

Paul addressed the letter to believers in Rome (Rom. 1:7). Clues in the letter lead to the conclusion that Paul's intended audience is a mix of Jewish and gentile believers.⁴

¹ Many commentators note that Paul's authorship is no longer debated. Those who provide detailed discussion and list early skeptics include C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols., International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975-82), 1:1-2; and Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 3-5.

² Many scholars concur although the dates they propose for Paul's three month stay in Greece range between AD 54-59. These scholars include Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, Sacra Pagina Series, 6 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 8; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 85-87; Craig S. Keener, *Romans*, New Covenant Commentary Series, 6 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 15; Frank J. Matera, *Romans*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 5-6; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 1-3; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 3-5; and Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 7.

³ For in-depth analysis of these details consult Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 2-4; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 18-22; Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 12-13; Cranfield, 1:12-16; and Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 43-50.

⁴ So also Charles D. Myers Jr., "Romans, Epistle to the," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:820; Cranfield, 1:17-21; Fitzmyer, 33, 79; Hultgren, 9; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 2; Matera, 7; and Moo, 9-13. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 76-

A few scholars see gentiles as Paul's exclusive audience primarily because of evidence in the letter frame (1:5, 13; 15:16, 18), and because Paul directly addresses gentiles in 11:13.⁵ However, there are indirect indicators for Jews among the audience as well. For example, Paul has a message for both the weak and the strong in Romans 14:1—15:13, and 15:7-12 indicates these two parties are Jews and gentiles.

The Occasion

The occasion and purpose of Romans is a complex matter.⁶ The letter frame (1:1-17; 15:14—16:27) suggests several reasons for the letter, while the theological topics covered in the letter body (1:18—15:13) suggest other reasons.⁷ Paul's immediate intentions and desires are clear enough from the letter frame: he plans to visit the believers in Rome and reap a harvest among them (1:10-15), and he hopes to gain their support for his mission to Spain (15:23-28).⁸ Yet, the topics covered in the letter body

78, 83-84, 136, 147, 372-73, lists evidence in the letter that the audience consisted of Jews as well as gentiles with a very Jewish theological outlook. Pace Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 8 (cf. also 169, 175): "In sum, Paul as the apostle to the gentiles is primarily addressing gentile Christians in Rome, although he is happy for Jewish Christians to overhear the conversation."

⁵ These scholars include A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 261-64; Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series*, 45 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 11-14; and Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 21-22, 30, 36-41, 43-44, 255.

⁶ Some commentators, most notably A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 5-6, 54-65, argue that many causes prompted Paul to write Romans. Cf. Das, 26-52; and Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 6-11, for recent summaries of all the possible occasions and purposes of Romans.

⁷ Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 6-7, succinctly states the seeming dichotomy between the letter frame and the letter body.

⁸ Jewett, 80-91, takes the firm stand that the mission to Spain is Paul's main reason for writing Romans.

suggest Paul is addressing objections to the apart-from-law gospel and attempting to heal tension in the church between Jewish believers and gentile believers.⁹ The return of the Jews from Rome after the rescission of the Edict of Claudius upon Claudius' death in AD 54 probably caused tension in the church(es) in Rome between the gentile believers and the recently returned Jewish believers.¹⁰ This tension is particularly evident in 14:1—15:13, where Paul admonishes the weak believers (Jews) and the strong believers (gentiles) to accept one another. It is not within the scope of this paper to flesh out all the possible occasions nor to defend one occasion over another in this ongoing debate. It is appropriate, though, to list occasions which are specific to the topic of Romans 6:1—8:17, the postconversion behavior expected of saints.

What occasioned the question in 6:1, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may increase?” First and foremost, the tone and hortatory nature of Paul’s response, particularly in his opening salvo (6:2-23), indicate that the believers in Rome entertained

⁹ Chip Anderson, “Romans 1:1-5 and the Occasion of the Letter: The Solution to the Two-Congregation Problem in Rome,” *Trinity Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 39-40; J. Paul Sampley, “Romans in a Different Light: A Response to Robert Jewett,” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 3, *Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 118-21; and Wolfgang Wiefel, “The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity,” in *The Romans Debate*, rev. ed., ed. Karl P. Donfried (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 96, maintain that Paul’s primary purpose is to unify the Jewish and gentile believers in Rome. According to Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 192-99, 215-16, Paul’s goal is not only to unite the Jewish and gentile Christians but to create a space in the sociological world of Rome where Christians in Rome are separate from the nonbelieving Jews in Rome.

¹⁰ Contra Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 23; and Barry F. Parker, “Romans 7 and the Split Between Judaism and Christianity,” *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 3 (2006): 113, who reject the notion that there were factions between Jews and gentiles in the Christian community in Rome, although Parker accepts that the return of the Jews sparked the theological concerns Paul raises in Romans.

For discussion on the effect of the Edict of Claudius on the Roman church, cf. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, 38A (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), liii, lvii-lviii; James C. Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul’s Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), 56-64; N. T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:406-08; Byrne, 12; Myers, 5:820; Sampley, 118-21; Schreiner, *Romans*, 13, 19-23; and Wiefel, 92-96, whose seminal article was first published in German in 1970.

the misconception that grace was a license to sin.¹¹ At 6:1 Paul begins directly addressing the believers in Rome.¹² Paul implores his addressees with rationale (6:2-7; 6:16-18), imperatives (6:11-13, 19), and warnings (6:21-23; 8:13) as if they misunderstood the nature of grace and were about to commit moral apostasy.¹³ Moreover, Romans 15:16 indicates that Paul was concerned about the sanctification of the gentiles.¹⁴ Perhaps gentiles who were converted out of immoral paganism (as opposed to godfearers converted out of the synagogue) needed moral training and exhortation. Romans 6:17-21 suggests that Paul was addressing believers who were formerly involved in sinful practices.¹⁵ The Jew-gentile tension in the church caused by the return of the Jews may have exposed behavioral problems among the gentiles converted out of immorality.

Second, Romans 3:8 confirms that detractors of Paul, probably Jews, were accusing him of promoting antinomian behavior.¹⁶ Paul's strong rhetoric against sin and

¹¹ Using various language, these commentators maintain that Paul refutes antinomianism in Romans 6:1ff in order to correct the believers in Rome: Christopher Bryan, *A Preface to Romans: Notes on the Epistle in Its Literary and Cultural Setting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 133-34; Jack Cottrell, *Romans*, 2 vols., College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996), 1:378-79; Byrne, 187; Cranfield, 1:296-97; Dunn, 306; Hultgren, 241; Moo, 356; and Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 154-55. All Scripture translations in this paper are my own unless identified otherwise.

¹² Hultgren, 241; Matera, 145; and Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 255, rightly emphasize that at Romans 6:1 Paul switches from the third person of Romans 5 to first and second person plural in order to address the believers in Rome directly.

¹³ Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:378; and Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 156, suggest that those whose knowledge of grace is incomplete mistake grace for antinomianism.

¹⁴ Some commentators, citing Romans 15:16, argue that Paul's foremost purpose in writing Romans is to bring about holy living among the gentile Christians. These commentators include Elliott, 93; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 10-11, 239-40, 275-76; and Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 16-18, 547, who views Romans 5-8 as Paul's central thrust in the book.

¹⁵ Romans 6:17-20 is vaguely reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 255, cites Romans 6:17-20 as evidence that Paul is addressing a gentile audience.

¹⁶ Dunn, 306; Fitzmyer, 429, 432; Keener, *Romans*, 79; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 162, 257; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 610; Matera, 148; Moo, 356; Charles H. Talbert, *Romans*,

for righteousness in 6:2-23 positively refutes that accusation,¹⁷ but only indirectly since Paul does not explicitly reference the detractors or their accusations in 6:1—8:17.

Third, Paul's teaching in Romans 7 about the law seems to respond indirectly to objections from Jews that the apart-from-law gospel did not restrain sin.¹⁸ Paul turns that objection on its head. He argues that the law does not restrain sin (7:5, 7-25), but the way of grace and the Holy Spirit does (7:6; 8:1-17). His teaching on the law in Romans 7 effectively inoculates believers in Rome against the teaching of Judaizers in the church.¹⁹

All of these parties occasioned the material in 6:1—8:17 to some extent. Since Paul's response to the question in 6:1 directly addresses the believers in Rome, urging them to forsake the sinful lifestyle and to pursue the lifestyle of righteousness, the working hypothesis of this paper is that Paul is primarily addressing a deficit in the understanding of the believers. As he does so, he indirectly counters the accusations and objections of his opponents and detractors.

Smith & Helwys Commentary (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2002), 160; and John Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, TPI New Testament Commentaries (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 155, perceive a connection between Romans 3:8 and Romans 6:1, although they differ on the nature and identity of the detractors in 3:8. Wedderburn, 139, suggests that the licentious behavior of those who espoused the law-free gospel in Rome threatened to confirm the worst fears of Paul's Jewish critics.

¹⁷ Per Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 257.

¹⁸ Similarly, Moo, 356. Contra Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 255; and Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 155, who assert that Paul is not arguing here with Jewish opponents, but is teaching a gentile Christian audience. Contra also Cranfield, 1:297, who maintains that Paul's concern here is to counter the danger of antinomianism in the church rather than to rebut objections from Jewish legalists that his teaching encourages antinomian license.

¹⁹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 303-04: "The question [in Rom. 6:1] arises because Jewish Christians (or perhaps Jews) had often raised this objection to Paul's gospel in the course of his ministry." Contra Jewett, 394: "The rhetorical question . . . does not presuppose a Jewish antagonist."

Structure

Romans 1:17, with its quotation of Habakkuk 2:4 and word order, provides a programmatic statement which fruitfully foreshadows the broad thematic structure of Romans, especially for chapters 1-8: The righteous by faith (chapters 1-5) shall live (chapters 6-8).²⁰ Such a structure is commended by the fact that occurrences of the words *δικαιος*, *δικαιόω*, and *πίστις* are concentrated in chapters 1-5, but not in chapters 6-8. In addition, the verb *ζάω* does not appear in chapters 1-5, except in the programmatic statement in 1:17, but occurs twelve times in chapters 6-8.

Another broad structure which employs words found within the text and displays a sort of chronological order is Justification (1:18—4:25); Reconciliation (5:1-21); Sanctification (6:1—8:17); and Glorification (8:18-39). This has merit also but like the scheme presented in Romans 1:17 it lacks precision and clear links to the problem(s) or occasion(s) addressed by the letter.

The following outline covers the whole letter and provides detail necessary for the purposes of this paper.²¹

Introduction	1:1-17
Paul addresses misconceptions of the gospel	1:18—11:36
Re: Sin and justification	1:18—5:21
Re: The postconversion behavior expected of believers	6:1—8:39
-Do not continue in sin (6:1—8:17).	
-Remain faithful during affliction (8:18-39).	
Re: God's faithfulness to Israel	9:1—11:36

²⁰ Cranfield, 1:27-28. Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 16, does not use this outline but notes its strengths.

²¹ Consult Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 16-22, for a much more detailed outline of Romans according to Greco-Roman rhetorical methods.

Paul addresses ethical and unity issues	12:1—15:13
Conclusion and personal greetings	15:14—16:27

Chapter Two

Survey of Romans 6:1—8:17

Introduction

Romans 8:12-13 resides in a major unit that begins at 6:1. Through 8:17 Paul is still responding to the question he raised in 6:1: “Should we continue in sin in order that grace may increase?” Possible historical occasions for the question and Paul’s response are discussed in chapter one.

The Place of Romans 6:1—8:17 in the Letter

The question in 6:1 marks a major division break in the letter. The question introduces a significant shift in Paul’s focus from preconversion sin to postconversion sin as a lifestyle choice. The focus of 1:18—5:21 is the plight of sinners, their initial justification, and their reconciliation to God. Recurring key words include *ἀδικία*, *ὁργή* (*θεοῦ*), *δικαιος*, *δικαιόω*, *πίστις*, and *καταλλάσσω*.²²

²² My placement of Romans 5 with chapters 1-4 rather than with chapters 6-8 is a minority position. Dunn, viii, groups Romans 5 with chapters 1-4 as I do. Commentators who group Romans 5 with chapters 6-8 include Katherine A. Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God’s Righteousness* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), vii; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), x, 159; Jeffrey S. Lamp, “The Rhetoric of Righteousness: An Overview of Paul’s Argument in Romans 5-8,” *Asbury Theological Journal* 60, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 56; Byrne, 26-27; Cranfield, 1:28, 252-54; Fitzmyer, 96-98; Hultgren, 24; Jewett, viii, 29-30; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 538-47; Matera, 14-16; Moo, 33, 292-95; Schreiner, *Romans*, 26; and Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:410, 508-09. Keener, *Romans*, ix, 73; and Talbert, 16, 159, 185, split Romans 5, resulting in this division: 1:18—5:11 and 5:12—8:39. Most commentators are persuaded to group Romans 5 with chapters 6-8 by the fact that many terms in chapter 5 recur in chapter 8, but this phenomenon proves little because chapter 5 also shares terms and concepts with chapters 1-4. In any case, recurring terms are trumped by change in subject. Regardless of where they place Romans 5, many commentators rightly acknowledge that 6:1 turns a corner from initial justification of sinners to postconversion lifestyle of believers (e.g., Hultgren, 241).

In contrast to Romans 1-5, the focus of 6:1—8:17 is the postconversion lifestyle expected of believers, and the sanctification of their behavior. Believers are exhorted to reject their former, sinful lifestyle and commit to the lifestyle of righteousness. In this section, the word *πίστις* does not appear. Also, in all or most of its occurrences in Romans 6-8, *δικαιοσύνη* is a label for the righteous lifestyle, not a reference to imputed righteousness, a forensic status, or to divine activity as in Romans 1-5.²³ Other key words in 6:1—8:17 include *ἀγιασμός*, *περιπατέω*, and *ζάω*, all of which reference conduct or lifestyle. Paul’s response to the question of Romans 6:1 extends to at least 8:12-13 because the message of 8:12-13 clearly reiterates the substance of Paul’s response.²⁴ Romans 8:13 repeats the promise and warning implied throughout Paul’s response, but explicitly expressed in 6:21-23. Finally, Paul’s use of *ζάω* in 8:13a for manner of life (as opposed to continued existence) recalls the same use of *ζάω* in 6:2.²⁵

Romans 8:18-39 continues to exhort postconversion faithfulness to God. A series of assurances and promises encourages believers to remain faithful through affliction and trials. Foremost among these is the promise of glorification. In 8:17b, Paul segues to the topic of glorification by urging believers to suffer with Christ so that they may also be glorified with Christ. In summary, 1:18—5:21 discusses initial justification, 6:1—8:17

²³ Due to contrastive parallelism with *ἁμαρτία* and *ἀνομία*, the six occurrences of *δικαιοσύνη* in 6:13-20 and 8:10 carry the sense of righteousness in behavior. “The quality or characteristic of upright behavior” is one of the three broad senses of *δικαιοσύνη* listed by Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 247-49 (sense 3).

²⁴ So also Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 155, who emphatically states, “The definitive answer to this question [in Rom. 6:1] will not come until 8:12-13.”

²⁵ Bryan, 149, agrees that Paul responds to the question at Romans 6:1 all the way through 8:17. Byrne, 187, perceives a break after 8:13, seeing all of 6:1—8:13 as one unit.

focuses on postconversion sanctification of behavior, and 8:18-39 exhorts faithfulness through affliction and underscores ultimate glorification.

The Topic of Romans 6:1—8:17

The topic of Romans 6:1—8:17 is the postconversion lifestyle choice of believers. In 5:20 Paul made the assertion that where sin increased, grace increased even more. In 6:1, Paul raises a false conclusion inferred from this assertion by means of the diatribal question, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may increase?” Paul poses this question in order to respond to the false conclusion that believers ought to continue in their lifestyle of sin.²⁶ The topic of the question is volitional, unrepentant sin on an ongoing basis, not sporadic moral failures of believers who afterward repent of their sin. Stated another way, the topic of Romans 6:1—8:17 is whether believers should sin intentionally as a lifestyle choice.²⁷ This is preeminently evidenced in the question itself by the word ἐπιμένω,

²⁶ According to Stanley K. Stowers, “The Diatribe,” in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, ed. David E. Aune, Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament, 21 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 75, one technique used by authors of diatribes is to string a series of objections and false conclusions from an imaginary interlocutor throughout the treatise. Questions voiced by the imaginary interlocutor raise false conclusions which may be drawn from the author’s teachings so that the author can then respond to these false conclusions. Stowers, “The Diatribe,” 81, finds that Paul employs diatribe in Romans 2:1-5, 17-29; 3:1-9; 3:27—4:2; 9:19-21; 11:17-24; and diatribal questions in 6:1, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14, 19; 11:1, 11, 19.

²⁷ Romans 6:1—8:17 can also appropriately be applied to those who end up in the lifestyle of sin due to apathy or deception. New Testament writers warn believers to be wary of self-deception, Satan’s deception, and the deception of false teachers: Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24; Mark 13:5-6; Luke 21:8; Acts 20:29-31; Romans 16:17-19; 1 Corinthians 3:18; 6:9-10; 15:33-34; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 11:13-14; Galatians 6:3, 7-8; Ephesians 4:14; 5:6; 6:11; 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 3:13; James 1:12-16, 22, 26; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 7; Jude 3-4, 17-19. Paul’s exhortations in Romans 6:1—8:17 indicate that believers must proactively pursue the lifestyle of righteousness. One can passively fall into the lifestyle of sin, but one cannot passively pursue the lifestyle of righteousness. The detailed exegesis of Romans 8:12-13 in chapter three finds that the lifestyle of righteousness requires proactivity. This is confirmed by many warnings and exhortations to righteous behavior in nearly all the books of the New Testament; specific passages are listed in chapter five.

which means to continue, persist, or persevere in an activity or state.²⁸ Also, the very premise of the question in 6:1, incorrectly inferred from Paul's assertion in 5:20, that people should sin in order to catalyze and increase God's grace, assumes not only volitional sin but also unabated sinfulness.

Many details in Paul's response to the question in 6:1 demonstrate that Paul's topic is lifestyle sin rather than sporadic sin. For example, the word ἔτι with the future of ζάω in 6:2 clearly contemplates continuing without compunction an existing behavior into the indefinite future. Moreover, the meaning of the verb ζάω in 6:2 and 8:13a, "to conduct oneself in a pattern of behavior,"²⁹ comprehends not single, isolated sins but sinfulness as a habit, as a way of life. This is confirmed by the use of περιπατέω in 6:4 and 8:4.³⁰ In addition, reference in 6:6 to crucifying ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος, the old self, describes the ending of a former lifestyle.³¹ The imperative form of παρίστημι in the

²⁸ Bauer, 375. So also Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 610. For many commentators, the clause ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ in Romans 6:1 could mean either "let us continue in sinful action" or "let us remain in the sphere of, or under the lordship of, sin" (cf. Dunn, 306; Moo, 355). Paul's subsequent argumentation indicates that Paul did not distinguish between being under the sphere of sin's enslavement and being involved in sinful action; one always denotes the other in Paul's mind per Romans 6:16. Schreiner, *Romans*, 304, affirms that the two concepts are inseparable.

²⁹ Bauer, 425.

³⁰ The figurative sense of περιπατέω according to Bauer, 803, is "to conduct one's life, comport oneself, behave, live as a habit of conduct." Bauer lists every one of the thirty-two occurrences of περιπατέω in Pauline literature under the figurative sense. Joseph O. Holloway, *Περιπατέω as a Thematic Marker for Pauline Ethics* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 50, 222-24, has argued persuasively that in the Pauline corpus περιπατέω is often a thematic marker of paraenetic material. Cf. Robert Banks, "'Walking' as a Metaphor of the Christian Life: The Origins of a Significant Pauline Usage," in *Perspectives on Language and Text*, ed. Edgar W. Conrad and Edward G. Newing (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 305-08; and Dunn, 315-16.

³¹ Reference in Romans 6:6 to the former, sinful lifestyle is reminiscent of Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:17: "You must no longer live as the gentiles live."

exhortation, “Do not present the parts of your bodies to sin as instruments of unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as instruments of righteousness” (6:13, 19) conveys the sense of continuous action into the future. Furthermore, the word *φρόνημα* in 8:6 denotes a settled way of thinking, a mindset, or a pervasive conviction.³² Finally, the present tense of *θανατοῦτε* in 8:13b implies that putting sinful practices to death with the help of the Spirit is an ongoing action that must be repeated throughout one’s lifetime on earth. Given this information, the sense of the question in Romans 6:1 is, “Should we continue in our former lifestyle of sin?”

Synopsis of Paul’s Response to the Question in Romans 6:1

In brief, Paul’s response to the question in 6:1 indicates that postconversion lifestyle does indeed affect the final salvation of believers in Christ. Romans 6:21-23 and 8:12-13 explicitly issue to believers the warning of eternal death and promise of eternal life. Numerous other passages briefly allude to life and/or death, including 6:5, 8, 16; 7:5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 24; 8:1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 17.

Since the eternal life of believers is at stake, Paul’s entire response to the question in 6:1 is an exhortation, not merely a dispassionate treatise.³³ He exhorts believers to choose the lifestyle of righteousness over the lifestyle of sin. His answer to the question, synopsized, is: “No, do not continue in sin because the sinful lifestyle ends in death.” The

³² Regarding *φρόνημα* see Bauer, 1066; and Craig S. Keener, “‘Fleshly’ Versus Spirit Perspectives in Romans 8:5-8,” in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies, 5 (Boston: Brill, 2008), 211.

³³ Pace Byrne, 187, who avers, “While at times Paul adopts an exhortatory tone, exhortation is not his main purpose,” although Byrne’s immediately subsequent commentary, 187-88, stresses that eternal life is dependent on righteous living.

hortatory thrust and tone of Paul's response is evinced by several features, including his shift to, and frequent use of, first and second person plural;³⁴ his emotionally charged *μή γένοιτο!* at the outset of his response; and his tone of incredulity in the rhetorical questions of 6:2-3. Also, Paul employs rhetorical devices, including logical rationale, imperatives, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement.

In Romans 7:7—8:17, Paul contrasts the law and the way of grace in Christ. The law is unable to help a person resist sin. In contrast, the indwelling Spirit given to believers in Christ enables them to resist sin, live the righteous lifestyle, and thereby fulfill the intended goal of the law. This Spirit-enabled fulfilling of the law is prophesied in Ezekiel 36:27; therefore, Paul's discussion echoes that prophecy. The climax of Paul's response to the question in Romans 6:1 is 8:13: "If you live according to the flesh, you will certainly die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." In effect, 8:13 exhorts, "By the Spirit, put to death the sinful lifestyle."

The Structure of Romans 6:1—8:17

Two broad divisions can be discerned in Paul's response to the question in Romans 6:1. His direct response to the question is in 6:2-13. This is a sufficient and complete response, but Paul feels the need to expound on the law vis-à-vis postconversion behavior. He does this in 6:14—8:17. Here is the structure of Romans 6:1—8:17 and the central point of each large section:

6:1: The question: Should we believers continue in sin in order that grace may increase?

³⁴ So also Dunn, 305; and Jewett, 391.

- 6:2-13: Paul's response: No, do not continue in sin. Instead, walk in the new lifestyle of righteousness.
- 6:14—8:17: An adjunct topic: Postconversion Lifestyle and the Mosaic Law
- 6:14: Thesis: Sin will not master over you because you are not under law but under grace.
- 6:15-23: Preface before the exposition of 6:14: Righteousness in behavior is required of those under grace as well as those under the law.
- 7:1—8:17: The main exposition of 6:14
- 7:1-6: Explicates 6:14: Those under the law of Moses are mastered by the sinful desires of the flesh. Believers in Christ have been released from the law and serve God in the new way of the Spirit.
- 7:7-25: Develops 7:5: The intent of the law is to produce righteous behavior, but under the law sin thrives because the law is unable to help a person master the sinful desires of the flesh.
- 8:1-17: Develops 7:6: The indwelling Spirit enables believers to overcome the sinful desires of the flesh and fulfill the intended goal of the law, which is righteousness in behavior.³⁵

Romans 6:2-13

Paul's initial response to the question in 6:1 is clear: “Μὴ γένοιτο! No, do not continue in sin.”³⁶ He strives to persuade believers to reject the sinful lifestyle and to live

³⁵ Lamp, 56, argues that the structure of Romans 5-8 is oriented around the contrasts in Paul's rhetoric. This is appropriate for 7:1—8:17, which develops a contrast between the Mosaic law and the way of grace, but not appropriate for Romans 6. The “contrasts” Lamp lists for 6:1—7:6 (baptism, slavery, marriage) are not cross-sectional organizational devices, but local rhetorical devices to illustrate arguments in individual passages.

³⁶ According to Stowers, “The Diatribe,” 75, in diatribal passages “objections and false conclusions are often rejected with strong negatives or an oath-formula, e.g. *mē genoito* (By no means!).” The false conclusions posed with diatribal questions in Romans 3:3, 5, 31; 6:1, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11 are rejected with *μη γένοιτο* and then reasons are given for the rejection. Abraham J. Malherbe, “MH

the righteous lifestyle by means of logical rationale in 6:2-7; reinforcement in 6:8-9; and imperatives in 6:10-13.

Rationale in Romans 6:2-7

Paul begins by asking, “How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Or do you not know that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” (6:2-3). Dying to sin is Paul’s figure for moral and behavioral change. In 6:2-3 he reminds believers that they made this change at baptism, so how can they contemplate reverting back to sin?³⁷ The language ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ in 6:2 is nearly identical with the language in 6:10 which describes Christ’s death, τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ἀπέθανεν. Verse 10 asserts that the death Christ died was a death *to sin*. Therefore, verse 3 explains, since believers were baptized into Christ’s death, they were baptized into Christ’s death to sin. Paul’s point is that believers died to sin at baptism, that is, at baptism they committed to moral and behavioral change, so they must not continue in sin.³⁸

ΓΕΝΟΙΤΟ in the Diatribe and Paul,” *Harvard Theological Review* 73, no. 2 (January-April 1980): 236, 239, observes that Paul always provides a reason for his rejection of the false conclusion and, with the exception of Romans 3:31, that reason provides the theme for the discussion that immediately follows.

³⁷ Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 258, rightly notes that the main purpose of 6:2-13 is not to provide information about baptism, but to counter the claim that the gospel advocates moral anarchy. In full agreement with Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 260, 267, baptism is shorthand for the whole conversion experience, the moment “when God for his part grants forgiveness and the gift of his Spirit.”

³⁸ Some commentators attempt to categorize “die to sin” in Romans 6:2 in one of Cranfield’s, 1:299-300, four senses (juridical, baptismal, moral, eschatological), though Cranfield himself sees the text of 6:1-14 alternating between all four senses. The conclusion of Peter Ensor, “The Meaning of ‘We . . . Died to Sin’ in Romans 6:2,” *Expository Times* 126, no. 5 (2015): 228, regarding the meaning of “we died to sin” in Romans 6:2 is complementary to mine. Ensor, 228, concludes that the arguments for taking “we died to sin” in a moral sense are stronger than those which take the statement in a forensic sense. Ensor, 230, avers that “[Paul] further uses this fact, in the context of Romans 6:1-11, to argue for the incongruity of turning back to a life of sin and to exhort his readers to go on regarding themselves as ‘dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus,’ so as to continue living morally transformed lives.”

Using a *ἵνα* purpose clause, Paul asserts in 6:4 that the purpose of baptism into Christ's death to sin is to walk in a new manner of life.³⁹ Verse 4 reads, "Therefore we were buried with Christ by baptism into his death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, so we also might walk in a new manner of life." The phrase *ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς* refers to a new manner of life, or a new conduct of life, on earth due to the fact it modifies *περιπατέω*, always a reference to behavior or lifestyle in Pauline literature.⁴⁰ Paul's rationale, therefore, is that the whole purpose of baptism into Christ is to die to sin with Christ in order to walk in the new, righteous manner of life. Why, then, would believers revert back to their old, sinful manner of life?

Moreover, Paul adds in 6:6-7 that believers were freed from sin. He uses enslavement imagery: "Our old self was crucified with him in order that the sinful body may be done away with so that we would no longer be slaves to sin. For the one who has died has been freed from sin." In other words, the former sinful lifestyle of the believer is crucified in order to set the believer free from slavery to sin.

In sum, the believer died to sin with Christ and was freed from enslavement to sin in order to walk in the new, righteous manner of life. In essence, the believer dies to sin in order to live for God. For believers to continue sinning is incongruous with the purpose

³⁹ Schreiner, *Romans*, 310, also notes the significance of the *ἵνα* purpose clause in 6:4b.

⁴⁰ So also Ensor, 226; Cranfield, 1:305; Moo, 366; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 310. As stated previously, *περιπατέω* refers to conduct or manner of life in the Pauline corpus because in his thirty-two uses of *περιπατέω*, Paul never uses the word in its literal sense, only its figurative sense (Bauer, 803). Also, *ζωῆς* in *ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς* is most likely an attributed genitive (not an attributive genitive), resulting in renderings such as "new life," "new lifestyle," and "new manner of life." Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 89-90, who cites *ζωῆς* in Romans 6:4 as an example of the attributed genitive.

of their baptism into Christ, so the very thought of continuing in sin provokes a tone of incredulity from Paul in 6:2: “How can we who died to sin go on living in sin?!”

It is important to note at this point that enslavement to sin is an important metaphor in Paul’s response to the question in 6:1. This metaphor recurs via various terms in Romans 6:6-7, 14, 16-23; 7:6, 14, 25; 8:2, 15.⁴¹ The imagery of enslavement highlights the inescapable and irresistible control, or grip, of sin over a person’s behavior and destiny.⁴² This control is depicted at length in 7:14-25. In 7:5-6 and 8:1-17, Paul

⁴¹ The terms include δουλεία, δουλεύω, δοῦλος, δουλόω, ἐλεύθερος, ἐλευθερώω, κυριεύω, and πιπράσκω. Paul’s enslavement metaphor was not opaque to his addressees because slavery was “entirely ubiquitous,” according to Hans-Joachim Gehrke, “Slavery,” in *Brill’s New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Christine F. Salazar (Boston: Brill, 2008), 13:534. Cf. also S. Scott Bartchy, “Slavery (Greco-Roman)” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:66. The Greek and Roman economies and societies were dependent on, even based on, slavery, although this cannot be said of Jewish society (cf. Paul A. Cartledge, “Slave Trade,” in *Brill’s New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Christine F. Salazar [Boston: Brill, 2008], 13:528; Bartchy, 6:66; and Gehrke, 13:534). The number of slaves in the Roman empire is difficult to ascertain, but all scholars agree the population of this demographic was significantly large (cf. Jewett, 51-52, 416; and Page Dubois, “Slavery,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, ed. George Boys-Stones, Barbara Graziosi, and Phiroze Vasunia [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], 316, 319). Bartchy, 6:67, theorizes the slave population “comprised at least a third of the inhabitants of most major urban centers.” Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 3, estimates that most of the Christians in Rome were either slaves or freedmen and freedwomen. Jewett, 416, concludes that the metaphor of slavery had a powerful impact on Paul’s addressees because in their world one-third to two-thirds of the population was either in slavery or were freedpersons who had been in slavery (cf. also Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 279-80).

⁴² So also Keener, *Romans*, 93-95. In Paul’s metaphor, sin is a slave master in two key respects. First, sin controls all behavior as a slave master controlled all activities of his slaves. Greco-Roman slaves were legally chattel property with no rights who were at the absolute disposal of their masters, the *pater familias* of the household (Bartchy, 6:68; Gehrke, 13:531, 534; Johannes Heinrichs, “Slavery,” in *Brill’s New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Christine F. Salazar [Boston: Brill 2008], 13:535). According to Gehrke, 13:531, slaves were considered mere bodies or tools walking on human feet as the terms σῶμα and ἀνδράποδον, often synonyms for δοῦλος, indicate. Second, sin controls the destiny of a sinner as a slave master controlled whether a slave was manumitted or retained regardless of the slave’s desire. Even slaves who did not desire manumission may have been manumitted by the slave master because, according to Bartchy, 6:71, “Owners granted manumission in order to advance their own various personal and business interests.” The *pater familias* literally had the power of life or death over his children and slaves (Bartchy, 6:68). Similarly, Paul emphasized repeatedly that the ultimate destination of sinners was death, the condemnation for sin (Rom. 6:21-23; 7:5b, 9-11, 13, 24; 8:1, 2, 6, 13a).

indicates that the irresistible mastery of sin over a person is broken by the indwelling Spirit which God gives to believers in Christ.⁴³

Positive Reinforcement in Romans 6:8-9

In Romans 6:8-9, Paul reinforces his rationale with the promise of eternal life for believers who die to sin with Christ. According to the εἰ conditional clauses in 6:8, they will only be raised to eternal life if they first die with Christ.⁴⁴ If a believer does not take up the lifestyle of righteousness, but continues in the former life of sin, he or she has not died to sin. He or she has not completed the death part of the death-burial-resurrection process and therefore will not experience resurrection to eternal life.

Imperatives in Romans 6:10-13

Paul buttresses his exhortation with a series of four imperatives in 6:11-13. In the first one, Paul uses the “die to sin” figure to mandate certain behavior: “The death Christ died, he died to sin once for all time, but the life he lives, he lives to God; so you also consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus.” In other words,

⁴³ Paul has already alluded in Romans 5:5 to the fact that God gives his Spirit to believers. At conversion, God shatters the grip of sin and thereby severs the relationship of servitude to sin. So also Schreiner, *Romans*, 299-300; and Byrne, 187, who states, “The Spirit creates the freedom that makes it possible to live out the new righteousness (8:1-13).”

⁴⁴ N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 2 vols., Christian Origins and the Question of God, 4 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 2:1117, states, “For Paul the road to . . . genuine humanness . . . will involve the messianic way of dying and rising. This is part of his theme of imitating the Messiah, not in a superficial way, but at the level of the transformation of heart, character, mind and life. Those who have already died and been raised with the Messiah . . . must learn to . . . ‘put to death the deeds of the body’ (Rom. 8:13). . . . The fact that this ‘putting to death’ will require moral effort, and that such effort is itself part of the ‘fruit of the spirit,’ is indicated by the fact that in the list of ‘fruit’ he includes ‘self-control,’ ἐγκράτεια. The ‘fruit’ does not, then, appear ‘automatically,’ any more than a fruit tree will continue to blossom and bear fruit if left untended and unprotected against predators.”

since believers died with Christ, like Christ they must also die to sin and live for God.

The next three imperatives elaborate on what living for God looks like: *do not let sin reign* by obeying the desires of the body; *do not present* your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; instead, *present* yourselves to God as instruments of righteousness.

These imperatives express in various ways the same idea: “Shun the sinful lifestyle and remain committed to the lifestyle of righteousness.”⁴⁵

Romans 6:14

Romans 6:14 begins, or headlines, a new section because in 6:14 Paul introduces a new subject, the law.⁴⁶ He wants to discuss the role of the law vis-à-vis postconversion behavior. Reasons for this, including possible historical circumstances, were discussed in chapter one and will be revisited at appropriate points in the following commentary.

⁴⁵ The book of Romans contains sixty-two verbs in the imperative mood. Fifty-six are concentrated in chapters 11-16. One is found in 3:4. The remaining five are found here in Paul’s response to the question in 6:1 (6:11-13, 19). These imperatives underscore the paraenetic and ethical nature of Romans 6:1—8:17.

⁴⁶ Dividing Romans 6 between verse 13 and verse 14 is a minority position. The reason for this break is that Paul starts a new thought in 6:14. He introduces, for the first time, *νόμος* into his response to the question in 6:1. The thesis statement of 6:14, and the contrast it draws, is then developed all the way through 8:17, the end of Paul’s response to the question in 6:1.

Commentators who divide Romans 6 between verse 11 and verse 12 include Dunn, 305, 333; Hultgren, 251, 257-59; Käsemann, x, 163, 171-72; Keener, *Romans*, 79-82; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 617; and Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:410, 542. This division separates a series of four imperative verbs in 6:11-13, and misses the point that the imperatives are rhetorical devices which buttress and bring to a close the rhetoric of 6:2-13.

Commentators who divide Romans 6 between verses 14 and 15, placing verse 14 with the preceding text, include Byrne, 195; Cranfield, 1:297, 320; Jewett, 413; Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 269; Matera, 154; Moo, 350-51, 396; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 302-03. Placing verse 14 with the preceding text overlooks several facts: that *νόμος* is not introduced in Paul’s response to the question in 6:1 until 6:14; that the assertion in 6:14 is explicated in 7:1-6; and that the contrast in 6:14 between “under law” and “under grace” is the dominant theme of all of 7:1—8:17, as demonstrated below.

Paul introduces the law into the discussion with the assertion, “Sin will not master over you for you are not under law but under grace.”⁴⁷ The subsequent argumentation demonstrates that “under law” and “under grace” are monikers for the administration of the law and the way of faith in Christ.⁴⁸ That νόμος is a reference to the Mosaic law is confirmed by several clues, most notably the fact that in 7:7 Paul quotes from the Decalogue.

Paul’s assertion in 6:14 posits a contrast between the two eras. Paul does not explicate that contrast until 7:1—8:17. First, in 6:15-23, Paul sidetracks momentarily in order to respond to a false conclusion inferred from his assertion in 6:14. Romans 6:15-23 acts as a preface for the elaboration of 6:14 in 7:1—8:17. In 7:1-25 Paul explains the assertion in 6:14 and depicts the experience of a person trying to manage sin under the administration of the law. In 8:1-17 he discusses the situation of sin management under grace. Here are the major sections of Paul’s discussion between Romans 6:14 and 8:17:

6:14:	Primary thesis: Under law versus under grace
6:15-23:	Response to a false conclusion
7:1-6:	Explication of the thesis in 6:14
7:7-25:	The situation under the law
8:1-17:	The situation under grace

⁴⁷ Paul’s assertion in Romans 6:14 is a classic example of the way Paul sometimes segues into a new section or subsection. He makes an assertion which repeats one theme word from the preceding section and also introduces a new theme word or concept which he then takes up in the next sentence. For example, Romans 8:17 repeats the word “children” and introduces the concepts of suffering and glorification which he develops straightaway in 8:18-39.

⁴⁸ So also Watson, 290-91.

Romans 6:15-23

In Romans 6:15-23 Paul raises and addresses a false conclusion inferred from the assertion in 6:14. Paul raises the false conclusion with the diatribal question, “Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace?”⁴⁹ The false conclusion encased in this question is that believers can sin with impunity because they are no longer under the administration of the Mosaic law. Paul must dispense with this notion before he can continue developing the contrast between “under law” and “under grace” posited by the thesis in 6:14. Paul develops that contrast in 7:1—8:17. Therefore, 6:15-23 acts as a preface to 7:1—8:17.

To the false conclusion that believers can sin because they are not under law but under grace, Paul rapidly responds, “Μὴ γένοιτο!” As in Galatians 5:13, Paul in Romans 6:15-23 opposes the practice of libertinism, or antinomianism, by believers.⁵⁰ Paul’s response to this false inference consists of logical rationale, an imperative, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement.

Rationale in Romans 6:16-18

Paul’s logic against antinomianism is that those who sin are voluntarily returning to enslavement to sin, which is nonsensical. He cautions the Roman believers that a person is a slave of the one whom he or she obeys. Therefore, if they obey sin, they are

⁴⁹ As stated previously, in Romans Paul frequently raises false conclusions by means of diatribal questions; in many cases, he immediately responds to these questions with the strong *μὴ γένοιτο* (3:1, 3, 5, 9, 31; 6:1, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1).

⁵⁰ So also Talbert, 168.

voluntarily making themselves slaves of sin after having been set free from sin.⁵¹

Moreover, Paul's point implies that believers who sin are disobeying their new master, God. In essence, Paul's response to the question in 6:15 is, "No, do not sin because those who sin are slaves of sin. You are now slaves of God and of righteousness."⁵²

Imperative in Romans 6:19

Paul follows with the command, "Just as you once presented your bodies (literally, members or body parts) as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness for lawlessness, so now present (*παραστήσατε*) your bodies as slaves to righteousness for sanctification."⁵³ In the command of 6:19 and in all or most of its five other occurrences in 6:1—8:17 (6:13, 16, 18, 19, 20; 8:10), the word *δικαιοσύνη* is a label for the godly lifestyle rather than a forensic verdict or character description as in Romans 1-5.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Paul's caution in Romans 6:16 may have been intended to induce in his Roman readers feelings of embarrassment or even horror. According to Bartchy, 6:69, it was not acceptable for free men to take orders from anyone except their fathers or military leaders; furthermore, it was beneath the dignity of a citizen to work every day to earn a living so that "those citizens who nevertheless entered domestic work were regarded as serving 'in place of slaves' (*loco servorum*) during their employment." In other words, in Roman society it is possible that whoever obeyed others was considered a slave and, therefore, obedience to others was a socially unacceptable embarrassment for any free citizen.

⁵² The slavery metaphor dominates Romans 6:15-23. Regarding 6:15-23, Moo, 396, insightfully observes, "The emphasis on the Christian's slavery . . . is necessary in order to show that the freedom of the Christian 'from sin' is not a freedom 'to sin.'"

⁵³ John K. Goodrich, "From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God: Reconsidering the Origin of Paul's Slavery Metaphor in Romans 6," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 23.4 (2013): 529, contends that Paul uses Greco-Roman slavery imagery in Romans 6:16-23 to assure readers that his gospel is law-free without being antinomian: "Obedience is a necessary correlate to slavery (*δοῦλοι ἐστε ᾧ ὑπακούετε* in 6:16) so that those who present themselves to God/righteousness to serve him as slaves must obey him, rather than obey sin, if in fact they truly are God's slaves (6:16-19). Paul therefore encourages his readers to continue presenting their very members as slaves to God/righteousness (6:19)."

⁵⁴ So also Moo, 386, who adds that this meaning for *δικαιοσύνη* is well attested in the LXX and the New Testament. Cf. Bauer, 247-49.

Positive and Negative Reinforcement in Romans 6:21-23

Paul reinforces his rationale and imperative with a promise and a warning. Paul promises that the lifestyle of righteousness ends in eternal life. Three times he warns that the sinful lifestyle ends in death. Paul is speaking of eternal death because it is in contrastive parallel with ζωή αἰώνιος, which occurs in 6:22 and 6:23. Therefore, returning to enslavement under sin is not only nonsensical, but also dangerous.

Paul concludes this section with the plain statement, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁵⁵ This is one of the clearest statements in the entire Bible that lifestyle choice determines destiny and believers can indeed die eternally. Again, this warning of eternal death is directed to believers, not nonbelievers. Recent reminders of this context are in 6:17 and 6:22. The warning and promise in Romans 8:13 mirror the warning and promise in 6:21-23.

Paul’s argumentation affirms that lifestyle choice affects believers’ final salvation, but this smacks of merited salvation. Paul’s assertion that eternal life is a gift of God stresses that eternal life is not merited.⁵⁶ How can this be, given that a believer must behave righteously in order to attain the gift of eternal life or be in danger of eternal death? This question will be discussed at length in chapter five. In brief, the answer is the concept of commitment. That is, those who remain committed to the lifestyle of

⁵⁵ The mention of wages (ὀψώνια) recalls the slavery metaphor because some slaves earned wages from their slave masters. Goodrich, 529n69, lists ancient sources which show some slaves received wages. Other scholars who affirm that some slaves received wages include Bartchy, 6:70; Bryan, 137; and Gehrke, 13:533.

⁵⁶ So also Goodrich, 529; Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 286; Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 174.

righteousness are pleasing to God although they may sporadically experience moral failure. Righteousness is not a level to be achieved. Rather, righteousness is a lifestyle choice to be lived. Those who choose, and remain committed to, this lifestyle are pleasing to God. Those who abandon their commitment are not pleasing to God and will not inherit life (cf. 8:8 for the concept of pleasing God).

Summary of Romans 6:15-23

Romans 6:15 abruptly suspends the development of the thesis presented in 6:14 in order to address and immediately get out of the way a false understanding of 6:14. In Romans 6:15-23 Paul eliminates from consideration the false notion that the way of grace in Christ removes or sets aside God's moral standard. Romans 6:15-23 establishes that righteousness in lifestyle is required under grace as well as under law. Righteousness in lifestyle is not merely an elective or preference under the way of grace, but a necessity. Righteousness is the non-negotiable prerequisite for eternal life. Believers cannot live the sinful lifestyle with impunity. Therefore, behavioral righteousness is the goal of the way of grace just as it was the goal of the Mosaic law. It is important to establish this point before developing the contrast between the way "under law" and the way "under grace" in 7:1—8:17. Therefore, 6:15-23 acts as a preface for the explication of 6:14 in 7:1—8:17.⁵⁷ Paul's argumentation through 6:23 indirectly, but effectively, counters the accusation referenced in 3:8 which was being leveled against him by his detractors. That

⁵⁷ Similarly, Dunn, 352, who observes that immediately following 6:14-15, "Paul does not at first say anything about the law; only in chapter 7 does he at last feel able to devote himself to a fuller explanation of the role of the law within his gospel. But first he seeks to squash firmly and finally any suggestion that his gospel encourages sin."

is, Paul does not promote sinful behavior; rather, Paul adjures and commands believers to avoid sinfulness.

Romans 7:1-6

At Romans 7:1, Paul references the law again, thus recalling the assertion he made regarding the law in 6:14.⁵⁸ In 6:15-23, Paul responded to a false conclusion which readers may infer from his assertion in 6:14. That false conclusion is that those who are not under law but are under grace may sin with impunity. Having responded to that false conclusion through 6:23, Paul can now, in 7:1ff, explain the assertion he made in 6:14.

Overview of Romans 7:1—8:17

All of Romans 7:1—8:17 develops the contrast between “under law” and “under grace” first posited in 6:14. In 7:1-6, Paul explicates the assertion in 6:14. In brief, those under the law are mastered by sin because the law does not enable them to overcome the sinful desires of the flesh. In contrast, those under the way of grace are enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit to resist the sinful desires of the flesh, live the righteous lifestyle, and thereby fulfill the intended goal of the law. The inability of the law is illustrated and driven home in 7:7-25. The enablement of the Spirit is assumed in 8:1-17, which exhorts believers to resist sin with the help of the indwelling Spirit.

⁵⁸ Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 289; and Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:558, rightly point out that the first word of 7:1, the particle η , connects 7:1ff with what precedes and specifically implies that Paul's addressees should not be ignorant of the fact stated in 6:14 that they are not under law but under grace.

The phrase “under law” from 6:14 means under the administration of the law of Moses because clues in the text demonstrate that the referent for νόμος is the law of Moses.⁵⁹ The preeminent clue is the quote of the tenth commandment from the Decalogue in Romans 7:7. Also, Paul alludes to Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 7:10. Moreover, Romans 7:22 and 25 refer to the law as “the law of God.” In addition, in 7:6 Paul refers to the law as γράμμα, a word he used in Romans 2:29 and 2 Corinthians 3:6-7 to refer to some aspect of the Mosaic law. Therefore, those under law are those under the administration of the Mosaic law, which includes Jews and proselytes, but not all of humanity.⁶⁰

Romans 7:5: Those Who Are under the Law Are Mastered by Sin

Romans 7:1-6 explicates the somewhat enigmatic postulate of 6:14. As a reminder, the assertion of Romans 6:14, “For sin will not master over you because you are not under law but under grace,” introduces a new thesis. Romans 7:5 is the key verse

⁵⁹ So also Hultgren, 269; Moo, 387-90, 428; Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:549, 561; Ziesler, 173-74; and Dunn, 339, 359, who argues at length for the Mosaic law. Contra Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:406, 424, 429, who argues Romans 6-7 is talking about law in general.

⁶⁰ In Romans 7:1—8:17 Paul discusses the pros and cons of the law in his contrast between the Mosaic law and the way of grace. Therefore, by “under law” (6:14) Paul is talking about being under the law in its entirety, in its divinely intended function (Dunn, 364-65; Moo, 387-90; Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:549, 561), not merely under the condemnation of the law (Cranfield, 1:297, 320), nor under a legalistic attitude toward the law (Cranfield, 1:339-40). That is, in Romans 7 Paul is not discussing or depicting a legalistic system of works self-righteousness as a basis for salvation. Rather, Paul is depicting the struggle of a Jew under the old covenant who attempts to live by the law in its divinely intended function, but without the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Contra Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 273-84, who believes Romans 7 depicts the struggle of a gentile godfearer attempting to live by the Mosaic law in order to dissuade gentiles from attempting to gain self-mastery by following the law. Stowers’ view is described in more detail in footnote 72 below.

which explicates 6:14: “When we were in the flesh, the sinful desires,⁶¹ the ones through the law, were at work in our bodies in order to produce fruit for death.” The phrase “fruit for death” is imagery for sinful behavior, the consequence of which is death.⁶² The emphasis of 7:5 is on the time element, that is, on *when* the production of sinful behavior occurred in the life of Paul and his addressees, the believers in Rome. By means of temporal indicators, 7:5 conveys the point that the production of sin by overpowering sinful desires occurred to Paul and to his addressees before they were released from the law at conversion, that is, when they were still under the Mosaic law.⁶³

Romans 7:5 makes two points, the first one explicit and second one implicit. First, 7:5 explains why sin masters those under the law: Those under the Mosaic law are “in the flesh” and therefore the sinful desires of the flesh master or control their behavior in order to produce sinful behavior. Second, 7:5 implies that the law is unable to empower those under the law to resist the sinful desires of the flesh. In short, the law is unable by

⁶¹ According to Bauer, 747-48, all sixteen occurrences of *πάθημα* in the New Testament except two refer to suffering or misfortune; the occurrences in Romans 7:5 and Galatians 5:24 carry the sense of feelings, interests, or desires. Cf. also Byrne, 215; and Dunn, 364.

⁶² “Fruit for death” references not merely death, but sinful behavior, because Paul has already established in Romans 6:15-23, the preface for 7:1—8:17, that death is the consequence of sinful behavior. Also, the phrase “to bear fruit for death” is in contrastive parallel with the phrase “to bear fruit for God” of 7:4 which surely refers to “righteous behavior,” not “God” himself. Thus, the *εἰς* phrase in 7:5 means, “in order to bear the fruit of sinful behavior which leads to death.”

⁶³ The subordinate clause *ὅτε γὰρ ἤμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί* which introduces 7:5 indicates that the event 7:5 describes lies in the past for Paul and his addressees, the believers in Rome. Also, the temporal contrast which this opening clause implies between 7:4 and 7:5 further indicates that 7:5 references the preconversion period of their lives, before they “died to the law” at conversion. This is confirmed by the *νυνὶ δέ* which introduces 7:6, the next sentence. The *νυνὶ δέ* creates a temporal contrast between 7:5 and 7:6 which confirms that 7:5 is describing the situation of Paul and his addressees before they were “released from the law.” Thus, 7:5 maintains that Paul and his addressees were overpowered and mastered by their sinful desires when they were still under the administration of the Mosaic law. So also Käsemann, 188; and Dunn, 370. Romans 7:5 is not talking about all humanity outside Christ. Romans 6:14; 7:4, 6, specifically narrow Paul’s focus to those outside Christ who are under the authority or administration of the Mosaic law. This is a key point for pinpointing the identity of the “I” in the subsequent 7:7-25.

itself to fulfill the intent or goal of the law, which is to produce righteousness in conduct and eternal life (cf. 7:10).

Paul's assertion and terminology (σάρξ, παθήματα, ἁμαρτία) in Romans 7:5 resonated with the familiar problem of akrasia, from ἀκρασία, the lack of self-control, or self-mastery, over the passions or desires of the flesh. Its opposite, self-control or self-mastery, was labeled ἐγκράτεια. It was widely acknowledged that desires of the flesh often enslave and master over reason and better judgment, producing evil behavior.⁶⁴ The enslavement-to-sin imagery in Romans 6, particularly the imagery of mastery conveyed by the term κυριεύω in 6:14, may have suggested the topic of akrasia to Paul's first

⁶⁴ For many playwrights and philosophers, the ancient myths of Phaedra and especially Medea were the font of discussion on the topic of akrasia. In the myth, Medea is a woman whose reason is overpowered by her passion of anger and desire for revenge to the point of killing her own children in order to take revenge on her husband. In depictions of Medea by playwrights, Medea contemplates her decision and admits that her desire for revenge is stronger than her reason. Plays which depict the problem of akrasia include Euripides, *Medea* (especially lines 1077-80) and *Hippolytus*; Seneca, *Medea* (especially 926-30, 988-90) and *Phaedra* (especially 178-84); and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.19-21. Seneca's plays had been published less than ten years before Paul wrote the letter to the Romans. Philosophical works which are dedicated to the problem of out-of-control passions include Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* books 7 and 10.1-5; and 4 Maccabees. Many others reference the problem, including Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.28.7-9, who quotes from Euripides, *Medea* 1078-79. The lament of enslavement to sinful desires and deeds in Romans 7:14-25 resonates with similar laments, including that of Seneca, *Epistle to Lucilius* 52.1ff. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 260-64, reviews in detail the ancient literature on self-mastery. Keener, *Romans*, 90-96, lists numerous ancient references (in several footnotes). Daniel Napier, "Paul's Analysis of Sin and Torah in Romans 7:7-25," *Restoration Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2002): 28-30, discusses the parallel between Euripides, *Medea* 1078-79, and Romans 7:15.

The terms used in many of these works to reference the desires of the flesh included ἡδονή, ἐπιθυμία, πάθημα, πάθος, and phrases such as ἡδοναί σαρκός and ἐπιθυμιαί τῆς σαρκός. Using these terms, New Testament authors display general agreement with the principle that desires of the flesh prompt sin. Specific passages include James 1:14-15; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 1:14; 2:11; 4:2-3; 2 Peter 2:10, 18; 1 John 2:16; and Jude 16-19. Paul himself evinces belief in these principles, and uses these terms, in Romans 1:24, 26; 6:12; 13:14; Galatians 5:13-24; Ephesians 2:3; 4:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:6; and Titus 3:3. Although Paul does not use the terms ἀκρασία, ἀκρατής, ἐγκράτεια, ἐγκρατής, and ἐγκρατεύομαι in Romans, he does so in 1 Corinthians 7:5, 9; 9:25; Galatians 5:23; 2 Timothy 3:3; and Titus 1:8.

century readers.⁶⁵ If not, Paul's assertion in 7:5 would have been readily recognized as engaging the topic of *akrasia*.⁶⁶

Paul did not disagree with the broad outlines of the contemporary understanding of the problem. Where Paul differed with other writers was on the solution.⁶⁷ The conventional wisdom exhibited by many works was that *ἐγκράτεια*, self-control or self-mastery over the passions, is gained via knowledge, or educated reason.⁶⁸ Jewish authors promoted the law of Moses as an aid to educate the reason.⁶⁹ According to Romans 7:5 and Paul's argumentation throughout Romans 7, the reasoning faculty of the mind, educated by the Mosaic law or otherwise, is no match against the overpowering sinful

⁶⁵ For *κυριεύω*, Bauer, 576, suggests, "be master of, dominate."

⁶⁶ Bryan, 89-91, avers that the idea of *ἐγκράτεια* as a desirable trait is clearly present in Romans, particularly in Romans 7:7-25, and was virtually inescapable at this period if one was to speak about virtue or virtuous persons.

⁶⁷ According to David Charles Aune, "Passions in the Pauline Epistles: The Current State of Research," in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (New York: Routledge, 2008), 232, "Scholars have long recognized that Paul's conception of 'self-mastery' (*ἐγκράτεια*) differs substantially from various conceptions developed in Hellenistic philosophy." Aune then explains that the chief difference between Paul and the philosophers was Paul's insistence that the Spirit of Christ can reverse moral decline.

⁶⁸ E.g., Cicero, *On Invention* 2.54.164: "Continence is the control of desire by the guidance of wisdom;" and Philo, *On the Unchangeableness of God* 143: "For there are no two things so utterly opposed as knowledge and pleasure of the flesh [*σαρκὸς ἡδονή*]." Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.26.7, finds the answer to misdeeds in the *ψυχὴ λογικὴ*: "Point out to the rational governing faculty a contradiction and it will desist." According to Keener, *Romans*, 82n11: "Many believed that the mind and correct beliefs could overcome passion."

⁶⁹ The entirety of 4 Maccabees is dedicated to the proposition, stated in 1:1, that "pious reason is sovereign over the passions." At some points, such as 4 Maccabees 2:21-23 and 18:1-2, the author indicates that the Mosaic law educates the reason or mind. Cp. Wisdom of Solomon 17:1.

desires of the flesh.⁷⁰ Paul hints in 7:6, and subsequently asserts in 8:13, that believers in Christ can resist sinful desires and deeds with the help of the Holy Spirit.⁷¹

In other words, Romans 7:5 declares that those under the law, Jews and proselytes, are still “in the flesh” and suffer from the malady of *akrasia*.⁷² In spite of being under the law, they are inexorably controlled or enslaved by the desires of the flesh just as the rest of humanity who are not under the administration of the law. Like the rest of humanity, those under the law are subject to sinful desires, or passions, of the flesh just as Adam was.⁷³ Therefore, Paul’s point in 7:5 is that under the administration of the law,

⁷⁰ Jean-Noël Aletti, “Romans 7,7-25: Rhetorical Criticism and its Usefulness,” *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 61 (1996): 91-92, summarizes Paul’s stance in this way: “As to the remedy for [the inner conflict of the *ἀκρατής*], it is not to be found—as in Socrates, Plato, or Epictetus—in an increased understanding . . . ; for, the law already provides all requisite understanding, but is incapable of releasing anyone from the clutches of sin.”

⁷¹ So also Keener, *Romans*, 94: “But whereas many ancient thinkers (especially Stoics) felt that proper knowledge would produce transformation, Paul denies that knowledge apart from God’s Spirit can produce righteousness (cf. Rom. 8:2-4).”

⁷² Similarly, Hultgren, 272; and Napier, 30, who suggests that perhaps in Romans 7:15 Paul described Israel’s predicament in the words of Medea (especially in Euripides, *Medea* 1078-79) in order to express that “although Israel is the people of God, they are the people of God according to the flesh. An Israelite locked in Adamic humanity is fundamentally no more privileged by nature than the ‘barbarian woman’ [i.e., Medea] or the *ἀκρατής*.”

The view of Stanley Stowers on Romans 7:1-25 is unique and compelling. According to Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 21-22, 36-41, 255, 273-84, the letter to the Romans is addressed to gentiles and the purpose of Romans 7 is to dissuade gentiles from attempting to gain self-mastery by following the Mosaic law. “Romans 7 stands forth as a Jewish Christian adaptation of Greco-Roman discourse about the problem of *akrasia*, in service of an argument against gentiles attempting to gain self-mastery by following the law” (279). Romans 7 does not depict Jews living under the law, but gentiles attempting to live under the law. “Paul uses *prosopopoeia* in chapter 7 to characterize . . . gentiles, especially those who try to live by works of the law” (273). The person in Romans 7:7-25 represents a gentile godfearer who delights in the law and wants to live by the law, but is caught between two cultures (277-78). “Like Medea, he cannot submit to a foreign law because his gentile passions will not allow it. . . he is torn between the passions of an idolator and the law of the one true God” (278). “Paul then ends his *prosopopoeia* by addressing the imaginary gentile in 8:1-2. The apostle tells him that he is freed from condemnation and from the law of sin and death through the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which will effect a renewed mind (8:1-11)” (281). Stowers’ interpretation must overcome some objections, but Stowers presents evidence that makes his interpretation worthy of consideration.

⁷³ Paul does not explicitly reference Adam in Romans 6:1—8:17, but the temporal designation *ὅτε ἤμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί* of 7:5 references the period in a person’s life before conversion to Christ, during which

sin and death thrive and reign just as sin and death reigned before the law (cf. Rom. 5:12-21).

Romans 7:6: Those under Grace Have the Enabling Spirit

Paul's statement in Romans 7:6 assumes that under the way of grace the Spirit does what the law cannot do.⁷⁴ The temporal *νυνὶ δέ* which introduces 7:6 signals a shift in focus from the past situation of Paul's addressees under the law, described in 7:5, to their present situation under grace. Paul asserts, "But now, we believers in Christ have been released from the law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve God in the new way of the Holy Spirit, not in the old way of the written code" (7:6). Later, 8:1-17 confirms that the Spirit enables believers in Christ to master the sinful desires of the flesh, control their own behavior, and produce righteousness in behavior, thereby fulfilling the ultimate goal of the law.⁷⁵

Is the Law Involved in the Production and Exacerbation of Sin?

Some of Paul's statements in 7:5-13 seem to suggest more than merely that the law cannot prevent enslavement to sinful desires and deeds. Some verses indicate that the

time people are controlled by the desires of the flesh, subject to death, and therefore in affinity with Adam. Cf. Byrne, 212; Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:560.

⁷⁴ *Πνεῦμα* in 7:6 refers to the Holy Spirit (Dunn, 373; Ziesler, 178), not to the human spirit (Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:429) or to a supposed deeper intent of scripture which underlies the "letter" of scripture. This interpretation is supported by Romans 8:1-17, especially 8:9-11, which develops 7:6 and specifically defines *πνεῦμα* as the Spirit of Christ. The terms "under grace," "in the new way of the Spirit," and "in Christ" in Romans 6:14; 7:6; and 8:1 are near synonyms which reference the way of faith in Christ.

⁷⁵ Dunn, 366-67, rightly adds that by "we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter" Paul has in mind an ethically responsible lifestyle, not spiritual experiences. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 293, remarks, "The Mosaic law is replaced by the work of the Spirit in believers' lives."

law plays an active role, rather than a passive role, in the production of sin. For example, 7:5 may imply this with the phrase τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου: “The sinful desires, *the ones through the law*, were at work in our bodies producing sinful behavior.” Although the phrase is verbless, many translations and commentators interpret this as meaning the law arouses or stimulates the sinful desires.⁷⁶ In 7:8-13, Paul repeats variations of the διὰ phrase five more times. All this potentially negative press compels Paul to mount a defense for the law in 7:7-13, but he does not at any point relent on the implication that the law is ineffective against the sinful desires of the flesh.

At minimum, people under the law cannot escape enslavement to sin because the administration of the law does not provide the help of the indwelling Spirit. Either because the law exacerbates sin or simply because the administration of the law does not provide the help of the Spirit, people under the law cannot escape enslavement to sin. They need help which the law cannot provide. Under the way of grace, they have enablement from the Spirit to escape enslavement to sin.

⁷⁶ Commentators who interpret Romans 7:5 as asserting that, in their words, the law arouses, evokes, exacerbates, fosters, incites, intensifies, or stimulates either the sinful passions or sinful behavior include Bryan, 139; Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:428; Hultgren, 272; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 636; Matera, 171; Moo, 415, 419-20; Talbert, 168, 191; Watson, 280; Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:558, 560; and Ziesler, 172-73, 176.

Aletti, 81-82; and Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 295-304, avoid and argue against language such as “arouse” to characterize the law’s relation to sinful passions and sinful behavior. Aletti, 81-82, argues that the law does not incite sin; rather, the law exposes sin and the deceitful nature of sin.

Commentators speculate on the degree to which the law may be involved with the sinful desires in the production of sinful behavior according to the statements in Romans 7. Ziesler, 176-77, provides a list of alternative interpretations and concludes, “It is impossible to be dogmatic about all this.”

Believers Are Released from the Law

In Romans 7:6, Paul assures his fellow believers in Christ that *κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου*, “We have been released from the law.”⁷⁷ However, release from the law does not mean believers may sin with impunity. The *ἵνα* purpose clause at the end of 7:4 asserts that the reason believers are released from the law and joined to Christ is *in order to* enable them to produce “fruit for God,” which is righteous behavior.⁷⁸ Evidently, then, believers are released from the administration of the law, *but not released from the necessity to fulfill the intended goal of the law which is righteousness in conduct*. Believers are not free *to* sin, but free *from* sin’s mastery over them⁷⁹ *in order that* they might live the lifestyle that leads to eternal life, the lifestyle of righteousness.⁸⁰

Summary of Romans 7:1-6

In summary, Romans 7:1-6 posits that those in Christ have been released from the administration of the law (7:1-4), because under the law the sinful desires of the flesh master a person and produce sinful behavior and death (7:5). Now, believers in Christ serve God in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code (7:6),

⁷⁷ Bauer, 526, recommends that *καταργέω* in Romans 7:6 be translated, “*released from the law*.”

⁷⁸ So also Hultgren, 271; and Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 294, regarding the referent of “fruit for God.”

⁷⁹ I borrowed this language from Ziesler, 165.

⁸⁰ As Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 269-70, observes, just because believers in Christ are no longer under the law, this does not mean they are free to flout the moral imperatives found in the law, for these are the moral standards God requires of all humankind. Cf. also Ziesler, 173-78.

because the Spirit does what the written law could not do: enable believers to live the lifestyle of righteousness.

Romans 7:7-25 illustrates the two points of 7:5: (1) The sinful desires of the flesh master over those who are under the law and cause them to sin; and (2) The law is unable to help a person resist the sinful desires of the flesh. Romans 8:1-17 elaborates on what 7:6 only hinted at, that the Spirit enables believers to resist the sinful desires of the flesh.⁸¹

Romans 7:7-25

Romans 7:7-25 Defends the Law

Romans 7:7-25 defends the law and at the same time illustrates the two points of 7:5. Paul is compelled to defend the law because statements in 7:5-6, 8, 11, and 13, particularly the *διὰ* phrases, implicate the law in the production of sin and death. Paul voices the accusations against the law with diatribal questions in Romans 7:7 and 7:13: Is the law sin? Does the law bring death? In 7:7-13 Paul argues that the Mosaic law is good and not culpable for human moral failure or the production of sin and death.⁸² For one thing, the law is good because it teaches people what behavior is sinful (7:7).⁸³ And the

⁸¹ Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 104; Keener, *Romans*, 86, 93, 98; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 294, 322; and Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:559-60, concur with the programmatic nature of Romans 7:5-6 for the structure of 7:7—8:17.

⁸² So also Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 297, 309.

⁸³ Pace Dunn, 378-80, 400; Käsemann, 193; and Watson, 280, who argue that Romans 7:7 does more than highlight the pedagogical function of the law. According to these commentators, 7:8 expands on 7:7, and therefore 7:7 asserts that the law evokes or stimulates sin and thereby causes a person to experience sin. According to Dunn, 378, 400, the verb *γινώσκω* in 7:7 indicates that the law "provokes the actual experience of sin." This interpretation stretches the meaning of *γινώσκω* too far in this passage. Also,

law's intent is good. Again, the law's intent, or goal, is to produce righteousness in behavior and thereby bring life to its adherents (7:10).⁸⁴ Later, in 8:4, Paul expresses the intent, or goal, of the law with the term τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου.

Paul's primary argument in defense of the law is that sin, not the law, produces sinful behavior and death. In an example of personification, ἁμαρτία, not νόμος, is the active subject of three verbs and three participles in 7:8-13 which express actions that are deleterious to humans. Thus, Paul asserts, in effect, "Sin, seizing the occasion of the command, 'You shall not desire,' produced in me all kinds of desire, deceived me, and killed me, thereby producing death in me." In other words, the law is not to blame; sin takes advantage of the opportunity presented by the law to produce sin and death. Therefore, Paul concludes, the law is holy, righteous, good, and spiritual (7:12, 14, 16).

Romans 7:7-25 Illustrates the First Point of 7:5

Again, Romans 7:5 explicitly asserted that sinful desires of the flesh master over those who are under the law and control their behavior in order to produce sinful deeds and death. The personification, speech-in-character (prosopopoeia), and enslavement imagery in Romans 7:7-25 drive home this principle. The personification of sin particularly illustrates this principle because personified "sin" is most likely shorthand for sinful desires of the flesh. "Sin" personified in 7:7-25 is most likely shorthand for sinful

the purpose of 7:7 is to defend the law by presenting evidence of the law's goodness, not further implicate the law. Therefore, 7:8 does not explain or expand on 7:7. Instead, the δὲ indicates that 7:8 presents a contrast to 7:7 in this manner: "The law is good because it teaches what is sinful, *but* sin seizes the occasion of the command and produces all manner of desire."

⁸⁴ In Romans 7:10 Paul alludes to Leviticus 18:5, which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:12 and Romans 10:5. Cf. also Deuteronomy 4:1; 5:33; 6:24; 8:1; 30:15-20.

desires of the flesh from 7:5 for three reasons. First, Paul’s assertions regarding sin in 7:8, 11, and 13 clearly mimic and restate in various ways the explicit assertion regarding sinful desires in 7:5. The phrase *διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς* mimics or parallels *διὰ τοῦ νόμου*. The phrase “in me” parallels “in our members (bodies).” The verbs and objects of the restatements express essentially the same thought as the *εἰς* purpose clause of 7:5. The citations below display all these parallels, including how “sin” in 7:8-13 parallels “sinful desires” of 7:5. The verbs and objects are italicized.

- 7:5 Sinful desires, the ones through the law, *were at work in our bodies in order to produce fruit for death* (that is, *sinful behavior*).
- 7:8 Sin, through the command, *produced in me all manner of (sinful) desire*.
- 7:11 Sin, through the command, *deceived me (into committing sin)* and through the command *killed me*.
- 7:13 Sin, through the good command, *produced death in me*.

Second, the identification of “sin” as sinful desires of the flesh is strongly suggested by the statement, “Sin dwells in me” in 7:17 and 7:20. The locus of sinful desires in ancient literature was the body or flesh of a person.⁸⁵ In fact, the statement “sin dwells within me” in 7:17, 20 may be an intentional clue supplied by Paul in order to help the reader decipher the referent for “sin” personified.

Third, Paul’s readers would have readily perceived sinful desires of the flesh in Paul’s personification of sin in 7:7-25 because it was conventional wisdom at the time that the desires of the flesh produced sinful behavior. This belief is also evident in other

⁸⁵ E.g., Plutarch, *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 14 (in *Moralia* 1096c): ταῖς τῆς σαρκὸς ἐπιθυμίαις; 2 Peter 2:18: ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς; Galatians 5:24: οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.

parts of the New Testament, including Romans 6:12; 13:14; Galatians 5:19-21, 24; James 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2:10, 18; and 1 John 2:16. Indeed, it is the very point which Paul makes in 7:5.

The following paraphrase of 7:7-25 assumes that “sin” is shorthand for sinful desires and shows how personification, speech-in-character, and enslavement imagery all team up to drive home the point that sinful desires control the behavior of people under the law: “It was not the law, but sinful desires of the flesh which produced sinful behavior in me. The sinful desires seized the occasion presented by the law to deceive me into committing sin, and thereby killed me (7:8-13). I am sold as a slave to sinful desires and deeds (7:14). I agree with the law and wish to do what is good, but cannot (7:15-16). It is no longer I who produces sinful behavior, but it is sinful desires dwelling within me which produce sinful behavior (7:17-20). When I want to do good, evil is near me. Sinful desires within me wage war against me and take me captive. I am wretched! Who will rescue me from the sinful desires of my body which lead me to death?” (7:21-24). In 7:25b Paul sums up his entire depiction in this way: “In my mind, I am a slave to God’s law, but with my body (that is, in reality, in my actual behavior) I am a slave to the law of sin (that is, I am a slave to the sinful desires of the flesh which seize the occasion presented by the law to deceive me into committing sin and thereby kill me).”⁸⁶ Therefore, 7:7-25 emphasizes the first point of 7:5, that sinful desires of the flesh master

⁸⁶ Romans 7:25a anticipates 8:1ff, and 7:25b summarizes 7:14-24. Aletti, 88, concurs, stating that “7:25a is a rhetorical figure, called anticipation, the purpose of which is to open the horizon or to signal the solution to be proposed in Romans 8.”

and control the behavior of those who are under the law in order to produce sinful deeds and death.

Romans 7:7-25 Illustrates the Second Point of 7:5

Romans 7:7-25 also drives home the second point of 7:5, that the law is unable to help its adherents resist the sinful desires of the flesh. The speech-in-character⁸⁷ particularly underscores the law's inability in regard to the sinful desires of the flesh because the identity of the person who fails to resist the sinful desires is a person *under the Mosaic law*.⁸⁸ Therefore, the portrayal implicitly depicts the law as failing to enable a

⁸⁷ Keener, *Romans*, 91-93; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 298, 300, 305; Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 16-21, 264-84; and Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 179ff, argue that Romans 7:7-25 employs speech-in-character, or prosopopoeia. Contra Mark A. Seifrid, "Romans 7: The Voice of the Law, the Cry of Lament, and the Shout of Thanksgiving," in *Perspectives on Our Struggle with Sin: Three Views of Romans 7*, ed. Terry L. Wilder (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 114-15.

⁸⁸ It is well-known that the identity of the ἐγώ in Romans 7, particularly 7:14-25 (some interpreters perceive a different persona in 7:7-13 than in 7:14-25), is a crux in New Testament scholarship. Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 67-84, surveys the history of interpretation since Origen. Among other insights, Reasoner, 81, finds, "The new perspective [on Paul] has taken a step past the anthropological lens with which Augustine read Romans 7 and emphatically views this section as an apology for the Torah." Commentators who provide lists of the many alternative interpretations include Cranfield, 1:342-47; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 314-21; and Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 187. The commentators listed below are placed in broad categories without regard for subtle nuances of interpretation or verbiage.

In the broadest terms, and with some variations, those who maintain the view that the "I" represents Jews, or Israel as a whole, under the law include Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 237-38; Aletti, 83, 88-92; Bryan, 140-42; Byrne, 218; Hultgren, 275, 285, 685; Keener, *Romans*, 94; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 298, 305, 321; Moo, 425-27, 430-31, 441; Napier, 20-31; Talbert, 196-97; Watson, 289-91; and Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:454, 565, who suggests that Paul's shift to first person in Romans 7:14 is a rhetorical move in order for Paul to talk of Israel without seeming to be siding against his kinsmen.

Others contend that the "I" represents nonconverts who are not necessarily Jew or gentile, in which case the passage depicts those who do not have the help of the indwelling Spirit in their struggle to resist sin (Käsemann, 192; Matera, 167; Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 180-81, 184ff). Others take the stand that the "I" represents converted believers in Christ, in which case the passage is an encouragement to Christians who struggle with temptation (Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:376; and Grant R. Osborne, "The Flesh Without the Spirit: Romans 7 and the Christian Experience," in *Perspectives on our Struggle with Sin: Three Views of Romans 7*, ed. Terry L. Wilder [Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011], 46).

person under the law to resist sin. As discussed previously, details within the depiction demonstrate that the law which 7:7-25 is talking about is the law of Moses. For example, Paul quotes the tenth commandment of the Decalogue in 7:7. In addition, Paul alludes to Leviticus 18:5 in 7:10. Finally, Romans 7:22 and 25 refer to the law as “the law of God.” All these details indicate that the “I” is a person under the law of Moses. Also, if the “I” is not under the law, Paul’s defense of the law in 7:7-25 would collapse because his arguments would be meaningless or irrelevant to the issue of the law’s culpability for sin.

Moreover, the speech-in-character does not depict just any person, or an *everyman*, who is under the Mosaic law. The illustration depicts a pious person, a person who strives to resist sin and obey the law. The person in the depiction agrees with the law, that it is good (*σύμφημι* in 7:16). Also, he wishes to do what is good (*θέλω* occurs seven times in 7:15-21). Indeed, he delights in the law of God (*συνήδομαι* in 7:22), but the sinful desires of the flesh wage war against the law of God in his mind and takes him captive, meaning the desires succeed in making him commit sinful deeds (7:22-23, 25b).

In sum, the identity of the “I” who fails to resist sin in 7:7-25 is a pious person under the law. Therefore, the identity of the “I” in the depiction profoundly illustrates and highlights the second point of 7:5, the principle that the law by itself is unable to help a pious person who is striving to obey the law resist the sinful desires of the flesh and control their own behavior.⁸⁹

Paul insisted that the law is good as far as it is designed. The law has a good intent and teaches people what is sinful (7:7). Therefore, the law is holy, righteous, good,

⁸⁹ So also Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 298, who states that the law’s only deficiency is its ineffectiveness when countering the power of sin.

and spiritual (7:12, 14, 16). Yet, the law has a limitation. The law is limited in its efficacy to produce righteous behavior and life.⁹⁰ The law teaches people what sin is, but cannot help them escape the mastery of the sinful passions of the flesh.⁹¹ In Romans 8:3, Paul references the limitation of the law with the epithet τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου ἐν ᾧ ἡσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, the inability of the law in which it is weak with regard to the management of the sinful desires of the flesh.⁹² In short, the law is incapable of helping its adherents fulfill the intent or goal of the law, which is to generate the righteous lifestyle in the lives of its adherents (cf. 8:4).

Paul's argumentation in Romans 7:1-25 disabuses his addressees of the notion that the law can help them gain ἐγκράτεια, self-mastery over the desires of the flesh that prompt sinful behavior. His teaching that the law is powerless in regard to the flesh inoculates the church in Rome against the teaching of the Judaizers.⁹³

⁹⁰ So also Stephen Westerholm, *Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 82: "There is nothing wrong, then, with the law or its commands. . . . On the other hand, it is not within the capacity of the law, however good its commands, to secure its obedience among human beings gifted with moral choice." Aletti, 85, characterizes the statement in Romans 7:14 as a *concessio*, a rhetorical device in which the speaker concedes a point, but demonstrates the limits of that point of view. According to Aletti, in 7:14 "Paul acknowledges (concession) with the biblical tradition and with observant Jews of his time that the law is good, but he immediately adds that the law is incapable of saving and sanctifying."

⁹¹ Similarly, Aletti, 82, describes the law's role and limitation in the production of righteous behavior in this way: "In short, the law has only a cognitive function, not a performative one (it does not facilitate the good behavior of the subject.)"

⁹² This translation assumes that the referent for *σάρξ* in 8:3 is sinful desires of the flesh, an interpretation which is defended in chapter three.

⁹³ Dunn, 340, in his commentary on Romans 6:14, suggests that Paul's addressees must be gentiles who were in danger of judaizing.

Summary of Romans 7:7-25

In summary, Paul does three things in Romans 7:7-25. He defends the Mosaic law from culpability for sin. He illustrates and drives home the explicit point of 7:5, that the sinful desires of the flesh master over those who are under the law. Finally, he highlights the implicit point of 7:5, that the law is unable to generate the righteous lifestyle in the lives of its adherents because it is ineffective at helping them resist the sinful desires of the flesh. At 8:1, Paul shifts his focus to the situation of those who are in Christ Jesus (that is, those who are “under grace”).

Romans 8:1-17

The Main Point of Romans 8:1-17

Romans 8:1-17 unpacks what Paul merely referenced in 7:6. Paul’s main point in Romans 8:1-17 is that the Holy Spirit sets believers free from enslavement to sinful desires and behavior. With the enabling help of the indwelling Spirit believers in Christ can resist the sinful desires of the flesh and live the righteous lifestyle, thus fulfilling the intent or goal of the law. Although 8:1-17 contains no imperative verbs or hortatory subjunctives, the entirety of 8:1-17 is an implied exhortation.⁹⁴ Its rhetorical aim is to encourage believers to live the lifestyle of righteousness with the help of the Spirit. The

⁹⁴ Jan Lambrecht, “The Implied Exhortation in Romans 8,5-8,” *Gregorianum* 81, no. 3 (2000): 450, concludes: “In Romans 8 Paul most probably thinks of the behavioral life of his addressees. His language is not just the description of the two contrasting ages. In a hidden way his admittedly positional language in 8,1-11 is intensively paraenetic. He has in mind the concrete and endangered existence of the community as well as that of the individual believer.”

climax is 8:13. The warning of death and promise of life in 8:13 imply this exhortation: With the help of the indwelling Spirit, put to death the sinful practices of the body.⁹⁵

In Romans 8:1-17 Paul does not explicitly say, “The Spirit enables people to resist the sinful desires of the flesh and live the righteous lifestyle.” Rather, that concept is assumed by Paul. He is manifestly leaning on the prophecy in Ezekiel 36:26-27.⁹⁶ He does not explicitly mention that prophecy or overtly allude to it.⁹⁷ He is taking it for granted that when the Roman believers hear the word “Spirit,” as in “by the Spirit put to death the sinful practices of the body” (Rom. 8:13), they are aware of either the prophecy or the theological principle that one of the roles of the Spirit is to enable righteous living. In his previous references to the Spirit in 5:5 and 7:6 Paul is similarly silent about details. He assumes a brief reference to the Spirit is sufficient for his addressees.

A movement can be perceived in Romans 8:1-17 from the indicative of what God has done (8:1-4), to a comparison of the two alternative responses to God’s action (8:5-11), to an admonition to respond by walking according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh (8:12-17).⁹⁸

⁹⁵ The Holy Spirit is referenced nineteen times in Romans 8, but only ten times in the rest of the letter. There are five additional occurrences of *πνεῦμα* in Romans which do not reference the Holy Spirit, two of which are in Romans 8.

⁹⁶ Commentators who see an echo of Ezekiel 36:26-27 in Romans 8:1-17 include Byrne, 239-40; Cranfield, 1:384; Dunn, 417; Keener, *Romans*, 99-100; Schreiner, *Romans*, 396; Talbert, 204; and Stuhlmacher, 118. M. Turner, “Holy Spirit,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 556-57, notes allusions to Ezekiel 36-37 in Romans 7-8; 2 Corinthians 3; 5:17; and Galatians 3-6.

⁹⁷ Martin Meiser, “The Torah in the Ethics of Paul,” in *The Torah in the Ethics of Paul*, ed. Martin Meiser, Library of New Testament Studies, 473 (London: T. & T. Clark, 2012), 136-37, states, “Admittedly, Paul does not quote Ezekiel 36:26-27 . . . and the theory of some exegetes who declare Ezekiel 36:26-27 to be the background for Romans 8 remains speculative, *but I do not see any alternative*” (emphasis added).

⁹⁸ Byrne, 235, enlightened me regarding this movement, although my version slightly varies from Byrne’s.

Romans 8:1-4: What God Has Done

In 8:1, Paul shifts his focus from the old way under the law, depicted in 7:7-25, to the new way of the Spirit.⁹⁹ The temporal adverb νῦν in 8:1 recalls νυνί of 7:6 and signals the shift. The word νῦν also introduces a contrast to the preceding material, 7:7-25. In contrast to the “I” under the law in 7:7-25, headed for death because he is enslaved to sinful desires and deeds, there is no condemnation for those in Christ.¹⁰⁰

Given Paul’s proscription of the sinful lifestyle on pain of death in Romans 6, the statement in 8:1 cannot be saying that believers in Christ are free of condemnation in spite of their postconversion lifestyle.¹⁰¹ The next verse, connected to 8:1 with a γάρ, explains that believers are free of condemnation because the Spirit has set them free from enslavement to sinful desires and behavior, that is, the Spirit has set believers free from

⁹⁹ So also Byrne, 235; Dunn, 415; Jewett, 479; Keener, *Romans*, 98; Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 322-23; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 684; Moo, 472; Schreiner, *Romans*, 397-98; Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 209-10; and Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:575. Contra Talbert, 185, 195, 203, who divides the text into 7:7—8:2 and 8:3-17.

¹⁰⁰ Κατάκριμα is the key word which draws the contrast with the preceding material. It draws a contrast with preceding material, particularly the references to death in 7:5, 9-11, 13, 24, because κατάκριμα refers to death. Κατάκριμα is not identical to the English word “condemnation.” Often, the English word “condemnation” refers to a verdict whereas κατάκριμα refers to the sentence or punishment decreed after a negative verdict has been reached. Cf. Bauer, 518.

¹⁰¹ In the commentary that follows, I express the interpretation of Romans 8:1 that the judicial sentence “no condemnation” is based on the postconversion sanctification of a believer’s lifestyle. This interpretation challenges the traditional Protestant theology of justification by faith alone. Chuck Lowe, “‘There is no Condemnation’ (Romans 8:1): But why Not?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42, no. 2 (June 1999): 231-32, lists the three main approaches taken by commentators who attempt to harmonize Romans 8:1 with traditional Protestant soteriology. The main approach is that Romans 8:1 is not talking about sanctification at all, but instead refers to justification based on the substitutionary, atoning death of Christ. This is the approach, e.g., of Moo, 472-73, 481; and Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:456. In contrast to all such approaches, Lowe himself, 231-250, contends that Romans 8:1 is indeed talking about sanctification of believers’ behavior. Lowe, 249, states, “The assumption that [‘no condemnation’ in Rom. 8:1] must be dependent upon justification reflects an underestimation of the need for sanctification characteristic of much of contemporary evangelicalism.”

the bondage depicted in 7:5, 7-25, which leads to death.¹⁰² The word ἐλευθερώ brings the enslavement-to-sin imagery from chapters 6 and 7 into Romans 8:2. Also, in both its instances in 8:2, the word νόμος is Moses' law; in other words, the word νόμος is not "rule," "principle," or "authority."¹⁰³ Thus, 8:2 declares, "The law which is fulfilled with the help of the Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-27) sets you free from the law which is unfulfilled because it is co-opted by the sinful desires of the flesh in order to produce sin and death (Rom. 7:5, 8-13)."¹⁰⁴ In other words, as promised in Ezekiel 36:26-27, the indwelling Spirit enables a person to fulfill the law by living the righteous lifestyle and living the righteous lifestyle sets them free from condemnation for sin.¹⁰⁵ Thus, whether one

¹⁰² So Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 211. Similarly, Byrne, 236. Contra Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:456, who explicitly equates "no condemnation" in 8:1 with justification or deliverance from "sin's penalty" and not with liberation from enslavement to sinful desires of the flesh, which he labels "sin's power" (i.e., sanctification). Moo, 472-73, is in agreement with Cottrell regarding Romans 8:1.

¹⁰³ So also Bryan, 146; Dunn, 414, 416-19, 436; Jewett, 480-81; Schreiner, *Romans*, 400; and Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:576-77. Contra the following commentators, all of whom interpret νόμος in Romans 8:2 as "rule," "principle," or "authority": Byrne, 235-36, 242; Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:457-58; Cranfield, 1:376; Fitzmyer, 482-83; Hultgren, 297; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 324; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 685; Matera, 190-91; Moo, 473-76; Talbert, 196; Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 211-12; Ziesler, 202; and Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 522.

¹⁰⁴ Similarly, Keener, *Romans*, 99, regarding the identity of the law of the Spirit. The law of the Spirit in 8:2 could also be characterized as the law written on the heart, from Jeremiah 31:33. Dunn, 417, insightfully notes, "The law of the Spirit is the eschatological law (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27)." The phrase "the law of sin and death" laconically comprehends or sums up all of Romans 7. Romans 7 argued that the law is unable to fulfill its intended goal, which is to produce righteous behavior and life. Instead, sin (i.e., the sinful desires of the flesh from 7:5) takes advantage of the occasion presented by the law, or co-opts the law, to produce sinful behavior and death. Thus, "the law of sin and death" is the unfulfilled law of Moses.

¹⁰⁵ The Spirit enables righteous living according to Colin G. Kruse, "Paul, The Law and the Spirit," in *Paul and His Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Pauline Studies, 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 112, 129; Byrne, 235-36, 240-41; Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:455, 458, 476-77; Dunn, 424; Fee, 558-59; Keener, *Romans*, 100; Matera, 185-86; Meiser, 139; Schreiner, *Romans*, 396-97; Stuhlmacher, 118; Talbert, 204, 209; Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 214-15; Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:592-93; and Moses E. Lard, *Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1875), 263, who emphasizes that the believer must work with the Spirit. Righteous behavior enabled by the indwelling Spirit is a constant theme in Ben Witherington III, *The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament*, vol. 1, *The Individual Witnesses* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), but see 271-74 for a summary on Paul.

receives the sentence “no condemnation” depends upon one’s lifestyle choice, that is, whether one avails oneself of the help of the Spirit to fulfill the intent of the law.¹⁰⁶

The long sentence in Romans 8:3-4 supplies additional evidence that 8:2 is about righteous behavior which sets believers free from condemnation for sin. Verses 3-4, connected to verse 2 by a *γάρ*, explain that freedom from sin, and therefore freedom from condemnation for sin, was effected by the atonement. The atonement ushered in, among other things of course, the bestowal of the indwelling Spirit.¹⁰⁷ Again, the Spirit frees believers from enslavement to sin because the Spirit enables believers to resist the sinful desires of the flesh and live the righteous lifestyle. Living the righteous lifestyle fulfills the intent of the law and thus frees believers from condemnation for sin.¹⁰⁸

Here is how Romans 8:3-4 conveys these concepts: Romans 8:3-4 starts out by referencing the inability of the law. Dirk Venter has found that *τὸ ἀδύνατον* is an accusative of respect by which Paul references a point he made earlier, in Romans 7,

¹⁰⁶ So also Lowe, 232: “According to Romans 8:1-2, Christians escape condemnation because they have been transformed by the Spirit; that is, because they now live in such a way that condemnation is no longer warranted.”

¹⁰⁷ Paul references the atonement only briefly. Within the context of his argument in Romans 8, the atonement is connected with the Holy Spirit and fulfillment of the law. The atonement ushered in the new age of restoration which is characterized by many things, including forgiveness of sins and the bestowal of the indwelling Holy Spirit, concepts promised in prophecies of the eschatological restoration and affirmed by New Testament authors. The bestowal of the Holy Spirit is promised in Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:26-27; 37:14; 39:29; and Joel 2:28-29; and affirmed in John 7:37-39; 16:7; Acts 2:38; Romans 5:5; 8:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:13; and 1 Peter 1:2.

¹⁰⁸ Lowe, 246-47, concludes, “Moral transformation is thus a prerequisite for eschatological salvation. . . . In fact, God sent Jesus and bestows the Spirit for this very reason; namely, because sanctification—and not only justification—is necessary, and could be achieved in no other way (Rom. 8:3-4).”

about the law.¹⁰⁹ In Romans 7, Paul had shown that the law is limited in its efficacy against sin. Paul established that the law is unable to help its adherents resist the sinful desires of the flesh, live the righteous lifestyle, and thus fulfill the intent of the law.¹¹⁰ This limitation of the law is encapsulated in τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου ἐν ᾧ ἡσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, the inability of the law in which it was weak with regard to the sinful desires of the flesh.¹¹¹

Romans 8:3 continues. God, via the atonement, did what the law could not do: God enabled people to fulfill the intended goal of the law. The atonement allowed God not only to forgive sins, but also to bestow his indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit does something the γράμμα (cf. 7:6) cannot do: enable people to resist the sinful desires of the flesh, live the righteous lifestyle, and thereby fulfill τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου, the righteousness of the law or the righteousness required by the law (8:4). The phrase τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου refers to the intended goal of the law which is to generate the lifestyle of righteousness in the lives of individuals.¹¹² This is where the allusion to Ezekiel 11:19-

¹⁰⁹ Dirk J. Venter, “Romans 8:3-4 and God’s Resolution of the Threefold Problems of Sin, the Incapability of the Law and the Weakness of the Flesh,” *In die Skriflig* 48, no. 1 (2014): 1-3. Cf. Wallace, 202, for occurrences of the accusative of respect in the New Testament.

¹¹⁰ So also Byrne, 236; Keener, *Romans*, 99; Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 325; and Ziesler, 203, who provides this wording: “The law can point the way, but cannot enable people to follow it.” Similarly, Moo, 478; Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 212. Pace Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:577, who argues that τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου refers to the law’s inability to give life. This is correct, but only partially correct. The law could not give the life it promised because it could not generate the righteous lifestyle which leads to life (cf. Rom. 7:10 which alludes to Lev. 18:5).

¹¹¹ Here, σὰρξ represents the sinful desires of the flesh from Romans 7:5. This referent for many of the occurrences of σὰρξ in Romans 8 is defended in chapter three.

¹¹² The word δικαίωμα is used frequently in the LXX (127 occurrences), usually in the plural (105), and usually to refer to the ordinances of the law. Paul refrains from using the plural here because he is not talking about the individual stipulations of the law. He is talking about the overall intent of the law. Due to the grammatical tie with τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου in 8:3a, fulfilling τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου is what the

20; 36:26-27 is the loudest. Like these passages in Ezekiel, Romans 8:4 connects the indwelling Spirit with law-fulfilling.¹¹³

The ἵνα of 8:4 underscores that the very purpose of the atonement was to enable people to fulfill the intent of the law.¹¹⁴ Thus, the ἵνα purpose clause in 8:4 echoes the ἵνα purpose clauses in 6:4 and 7:4. Using various language, each expresses the same thought: the purpose of God's action in Christ, and of believers' acceptance of Christ in baptism, is to enable believers to live the righteous lifestyle that leads to eternal life. In the language of each passage, the purpose of God's enterprise is to enable believers to walk in a new (righteous) manner of life (6:4), bear the fruit (of righteousness) for God (7:4), and fulfill the righteousness of the law (8:4).

law could not do; that is, fulfilling the δικαίωμα of the law is the converse of the ἀδύνατον, or inability, of the law. Paul established in Romans 7 that the law could not produce or generate the righteous lifestyle it demanded. Therefore, here, the referent for the singular δικαίωμα is the righteous lifestyle required by the law. That is, τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου is “what the law, in its totality, required of human beings, namely, righteousness, a life lived in faithful conformity to God's will,” as Byrne, 237, phrases it. Righteousness in lifestyle fulfills the intent or goal of the law. This interpretation is supported by Romans 13:8-10, which also uses πληρῶ to affirm the necessity of fulfilling the law. Romans 13:8-10 affirms that the law is fulfilled when the ethical demands, summed up in the love command, are kept (cf. also Matt. 22:37-40; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8). Commentators with similar understandings include Byrne, 237, 244; Cranfield, 1:384; Fee, 536-37; Moo, 481-82; Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 214-15; and Keener, *Romans*, 99, who has, “Those who are in Christ . . . fulfill the moral intention of the law.” Leander E. Keck, “What Makes Romans Tick?” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 3, *Romans*, ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 27-28; and Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 329, assert that τὸ δικαίωμα of the law is the love command.

Contra Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:462-63, who maintains that τὸ δικαίωμα refers to the same thing in both Romans 1:32 and 8:4, the decree that sin must be punished; Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:574, 577, 580, for whom τὸ δικαίωμα is the positive verdict the law announces, in contrast to κατὰκριμα of 8:1, rather than the behavior the law requires; and Ziesler, 206-07, who believes τὸ δικαίωμα is the tenth commandment, from Romans 7:7.

¹¹³ Dunn, 423, rightly observes: “Paul here [in Rom. 8:4] deliberately and provocatively insists on the continuity of God's purpose in the law and through the Spirit.”

¹¹⁴ Dunn, 423, emphatically argues that the ἵνα introduces a purpose clause rather than a result clause and that the purpose of Jesus' mission and death was the fulfillment of the law's requirement.

In sum, the thing God did which the law cannot do is condemn sin without condemning the sinner and thereby provide the means by which the former sinner is able to fulfill the intent of the law, which is to live the righteous lifestyle by walking *κατὰ πνεῦμα* and not *κατὰ σάρκα* (8:4).¹¹⁵ In short, with respect to the law's inability, God condemned sin in the flesh in order that the law's intent might be fulfilled.

Putting all these findings together results in this interpretation: "Therefore now there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus; for the law which is fulfilled with the help of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law which is unfulfilled because it is co-opted by the sinful desires of the flesh in order to produce sin and death. For, with respect to the inability of the law in which it was weak with regard to the sinful desires of the flesh, God, sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering, condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteousness of the law, which was

¹¹⁵ As stated previously, *περιπατέω* is a marker for ethics in the Pauline corpus because in his thirty-two uses of *περιπατέω*, Paul never uses the word in its literal sense, only its figurative sense (Bauer, 803). Therefore, walking *κατὰ σάρκα* means living according to the sinful desires of the flesh, which were first referenced in Romans 7:5. Walking or living *κατὰ πνεῦμα* means putting to death the sinful desires of the flesh with the help of the indwelling Spirit, per 8:13-14.

That believers, by their behavior, play a role in the fulfillment of the law according to Romans 8:4 is a minority position. Like me, Schreiner, *Romans*, 405, stresses that both God's activity and believers' obedience play a role in fulfilling the law. Commentators who disagree, most arguing that the voice of *πληρωθῆ* is a "divine passive" and *ἐν ἡμῖν* is locative rather than instrumental, include Byrne, 237; Matera, 193; and Moo, 483-84. Richard W. Thompson, "How is the Law Fulfilled in Us? An Interpretation of Rom 8:4," *Louvain Studies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 33-39, argues convincingly, mostly from details in the surrounding text, that *πληρωθῆ* is not a "divine passive," *ἐν ἡμῖν* in Romans 8:4 carries a primarily instrumental sense, and therefore believers do fulfill the law by their behavior. To Richard Thompson's arguments, I add these additional arguments in favor of human participation in the fulfillment of the law: First, the context is about believers' behavior. Paul is still answering the question in 6:1 and still exhorting believers to shun the sinful lifestyle and commit to the righteous lifestyle. Second, although both God and believers play roles in fulfilling the intent of the law, in the end the law's intent will not be fulfilled in the lives of individual believers who do not walk according to the Spirit, but instead walk according to the flesh. Third, even if Romans 8:4 does not affirm that believers participate in fulfilling the law, Romans 13:8-10 definitely does. Using *πληρώω*, the same verb used in 8:4, *Romans 13:8-10 explicitly affirms that believers fulfill the law* (cf. also Matt. 22:37-40; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8).

the intended goal of the law, might be fulfilled in us, the ones who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”¹¹⁶

Romans 8:5-11: Two Alternative Responses to What God Has Done

Romans 8:5-8 asserts that living according to the Spirit and living according to the flesh are diametrically opposed. They derive from two different mindsets. One mindset and lifestyle pleases God and the other cannot possibly please God because it does not submit to God’s law. One leads to death and the other leads to life and peace. Clearly, these assertions have a rhetorical aim: Paul is striving to exhort believers to shun one lifestyle and pursue the other.¹¹⁷

The rhetorical strategy of Romans 8:9-11 is to remind believers of two things. First, unlike those outside Christ, they have the Spirit, hence they are able to live righteously and please God (cf. 8:8).¹¹⁸ Second, they already possess eternal life now. Paul’s rhetorical aim is to encourage them to stay committed to the righteous lifestyle in order to retain the eternal life they have been given.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ The sentence of 8:3-4 exhibits a certain parallelism or equilibrium whose fulcrum is the *ἵνα*. On one hand, τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου prevents the fulfillment of τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου (note the similar construction). On the other hand, God’s condemning of sin in the flesh permits believers to live a lifestyle that is not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. This literary parallelism suggests a link between the atonement and enablement of righteous living, a link exhibited in 6:2-7 and which all of 8:1-17 assumes.

¹¹⁷ Similarly, Byrne, 238; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 696-97; and Lambrecht, 451, who concludes: “Exhortative urgency is not absent from 8,5-8.” Contra Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 330: “[Paul’s] intention in 8:5 is to describe, not exhort”; and Moo, 486: “Paul’s interest here is descriptive rather than hortatory.” If 8:5-8 is merely descriptive, an appropriate exegetical question arises: What is its purpose in this context if not to exhort?

¹¹⁸ Per Keener, *Romans*, 101.

¹¹⁹ Eternal life is not earned; it is a gift, as stressed by Romans 6:23. Paul confirms at several points throughout Romans 6:1—8:39 that believers already possess eternal life. God gives eternal life at

Romans 8:9-11 play a crucial function in Romans 8. These verses confirm that by *πνεῦμα* Paul is referring to the Holy Spirit of God. Also, these verses confirm that the Spirit indwells believers in Christ. Indeed, Paul emphasizes the indwelling, twice with *οἰκέω* and once with *ἐνοικέω*.¹²⁰

Romans 8:12-17: Admonition to Live according to the Spirit

Romans 8:12 draws an inference from the foregoing material. Since God has given to believers the Spirit, freedom from sin, and eternal life, believers are debtors to God, not to the flesh.¹²¹ Romans 8:13 issues the warning of eternal death for believers who live according to the flesh; and the promise of eternal life for believers who, by the Spirit, put to death the sinful lifestyle of the flesh.¹²² Romans 8:12-13 is the climax of Paul's exhortation. It specifically repeats the thrust of 6:21-23 and generally encapsulates Paul's entire response to the question in 6:1.

Romans 8:14-17a comprise the denouement to the climax of 8:12-13. On one hand, 8:12-13 epitomizes Paul's response to the question in 6:1, summarizing the heart of Paul's theology on the matter of postconversion behavior expected of saints. On the other

baptism, but according to Romans 6:21-23 and 8:13 believers who choose the sinful lifestyle will in the end reap for themselves eternal death.

¹²⁰ The emphasis on the indwelling of the Spirit in Romans 8:9-11 is in contrast to the emphasis on the indwelling of sin in 7:17-20. Using *οἰκέω* each time, Romans 7:17-20 repeats twice that sin dwells within the "I" who is depicted in Paul's speech-in-character. Cf. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:574.

¹²¹ Similarly, Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:474; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 701; and Ziesler, 212-13.

¹²² So also Byrne, 241, 246; Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:475-77; Cranfield, 1:394; Fee, 558; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 335; Matera, 196-97; Schreiner, *Romans*, 420; Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:592; and Dunn, 448, who notes, "The danger is real for . . . believers."

hand, 8:14-17a introduces new themes, but all these themes express one of the rhetorical devices Paul used earlier in his response: the promise of eternal life. These verses encourage believers to choose the path of the second “if” statement in 8:13 by reminding them that those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Thus, 8:14-17 concludes Paul’s response to the question in 6:1 on a positive note, a final reminder that those who allow the Spirit to guide their lives are sons of God and therefore co-heirs with Christ of eternal life. This positive reinforcement continues all the way through 8:39. Romans 8:18-39 is a series of assurances and promises the aim of which is to encourage believers to remain faithful to God through affliction and trials. This series is headlined by 8:17b which urges believers to suffer with Christ so that they may also be glorified with Christ.

Summary of Romans 8:1-17

Paul’s implicit exhortation in Romans 8:1-17 can be summarized in this way: “Since you believers have the indwelling Spirit, avail yourselves of the Spirit’s help.” Paul implicitly commands, “Walk by the Spirit (8:4), put to death sinful practices by the Spirit (8:13b), and be led by the Spirit (8:14).” These are parallel to the exhortations in Galatians 5:13-25: Walk by the Spirit (5:16), be led by the Spirit (5:18), and be guided by the Spirit (5:25). All these exhortations are within the context of ethics.

Conclusion

Romans 6:2-23 establishes that believers must die to sin, that is, they must commit to the righteous lifestyle or be under condemnation. Romans 7:1—8:17 contrasts

two ways to pursue the righteous lifestyle, under the Mosaic law and under the way of grace in Christ Jesus. The law alone, bereft of the Spirit, is unable to help a person resist sin. In contrast, the indwelling Spirit given to believers in Christ enables them to “put to death the sinful practices of the body” (8:13). Since the sinful lifestyle leads to death, Paul exhorts his addressees, the believers in Rome, to take up the righteous lifestyle enabled by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Three

Exegesis of Romans 8:12-13

Introduction

Romans 8:1-17 is a series of theological assertions at the end of Paul's response to the question in 6:1. Romans 8:12-13 is one small pericope of three assertions in that series. The three sentences of 8:12-13 include an inference based on the preceding material, followed by two conditional sentences which further explain the inference. There are no significant textual issues. Variants are referenced in the exegesis below when appropriate. These are the three sentences:

- 12: Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ὀφειλέται ἐσμέν οὐ τῇ σαρκὶ τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν,
13a: εἰ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε, μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν,
13b: εἰ δὲ πνεύματι τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε, ζήσεσθε.

Although 8:12-13 consists of three theological assertions, its primary purpose is exhortation, not merely education. It implicitly exhorts believers to proactively reject the sinful lifestyle and live the righteous lifestyle. The following displays the findings of the exegesis: “So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh by sinfully indulging the desires of the flesh. For if you live according to the desires of the flesh, you will certainly die eternally; but if you actively put to death the practices of the sinful lifestyle with the help of the indwelling Spirit, you will live eternally.”

The following exegesis frequently references Galatians 5:13—6:8. This is a sister passage to Romans 6:1—8:17. Both passages have the same purpose: to exhort believers to avoid sinful desires of the flesh and instead to pursue righteousness in lifestyle. Indeed,

the thesis statement of the Galatians passage could be used to sum up the Romans passage: “Do not allow your freedom to become an opportunity for the flesh” (Gal. 5:13). Moreover, these two passages share similar themes and similar terms. Therefore, some elements in Galatians 5:13—6:8 illuminate some elements in Romans 6:1—8:17.

Romans 8:12

Romans 8:12 is an inference based on the preceding material, especially the immediately preceding 8:1-11. The construction is uncommon and somewhat awkward, resulting in both an explicit point and an implicit point. The explicit point is that believers are not indebted to the flesh. The implicit point is that believers are indebted to God. Paul introduces the imagery of obligation in order to remind believers of God’s gifts to them and the commitment they made to God, and to exhort rejection of the sinful lifestyle. The sense of the verse is, “So then, brothers, we are debtors, but not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh by sinfully indulging the desires of the flesh.”

Ἄρα οὖν

Ἄρα οὖν introduces an inference based on preceding material. The best translation is “So then.”¹²³ The explicit point which *ἄρα οὖν* introduces, discussed below, is that believers are not indebted to the flesh.

¹²³ So Wallace, 673; and Bauer, 127, whose featured exemplars of *ἄρα οὖν* as a phrase include all eight of the occurrences in Romans: 5:18; 7:3, 25; 8:12; 9:16, 18; 14:12, 19.

ἀδελφοί

This vocative is not benign. Its insertion here accomplishes at least two significant purposes. First, ἀδελφοί clearly identifies Paul’s audience as the believers in Rome. As a result, Paul’s assertions in 8:12-17, including the striking warning in 8:13, unequivocally apply to believers. Second, ἀδελφοί underscores Paul’s concern and exhortational tone.

ὀφειλέται ἐσμέν

The word ὀφειλέται introduces obligation imagery into Paul’s exhortation.¹²⁴ Although obligation imagery is new, the inference which Paul draws from the preceding assertions is self-evident by this point. The assertions of the previous material are centered around the contrast between the flesh and God’s Spirit: Living according to the flesh brings death (7:5; 8:6), whereas living according to the Spirit brings life and peace (8:2, 6, 10-11). Moreover, God sent his son as an atonement for sin in order to make it possible for people to live according to the Spirit and escape death (8:3-4). Given all these facts, the inference Paul draws in 8:12 is, “We are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.”

The placement of the negative adverb οὐ before the dative phrase rather than before the verb may suggest that the implicit point, “We are debtors to God,” is also

¹²⁴ According to Bauer, 742-43, ὀφειλέτης and its cognates ὀφείλημα, ὀφείλω, and ὀφειλή carry the sense of being under an obligation. The obligation owed can be either monetary or moral, such as a debt of gratitude or of service.

intended by Paul.¹²⁵ Given all the good things believers have received from God, they are indebted to God. The immediately preceding 8:9-11 reminds believers that God has given to them the gift of his Spirit and the gift of eternal life. According to Romans 6:23, eternal life is a free gift of God; therefore, believers owe God their life, to conduct their lives according to the Spirit of God (hence the commands in 6:11-13, 19; cf. Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:1, 17).

The imagery of obligation may have reminded Paul's addressees of the institution of slavery. Borrowers were sometimes sold into slavery in order to pay off their debts (cf. Matt. 18:25; Lev. 25:39; 2 Kings 4:1; Neh. 5:5-8; Prov. 22:7).¹²⁶ If Paul had debt bondage in mind in Romans 8:12, this links 8:12 with the metaphor of slavery which is ubiquitous in Paul's response to the question in 6:1 (e.g.: 6:6-7, 12-14, 16-23; 7:14, 23-25; 8:2, 15). This metaphor features prominently in Paul's rationale: You should not serve sin because you were freed from servitude to sin in order to serve God (Rom. 6:6).

¹²⁵ The negative adverb οὐ is typically placed before the term or element it negates and commonly occurs before the verb. Cf. Friedrich W. Blass and Albert Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 224 §433. The placement of οὐ before the dative phrase rather than before the verb may suggest that believers are indeed indebted to someone, if not to the flesh. Cranfield, 1:394, states, "The position of the negative strongly suggests that Paul intended to continue with something like ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ κατὰ πνεῦμα ζῆν." Commentators who aver that the implicit point (that believers are indebted to God) is intended by Paul in Romans 8:12 include Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:474; Dunn, 457; and Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:592. Contra Schreiner, *Romans*, 419-20; and Andrzej Gieniusz, "'Debtors to the Spirit' in Romans 8.12? Reasons for the Silence," *New Testament Studies* 59, no. 1 (January 2013): 61-66. Gieniusz, 65, 69-71, argues that ὀφειλέτης was too associated with sin and sinners to be used by Paul to describe saints; instead, Romans 8:12-14 forms a chiasm in which the anacoluthon in 8:12 is intentionally crafted by Paul in order to underscore that believers are not debtors to the flesh, but are sons of God (8:14).

¹²⁶ According to Bartchy, 6:67-68, enslavement of debtors was one source of slave labor in the Mediterranean area and was a widespread practice in Palestine. Cf. also Jewett, 416. Other than the word ὀφειλέτης, which may be enough for the ancient Romans, Paul does not provide clues either here in 8:12-17 or previously that indicate he had in mind debt bondage in particular.

As stated above in chapter two, Paul's enslavement metaphor was not opaque to his addressees because slavery was "entirely ubiquitous," according to Gehrke, 13:534. Bartchy, 6:67, theorizes the slave population "comprised at least a third of the inhabitants of most major urban centers."

If the association of obligation with slavery is correct, Paul's inference reminds the Roman believers that they are no longer in servitude (in debt) to sin and that they are in service to, and indebted to, God. Thus, 8:12 answers the question in 6:1 in this way: "No, do not continue in sin because we are debtors not to the flesh, but to God."

οὐ τῇ σαρκί

In all of its occurrences in Romans 7-8, *σάρξ* appears to be, at minimum, Paul's reference to the desires of the flesh which prompt sinful action. In some instances, *σάρξ* may even be a metonym for the sinful desires of the flesh. An additional, more metaphysical sense may be perceived in some instances, particularly in the three occurrences of *ἐν σαρκί* in 7:5 and 8:8-9.

It is widely recognized that in Romans 7-8 and 13:14 *σάρξ* has a special, uncommon sense.¹²⁷ Everywhere else in Romans, Paul uses *σάρξ* in its more common, morally neutral senses, such as the physical body, humankind, or ancestral descent.¹²⁸ In

¹²⁷ The occurrence of *σάρξ* in 6:19, the only occurrence in Romans 6, carries a common, morally neutral sense.

¹²⁸ *Σάρξ* occurs a total of 149 times in the New Testament, 93 times in Paul, and 26 times in Romans. About one-third of the 93 occurrences in Paul, concentrated in Romans 7-8 (16x) and Galatians 5:13—6:8 (8x), are in the morally negative sense and connected with sin. Outside Paul, there are only four to six instances of *σάρξ* in the morally negative sense, including 2 Peter 2:10, 18; 1 John 2:16; Jude 23; and possibly Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38. Of the seven total occurrences of *σαρκικός* and the four total occurrences of *σάρκινος* in the New Testament, five are in the morally negative sense, including Romans 7:14; 1 Corinthians 3:1, 3a, 3b; and 1 Peter 2:11.

Bauer, 914-16, identifies five broad senses or categories for *σάρξ*. From the literal to the more figurative these five senses include animal tissue that covers the bones, the body, a living being, human or ancestral connection, and the outward side of life. All categories are morally neutral. Bauer considers the morally negative sense of *σάρξ* (occurrences where *σάρξ* is dominated by sin) a subset of the body category. This is probably appropriate given that ancients felt the *σάρξ*, or body, was the locus of passions which prompted evil behavior.

all sixteen occurrences in Romans 7-8, and once in 13:14, *σάρξ* carries a morally negative sense because it is categorized with, or dominated by, sin.¹²⁹ What, more precisely, is the referent for *σάρξ* in Romans 7-8? Romans 7:5, the first instance where *σάρξ* is used in the morally negative sense, suggests that the word *σάρξ* represents the sinful desires of the flesh which prompt sinful deeds. In 7:5, *σάρξ* is closely associated with *τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν*, the sinful passions or desires.¹³⁰ As discussed in chapter two, the language of 7:5 reminded first century readers of the familiar problem of *akrasia*, from *ἀκρασία*, the mastery of desires of the flesh over a person's better judgment and behavior.

Philosophical works attest to the fact that for the ancients *σάρξ* was the seat of the passions, or desires, in humans. The words which the Greek authors used most often for desire include *ἐπιθυμία*, *ἡδονή*, *πάθημα*, and *πάθος*. Common parlance in philosophical works were phrases such as *ἡδοναί σαρκός* and *ἐπιθυμίαι τῆς σαρκός*.¹³¹ All of these words are morally neutral, not inherently evil.¹³² The problem was unbridled passion which prompted evil deeds.¹³³ Whether an occurrence of one of the words for passion refers to

¹²⁹ According to Keener, *Romans*, 96, the flesh is not inherently evil, but Paul uses it in Romans 7-8 to refer to the sinful passions or to the body dominated by the merely human sinful passions rather than by God.

¹³⁰ As noted in chapter two, Bauer, 747-48, indicates that all sixteen occurrences of *πάθημα* in the New Testament except two refer to suffering or misfortune. The occurrences in Romans 7:5 and Galatians 5:24 carry the sense of feelings, interests, or desires. Cf. also Byrne, 215; and Dunn, 364.

¹³¹ E.g., Plutarch, *Virtue and Vice* 3 (in *Moralia* 101b): *ταῖς τῆς σαρκός ἡδοναῖς*; *That Epicurus Actually Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible* 14 (in *Moralia* 1096c): *ταῖς τῆς σαρκός ἐπιθυμίαις*; 4 Maccabees 7:18: *τὰ τῆς σαρκός πάθη*; Philo, *On the Unchangeableness of God* 143: *σαρκός ἡδονή*; *Who is the Heir of Divine Things?* 57: *σαρκός ἡδονή*.

¹³² Bauer, 372, 434, 747-48.

¹³³ So also Bryan, 155-56.

something morally negative must be determined from the context.¹³⁴ In Romans 7:5, the modifier τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν adds a morally negative sense, as well as a behavioral dimension, to the term τὰ παθήματα.

In addition to the evidence provided by philosophical works, other Pauline passages locate the sinful desires within the σάρξ. Romans 13:14 connects σάρξ with ἐπιθυμίαι. Romans 6:12 speaks of the ἐπιθυμίαι of the σῶμα, here a near synonym for σάρξ. Galatians 5:16 contains ἐπιθυμία σαρκός and 5:17 personifies σάρξ with ἡ σάρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ. Galatians 5:19-21 identifies several specific sins as τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός. Galatians 5:24 equates or at least categorizes σάρξ with παθήματα and ἐπιθυμίαι.¹³⁵ Other New Testament passages provide corroborating evidence, including Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21; Romans 1:24, 26; Ephesians 2:3; 4:22; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:5; 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:6; Titus 3:3; James 1:14-15; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 1:14; 2:11; 4:2-3; 2 Peter 1:4; 2:10, 18; 3:3; 1 John 2:16; and Jude 16, 18. Although many of these passages do not use the word σάρξ, all of them attest to the presence of sinful διαλογισμοί, ἡδοναί, ἐπιθυμίαι, and πάθη within every human.

¹³⁴ Dallas Willard, “Spiritual Formation and the Warfare Between the Flesh and the Human Spirit,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 6, no. 2 (2013): 154-55, is correct: “On Paul’s understanding . . . flesh is not necessarily bad, and it certainly is not ‘fallen or sinful human nature.’ For one thing, it is not human nature, but only one part of it. For another it is not essentially sinful, fallen, or bad. It is a good creation of God, and needs only to keep or be kept to its proper function in life before God. . . . Flesh naturally works by desire. Obsessive desire—the kind of desire that can rule your whole life—is usually translated as ‘lust’ in the New Testament. . . . This overriding drive for gratification is the genuine root of ‘weakness of will.’” Willard, 155, continues, “The terrible ‘deeds of the flesh’ . . . which Paul enumerates as he continues his discussion in Galatians 5 are the natural and inevitable outcomes of ‘lusts’ given free rein. . . . The will, the human spirit, cannot prevail going one-on-one with desire. That is the situation described by Paul in Romans 7:19 and Galatians 5:17.”

¹³⁵ In his commentary on Galatians 5:13-24, J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, Anchor Bible Commentary, 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 492-93, 526n162, states that “the flesh” is an abbreviation for “the desire of the flesh.”

Therefore, at minimum, *σάρξ* in Romans 7-8 appears to be Paul's shorthand for sinful desires of the flesh.¹³⁶ In some instances, such as 7:18, 25 and 8:3, *σάρξ* refers to the part or aspect of the human body which is morally weak and the seat of the desires. In other instances, especially in the phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* in 8:4, 5, 12, and 13, *σάρξ* is used metonymically to refer to the sinful desires of the flesh. Thus, living *κατὰ σάρκα* (8:4, 5, 12, 13) is conducting life according to the desires of the flesh, or indulging the desires of the flesh in a sinful way.

The somewhat abstract *ἐν σαρκί* in Romans 7:5 and 8:8-9 may suggest that *σάρξ* is a metaphysical realm or sphere.¹³⁷ This interpretation may be accurate to a degree, but it is nebulous and wants clarification and support. In Romans 7:5 and 8:8-9, *ἐν σαρκί* appears to be Paul's shorthand for the preconversion state of being. Both of these passages evince a temporal aspect. Paul asserts in 8:9 and implies in 7:5-6 that converted believers in Christ are no longer *ἐν σαρκί*. The temporal particle *ὅτε* and imperfect *ἤμεν* in 7:5 reference the former life and position of the believer. Therefore, in Romans 7:5; 8:8, 9, being *ἐν σαρκί* probably references the former, preconversion state of being in which a

¹³⁶ Keener, "'Fleshly' Versus Spirit Perspectives," 211-12, postulates that Paul's readers would have roughly equated *σάρξ* with bodily passions.

¹³⁷ No one sense has a proprietary hold on the phrase *ἐν σαρκί*. Dunn, 363, concurs. The meaning of the phrase must be determined from the context because it carries a wide variety of referents in its twenty-five occurrences in the New Testament (Rom. 2:28; 7:5, 18; 8:3, 8, 9; 2 Cor. 4:11; 10:3; Gal. 2:20; 4:14; 6:12, 13; Eph. 2:11, 14; Phil. 1:22, 24; 3:3, 4; Col. 1:24; 2:1; 1 Tim. 3:16; Philem. 16; 1 Pet. 4:2; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7).

Those who use the terms sphere, realm, and/or cosmic power to describe *σάρξ*, especially when in the phrase *ἐν σαρκί*, include Bryan, 155-56; Käsemann, 188-89; and Matera, 197. The NIV 2011 translates *ἐν σαρκί* in 7:5 and 8:8-9 as "in the realm of the flesh."

person outside Christ remains enslaved to the sinful passions of the flesh.¹³⁸ To the degree that a state of being is a metaphysical sphere, it may be appropriate to regard ἐν σαρκί as a sphere.¹³⁹ However, it is perhaps clearer and more accurate to characterize ἐν σαρκί as a state of being, the former state of those who are now ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.¹⁴⁰

In summary, while acknowledging that σάρξ may carry additional metaphysical notions, this analysis concludes that σάρξ in Romans 7-8 is primarily a reference to the sinful desires of the flesh, first referenced in Romans 7:5. Therefore, the point of the statement, “We are debtors not to the flesh,” in 8:12 is that believers are not obligated to the sinful desires of the flesh.

τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν

The genitive of articular infinitive phrase, τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν, may be either

¹³⁸ According to Keener, *Romans*, 97, “flesh” is thinking dominated by physical desires, and “in the flesh” is life dominated by physical desires and self-centeredness.

¹³⁹ Bauer, 914-16, does not use the terms *sphere* or *realm* in its entry for σάρξ. According to Eduard Schweizer, “σάρξ, σαρκικός, σάρκινος,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:132, Paul does not view σάρξ in a mythological sense as a sphere or power that controls humans, but Paul uses the ideas of his time to express his own thought. Thus, in Paul σάρξ approximates to the idea of a power which influences man, but only where σάρξ is in antithetical parallelism with πνεῦμα. In other Pauline texts, σάρξ is not a power which works in the same way as the πνεῦμα because σάρξ never occurs as the subject of an action except where it occurs in antithesis with πνεῦμα. Πνεῦμα, on the other hand, is often an acting agent with or without σάρξ in context.

¹⁴⁰ Translations such as “sinful nature” and “human effort” for σάρξ are too interpretational. That is, many metaphysical interpretations for σάρξ are largely based on presupposed theology rather than on clues from the text. In tacit recognition of this difficulty, the 2011 edition of the New International Version opted to revert to the traditional translation of σάρξ as “flesh.” The previous edition of the NIV, the 1984 edition, glossed σάρξ with “sinful nature,” “sinful man,” “human effort,” and other terms in Romans 7:5; 8:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13; 13:14; Galatians 3:3; 4:23, 29; 5:13, 16, 17, 19, 24; 6:8, 12. The NIV 2011 retained “sinful nature” for Romans 7:18 and 7:25.

consecutive or epexegetic. If it is consecutive the sense is, “We are not debtors to the flesh with the result that we live according to the flesh.” Such an interpretation indicates that believers are not trapped within the flesh-oriented life.¹⁴¹ If the genitive fills an epexegetical function, the sense is, “We are not debtors to the flesh; that is, we are not obligated to live according to the flesh.” In this case, the genitive phrase clarifies or explains the (hypothetical) obligation of those who are indebted to the flesh.¹⁴² Although the nod probably goes to the epexegetical sense, both interpretations indicate that believers have a choice in lifestyle, a fact which fits well with the very next sentence. The tandem of conditional clauses in 8:13 present two choices in lifestyle.

The phrase *κατὰ σάρκα* has been used by Paul since 8:4 as a label for the sinful lifestyle. *Κατὰ σάρκα* is the lifestyle that is “according to the sinful desires” or seeks to gratify the sinful desires (cf. Rom. 13:14; Gal. 5:16, 24). Here, *ζῆν* refers to conduct in earthly life because it is modified by *κατὰ σάρκα*.¹⁴³ In 8:4-5, *κατὰ σάρκα* modified *περιπατέω* and *εἰμί*, near synonyms of *ζάω* in this context. By selecting *ζάω* for earthly conduct in 8:12 and 13a, Paul creates a wordplay with the *ζάω* in 8:13b which references

¹⁴¹ Blass, 206 §400(2), lists the genitive phrase in Romans 8:12 as an example of one which tends toward the consecutive sense. James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3, *Syntax*, by Nigel Turner (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), 3:141, lists Romans 8:12 under consecutive or final sense. Fitzmyer, 492, follows Blass.

¹⁴² Moo, 493n116; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 419, note the possibility of a consecutive (result) sense for the genitive in Romans 8:12, but lean toward the epexegetic sense. Cranfield, 1:394, states that the genitive phrase in 8:12 may be either consecutive or epexegetic. Wallace, 607, indicates that often the epexegetical infinitive clarifies or explains certain words, including those words indicating obligation. Wallace, 598, also provides the possibly relevant information that some verbs, including *ὀφείλω*, take the infinitive to complete the thought and rarely occur without the infinitive.

¹⁴³ Bauer, 426, places the two occurrences of *ζάω* in 8:12 and 8:13a under the category, “to conduct oneself in a pattern of behavior.”

eternal life. The words ζάω and ζωή are used frequently in Paul's response to the question in 6:1. Most often they refer to eternal life. However, ζάω in the sense of postconversion lifestyle, the theme of the question in 6:1, occurs only in 6:2 and 8:12, 13a. This is additional evidence that Paul's response to the question in 6:1 extends to at least 8:13.

Romans 8:13a

The two parallel conditional sentences in Romans 8:13 expand upon the assertion made in 8:12. Romans 8:13 augments 8:12 by revealing the mutually exclusive consequences of living according to the flesh versus living according to the Spirit. These alternative lifestyles and their consequences are not merely hypothetical, but possible for believers in Christ.¹⁴⁴ Revealing these consequences continues the exhortational tone of 8:12. The switch to second person plural verbs in 8:13 further intensifies the hortatory tone. The presentation of two alternative lifestyles evinces the fact that believers have freedom of choice in the matter of postconversion lifestyle. The first conditional sentence, 8:13a, asserts in no uncertain terms that the sinful lifestyle ends in eternal death. The sense of 8:13a can be expressed in this way: "For you believers have a choice between two mutually exclusive lifestyles. If you choose to live according to the flesh by sinfully indulging the desires of the flesh, you will certainly die eternally."

¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Dunn, 448: "Paul has in mind no merely hypothetical or unreal possibility. The danger is real for his hearers."

εἰ γάρ . . . εἰ δὲ: The Tandem of Conditional Sentences

The γάρ of Romans 8:13 introduces an explanation for the inference presented in 8:12.¹⁴⁵ The sense of the explanation is that believers are not under obligation to the flesh *for* (because) living according to the flesh leads to death.¹⁴⁶ The εἰ . . . εἰ construction presents believers with a choice between two lifestyle options and their future consequences.¹⁴⁷ The δὲ indicates that the two options and their consequences are opposed to each other. That is, they are mutually exclusive.¹⁴⁸

These facts provoke two observations. First, 8:13 assumes that believers have freedom of choice in the matter of postconversion lifestyle. Paul's entire response to the question in 6:1, especially the warnings and imperatives in 6:11-13, 16-23; 8:12-13, assumes that believers have choice in regard to postconversion lifestyle. The fact that believers have freedom of choice in the matter of lifestyle, and that believers will die eternally for choosing the sinful lifestyle, is nowhere stated as clearly as in 8:13.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Three of the eight occurrences of ἄρα οὖν in Romans are followed by an explanatory γάρ, including 5:18; 8:12; and 9:16.

¹⁴⁶ Schreiner, *Romans*, 420, does not see a logical relationship between 8:12 and 8:13, nor does he believe that Paul is exhorting or warning in these verses. Schreiner's interpretation is driven by his theology that salvation is by unconditional election (154-56).

¹⁴⁷ The element of choice is present because these are first class conditions and the consequences are still in the future. Therefore, according to Wallace, 690-94, cf. 708, 711, εἰ in first class conditions should not be translated as "since" but instead as "if." This is especially true in the case of a tandem of opposed conditional statements. The discussions in Bauer, 277; and Blass, 188-90 §371-72, are not sufficiently clear on this point and regrettably do not address the tandem εἰ . . . εἰ δὲ construction as Wallace does.

¹⁴⁸ Hultgren, 312; Dunn, 447-49. Matera, 197, rightly stresses that it is still possible for believers to revert to their old way of life, that is, to live according to the flesh.

¹⁴⁹ Westerholm, *Justification Reconsidered*, 81-82, expounds the stance that humans have the capacity to choose between what they ought, and ought not, to do.

Second, Romans 8:13 constitutes an implied imperative. Paul is not merely laying the options before his readers; he is attempting to persuade them.¹⁵⁰ Paul’s purpose is to strongly urge readers to choose the second option. The second person plural verbs in 8:13 intensify the hortatory tone.¹⁵¹

κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε

The referent for *κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε* is the same as the referent for the preceding *κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν*. Both refer to living or conducting one’s life according to the fleshly desires. *Ζάω* here refers, again, to one’s conduct of life on earth because it is also modified by the adverbial *κατὰ σάρκα*, Paul’s label for the sinful lifestyle since 8:4.

Ζῆτε is a durative present, signifying “continue to live” by the dictates of the flesh.¹⁵² This sense is reminiscent of *ἐπιμένω* in 6:1. Thus, “If you live according to the flesh” recalls “Shall we continue in sin?” in 6:1. Both *ζῆτε* and *ἐπιμένω* describe a consistent behavior rather than merely one act or deed.

¹⁵⁰ So Wallace, 693: “Not infrequently conditional sentences are used rhetorically in a way that goes beyond the surface structure. . . . For example, suppose a mother says to her child ‘If you put your hand in the fire, you’ll get burned.’ We could analyze the condition on a structural or logical level. These ought not to be ignored. But the pragmatic meaning of the statement is, ‘Don’t put your hand in the fire!’ It is, in effect, a polite command, couched in indirect language.” Wallace’s comment is apropos for Romans 8:13 although he does not list 8:13 in his examples. Wallace, 711, also said, “[The first class] condition is primarily used as a tool of persuasion.”

¹⁵¹ So also Dunn, 448.

¹⁵² Moo, 494.

μέλλετε

Μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν is the main clause of the conditional sentence. Most authorities assert that here μέλλω with the present infinitive denotes not mere futurity or immediacy, but certainty and inevitability.¹⁵³ Several commentators convey this sense of certainty with a translation such as, “You will certainly die.”¹⁵⁴

Most likely, Paul chose μέλλω because his purpose is rhetorical. He could have conceivably used ἀποθανεῖσθε here, just as he used ζήσεσθε in the main clause of the next conditional sentence.¹⁵⁵ Instead, Paul used μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν in order to emphasize the inevitability of death for those who live according to the flesh. This is a dire warning to Paul’s addressees, the believers in Rome.

ἀποθνήσκειν

In his hortatory response to the question in Romans 6:1, Paul repeatedly warns that continuing in the sinful lifestyle leads to eternal death. He states this explicitly in 6:21-23 and 8:12-13. He briefly alludes to death in 6:16; 7:5, 9-11, 13, 24; 8:1, 2, 6. The weight of the evidence favors the view that the death Paul warns about in 8:13 is eternal

¹⁵³ Bauer, 628, applies this interpretation specifically to Romans 8:13. So also Byrne, 246; Dunn, 448; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 420.

¹⁵⁴ Dunn, 448; Moo, 494; Hultgren, 310; and Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 702, render the clause this way: “You are destined to die.” The simple “you will die” of the ESV, NIV 1984, NIV 2011, NRSV, and RSV does not convey the sense of inevitability. The NASB translates the clause as, “you must die.”

¹⁵⁵ Ἀποθανεῖσθε is used three times in the New Testament, all in John 8:21-24.

death.¹⁵⁶ First, this warning of death in Romans 8:13a is counterbalanced by the promise of eternal life in both the preceding 8:11 and the subsequent 8:14-17.¹⁵⁷ Second, every previous reference to the consequence of sin in Romans is an expression of eternal spiritual death. These references include 1:32; 2:1-10; 5:12-21; and 6:21-23. Clearly, death in Romans 5:21 and 6:21-23 is eternal because in both passages death is set in contrast to ζωή αἰώνιος.¹⁵⁸

Romans 8:13b

Romans 8:13b promises eternal life for believers in Christ who reject the sinful lifestyle. Therefore, 8:13b presents the counterpoint to 8:13a. Paul previously expressed the promise of eternal life in 6:22-23, and briefly alluded to it in several other passages. The language suggests that believers must be proactive, not passive, in resisting sin.

¹⁵⁶ So also Byrne, 241, 246; Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:475-77; Cranfield, 1:394; Dunn, 448; Fee, 558; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 335; Matera, 196-97; Schreiner, *Romans*, 420; Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:592; and Moo, 494, who states: "We must not eviscerate this warning; Paul clearly affirms that his readers will be damned if they continue to follow the dictates of the flesh."

Contra Wallace, 393, according to whom Romans 8:13 warns of premature cessation of physical life. Such a stance is at odds with clear clues in the text and suggests that sin *always* cuts a person's lifespan short, which is untenable.

Pace also Jewett, 494-95, who has a unique take on Romans 8:13. He says Paul is not speaking of the inevitable death of individual believers, but of the death of the collective Christian community in that locale, or each house church in Rome. For support, Jewett lays claim to the plural number of the second person verbs. He also maintains that "you (plural) are about to die" is a traditional formula, citing an inscription on an Orphic gold tablet as support. Jewett avers that σῶμα in 8:13b refers to the community and that "deeds of the body" are more likely social than sensual. Jewett's argument is unpersuasive. The plural number of the second person verbs does not limit interpretation to the community as a corporate whole. How else can Paul direct comments to individuals in a group of individuals except by using second person plural? If Paul used the singular that would be more confusing. Moreover, Jewett is over reliant on the Orphic gold tablet, and does not clarify how this inscription proves that the sentence, "You are about to die," is a familiar formula to Paul's addressees.

¹⁵⁷ Both Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 334; and Moo, 493-95, cite 8:10-11 as support for the view that 8:13 is talking about spiritual life and death; Romans 8:11 builds up readers' hopes of resurrection so eternal life is on their mind when they read 8:12-13.

¹⁵⁸ Schreiner, *Romans*, 420, also references Romans 6:23 to identify the death in 8:13.

Paul's language also assumes that the indwelling Spirit assists believers in resisting sin and living the lifestyle of righteousness. This recalls the prophetic promise of Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:25-31. The sense of Romans 8:13b is, "But if you believers actively put to death the practices of the sinful lifestyle with the help of the indwelling Spirit, you will live eternally."

εἰ δὲ

Εἰ δὲ introduces the second of the couplet of conditional sentences. *Δέ* indicates a contrast to the previous conditional sentence. The contrast is between two mutually exclusive lifestyles and their opposite consequences.

πνεύματι

Πνεύματι raises two exegetical questions. First, whose spirit is Paul talking about? The next verse, 8:14, answers that question: Paul is talking about *πνεῦμα θεοῦ*, the Spirit of God. Romans 8:9-10 also confirms the identity of *πνεῦμα* as *πνεῦμα θεοῦ*.

Second, what does it mean to put sins to death *by God's Spirit*? Again, 8:14 provides a clue. It means to allow oneself to be led by the Spirit of God that indwells believers. The indwelling of the Spirit is obliquely referenced in Romans 5:5. The indwelling of the Spirit is explicitly confirmed in 8:9-11 with two instances of *οἰκέω* and one instance of *ἐνοικέω*.¹⁵⁹ Galatians 5:18 is the only other passage where Paul talks of

¹⁵⁹ *Οἰκέω* occurs nine times in the New Testament. All five occurrences in Romans are in chapters 7-8. The indwelling Spirit of 8:9-11 contrasts with indwelling sin of 7:17, 20. Romans 7:17 and 20 each use *οἰκέω* to assert that personified sin dwells within a person. *Ἐνοικέω* is featured five times in the New

being led by the Spirit. Both Romans 8:14 and Galatians 5:18 are within ethical contexts. Both of these contexts exhort believers to abstain from works of the flesh and instead to be led by the Spirit.

The promise that God's indwelling Spirit will enable sin resistance and obedience to God's law is proclaimed by Ezekiel.¹⁶⁰ Ezekiel 37:14 and 39:29 promise that God will give his Spirit to people in order to dwell within them in the eschatological age.¹⁶¹ Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:26-31 promise not only the indwelling of God's Spirit, but also that the Spirit will enable people to obey God's law.¹⁶² Here are those two passages:

I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 (NRSV)

Testament. The occurrence in Romans 8:11 is the only one in Romans. Cf. Bauer, 338, for the sense of ἐνοικέω referring to the Spirit dwelling in a person. Bauer cites both Romans 8:11 and 2 Timothy 1:14.

¹⁶⁰ The bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon God's people is one of the signs of the arrival of the restoration age promised by the prophets. In addition to these passages in Ezekiel, the promise of the Holy Spirit is found in Joel 2:28-32 and Isaiah 32:15; 44:3. Isaiah 11:1-2 and 61:1-2 prophesy that God's Spirit would rest upon the promised messiah. Cf. Isaiah 42:1, which may also be a prophecy of the messiah. Cf. Bryan, 156-57.

¹⁶¹ Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:26-27; 37:14; 39:29 and Romans 8:9-11 refer to the literal indwelling of God's Spirit, not to the symbolic or figurative indwelling of the Spirit via God's word or some other surrogate. Within the Restoration Movement (aka the Stone-Campbell Movement), there has been considerable controversy over the nature of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Spirit indwelling via the word only is argued by Restoration Movement commentators such as H. Leo Boles, *The Holy Spirit: His Personality, Nature, Works* (1942; repr., Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1967), 206-08; and Guy N. Woods, *Questions and Answers Open Forum: Freed-Hardeman College Lectures* (Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman College, 1976), 277-80. Restoration Movement commentators who reject word-only indwelling and advocate the literal indwelling of the Spirit include Jack Cottrell, *Power from on High: What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2007), 337-42; F. Furman Kearley, *God's Indwelling Spirit* (Birmingham, AL: Parchment Press, 1974), 37-43; and Lard, 156-57, 257-58. Both Cottrell and Kearley provide a brief history of interpretation, listing several other Restoration Movement commentators on each side of this debate.

¹⁶² According to Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 356, 382, the language of these passages in Ezekiel confirms that the *ruah*, or spirit, in these passages is God's own Spirit.

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances . . . and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. . . . Then you shall remember your evil ways and your dealings that were not good; and you shall loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds.

Ezekiel 36:26-31 (NRSV)

In clear alignment with Ezekiel, Romans assumes the indwelling of God's Spirit in believers (5:5; 8:9-11), and also assumes that the Spirit enables God's people to resist sin and fulfill God's law (7:6; 8:2-14). This alignment with Ezekiel is clearest in Romans 8:4 and 8:13.

In summary, the indwelling Spirit enables believers to put to death the practices of the sinful lifestyle.¹⁶³ However, Romans 8:13b indicates that believers must be active, not passive, in the postconversion sanctification of their own behavior.¹⁶⁴ Here, *πνεύματι* is a dative of means, indicating the indwelling Spirit is an instrument at the disposal of the believer.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, putting sin to death *by the Spirit* means believers must proactively avail themselves of the help of the indwelling Spirit.

¹⁶³ So also Stephen Westerholm, "The Righteousness of the Law and the Righteousness of Faith in Romans," *Interpretation* 58, no. 3 (July 2004): 264; and Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:592.

¹⁶⁴ Contra Richard Lints, "Living by Faith—Alone? Reformed Responses to Antinomianism," in *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 36-37, 44-45, who argues that believers must pursue sanctification by passive faith rather than by active moral exertion because "sanctification does not require a different act of faith than justification. It is the same faith through which the gift of the Holy Spirit is appropriated as the faith through which Christ is embraced. . . . And therefore sanctifying faith is not different in its orientation than justifying faith" (44).

¹⁶⁵ Wallace, 162-66, distinguishing between the dative of means (also known as dative of instrument) and the dative of agency, concludes, "In all probability, none of the examples involving *πνεύματι* in the New Testament should be classified as agency," but are instead dative of means. For examples, Wallace, 166n77, lists Romans 8:13, 14 as well as 1 Corinthians 14:2; Galatians 3:3; 5:5, 18, 25; Ephesians 1:13; and 1 Peter 3:18.

The choice inherent in the tandem conditional clauses indicates that although the indwelling Spirit is present, believers have freedom of choice and must avail themselves of the indwelling Spirit's help in order to experience eternal life. The believer must cooperate with the transforming work of the Spirit after initial conversion.¹⁶⁶ The commands and implied commands in Galatians 5:16, 18, and 25—to walk by the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, and to fall in step with the Spirit—confirm this interpretation of Romans 8:13b.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, Galatians 6:8 strongly exhorts proactivity on the part of believers to sow to the Spirit rather than to the flesh. Romans 8:13 is an implied exhortation for believers to avail themselves of the indwelling Spirit. The presence of an implied imperative in 8:12-13 is discussed at length below.

τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος

Typically, the words *πρᾶξις* and *σῶμα* are morally neutral. Here, the context dictates that the practices of the body are the sinful deeds committed by those who live according to the flesh.¹⁶⁸ In the parallelism of the pair of conditional sentences in 8:13, *τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος* is parallel to *κατὰ σάρκα* of 8:13a. In addition, *σῶμα* is a near synonym of *σάρξ* in most of its instances in Paul's response to the question in 6:1,

¹⁶⁶ So also Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 443-44. Cf. the commands in Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19.

¹⁶⁷ As in Romans 8:13a, each of these commands is modified by the dative *πνεύματι*: *πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε* (Gal. 5:16); *πνεύματι ἄγεσθε* (5:18); *πνεύματι στοιχῶμεν* (5:25).

¹⁶⁸ So also Dunn, 449; and Bauer, 860, who lists Luke 23:51; Colossians 3:9; and Acts 19:18 as exemplar passages where the context affixes a negative aspect to *πρᾶξις*.

including 6:6, 12; 7:24.¹⁶⁹ The variant τῆς σαρκός for τοῦ σώματος suggests confusion over the two words in the past.¹⁷⁰ Thus, by the phrase τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος Paul refers to the behavior that results from living κατὰ σάρκα.

Some modern scholars have wrestled with the negative connotation placed on σῶμα here, probably fearing dualism.¹⁷¹ This fear is unnecessary. The word σῶμα, like σάρξ, is known to carry numerous senses, most of them morally neutral. The fact that Paul often puts σῶμα in a positive light (12:1) as well as a negative light (6:6, 12; 7:24; 8:13) proves that context affixes meaning to a word and that Paul was not a dualist.¹⁷²

θανατοῦτε

The condition for attaining eternal life is to put sinful deeds to death. To put sinful deeds “to death” is a figurative expression for the forceful rejection of the sinful lifestyle.

¹⁶⁹ So also Cranfield, 1:395; Keener, *Romans*, 96; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 335; Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 217; and Ziesler, 213. Dunn, 449, states that σῶμα has been used by Paul as a “stylistic variant” of σάρξ. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:592n273, states, “Paul once again moves to and fro between ‘flesh’ and ‘body.’”

¹⁷⁰ The variant is found in manuscripts D, F, G, et. al., per *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed., ed. the Institute for New Testament Textual Research Münster/Westfalen, under the direction of Holger Strutwolf (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012). Cf. Hultgren, 310.

¹⁷¹ According to Keener, *Romans*, 95-96, modern interpreters attempt to separate σῶμα and σάρξ for fear of promoting the early church’s error that the body was inherently evil, a belief many in the early church absorbed from Neoplatonism and Gnostic dualism. Moo, 495, states, “Paul’s use of the phrase, ‘the practices of the body’ to depict sin is troublesome.” Schreiner, *Romans*, 421, incorrectly assumes that there is always a distinction between body and flesh. Jewett, 495, says the apparent substitution of σῶμα for σάρξ here in Romans 8:13 is unresolved. Dunn, 447, suggests the variant τῆς σαρκός was proposed by later scribes who recognized that σῶμα is unusually negative here.

¹⁷² Scholars who are not troubled by the use of σῶμα here include Keener, *Romans*, 95-96; Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 335; Matera, 197; and Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:592, who argues Romans 8:13 is not a lapse into dualism.

The active voice of *θανατοῦτε* indicates that believers are to take an active, not passive, role in the postconversion sanctification of their own behavior. Indeed, the consequence of the sinful lifestyle (eternal death) behooves them to do so. Note the similarity with the imperative in Romans 6:11: “Consider yourselves dead to sin.”¹⁷³

The imagery of killing sinful deeds is reminiscent of imagery in Romans 6:2-7: “We died to sin” (6:2), and “Our former, sinful self was crucified” (6:6). Therefore, 8:13 reminds believers of what God did for them at conversion. It also reminds believers of the commitment they made at baptism to put the sinful lifestyle to death. However, the conditional nature of Romans 8:13 and the present tense of *θανατοῦτε* indicate ongoing action into the future is necessary to maintain that commitment. Accordingly, believers must continually die to, or put to death, the sinful lifestyle in order to attain eternal life.¹⁷⁴

The emphasis on human proactivity here in 8:13 resolves the exegetical question of the *ἐν ἡμῖν* in 8:4: who fulfills the law, God or believers? Romans 8:13 provides the answer: believers in Christ who avail themselves of the assistance of the Holy Spirit are the ones who fulfill the righteous behavior required by the law.

ζήσεσθε

Here, “you will live” refers to eternal spiritual life for two reasons.¹⁷⁵ First, the

¹⁷³ Cf. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:592: “The misdeeds must be put to death. Paul’s meaning here is explained in greater detail in Colossians 3:5-11.”

¹⁷⁴ Dunn, 449, notes that the present tense of *θανατοῦτε* indicates a sustained effort so whatever happened at conversion (Rom. 6:2-7) was evidently not a once-for-all killing of the old, sinful self. Matera, 197: “The new life that believers have embraced then requires a daily reaffirmation on their part.” Cf. also Acts 26:20b.

¹⁷⁵ So also Bauer, 425, who specifically cites the occurrence of *ζάω* in Romans 8:13b.

preceding 8:9-11 promises resurrection to eternal life for believers. Also, 8:17 reminds believers they are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ and will be glorified with Christ if indeed they suffer with Christ. Romans 8:13 clearly states that believers will die eternally if they pursue the life that is *κατὰ σάρκα*, but if they continue putting sin to death and staying committed to the life that is *κατὰ πνεῦμα*, they will live eternally. Thus, 8:13 repeats the thrust of 6:21-23, but with other terms.

Conclusion

In his response to the question in Romans 6:1, Paul's overall rhetorical purpose is to exhort believers to proactively resist sin and live the lifestyle of righteousness. The primary function of 8:12-13 within Paul's rhetorical strategy is to exhort believers by presenting the consequences of each lifestyle alternative. The following expresses the conclusions of the exegesis: "So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh by sinfully indulging the desires of the flesh. For if you live according to the desires of the flesh, you will certainly die eternally; but if you actively put to death the practices of the sinful lifestyle with the help of the indwelling Spirit, you will live eternally." If Paul wanted to preclude any notion in the minds of believers that postconversion behavior has no effect on final salvation, he could not have done that more clearly and concisely than in Romans 8:12-13.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Cranfield, 1:295, rightly expresses Paul's mindset in Romans 6:1—8:17: "Paul is here concerned to insist that justification has inescapable moral implications, that our righteous status before God involves an absolute obligation to seek righteousness of life."

Chapter Four

Summary of Exegetical Findings

This chapter summarizes the conclusions of chapter two and chapter three together. Romans 6:1—8:17 addresses the postconversion lifestyle expected of believers. In 6:1, Paul poses the question, “Shall we believers continue in sin in order that grace may increase?” In response to this question, Paul takes a firm stance against pursuit of the sinful lifestyle and for the righteous lifestyle.

Since believers reap for themselves eternal death for pursuing the sinful lifestyle, Paul’s response to the question in 6:1 is hortatory. His rhetorical strategy in Romans 6 includes logical rationale, imperatives, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement. The thrust of Paul’s rationale in 6:2-7 is that believers must not continue in sin because at baptism they died to sin. That is, at baptism believers made a moral and behavioral change. Paul’s rationale in 6:16 is, “If you sin now, after having been set free from enslavement to sin, you will be *voluntarily* enslaving yourself to sin.”

In addition to employing logical rationale, Paul commands believers to proactively reject the sinful lifestyle and pursue the righteous lifestyle. The five explicit imperatives in Paul’s response to the question of 6:1 are in 6:11-13 and 6:19.

Paul’s positive reinforcement is the promise that the righteous lifestyle leads to eternal life. Paul’s negative reinforcement is the warning that the sinful lifestyle ends in eternal death. Paul explicitly expresses this motivational reinforcement in 6:21-23, and briefly references or alludes to life and death in 6:5, 8-10, 16; 7:5, 9-11, 13, 24; 8:1-2, 6, 10-11.

Romans 7:1—8:17 develops the contrast between “under law” and “under grace” first posited by the thesis statement of Romans 6:14. In Romans 7:1-6 Paul makes the point that the law is incapable of enabling a person to resist sinful desires of the flesh. Romans 7:5 asserts that those under the law are mastered or controlled by the sinful desires of the flesh and therefore headed for death. The situation of those who are under the law is emphasized by the illustrative material in Romans 7:7-25. In contrast to the situation of those who are under the law, those under grace are set free from enslavement to the sinful desires of the flesh. The indwelling Holy Spirit enables believers to resist the sinful desires of the flesh, live the righteous lifestyle, and thereby fulfill the intended goal of the law. This enabling activity of the Holy Spirit is a fulfillment of the promise in Ezekiel 36:27 and is assumed in the argumentation and implied exhortations of Romans 8:1-17.

Paul addresses all his exhortations directly to the believers in Rome, but his proscription of the sinful lifestyle effectively responds to the accusation of his detractors that he was promoting antinomian behavior (cf. Rom. 3:8). Also, his treatment of the law responds to the objection that the apart-from-law gospel does not restrain sin. He turns that objection on its head. He argues that the indwelling Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (cf. 8:2) restrains sinful behavior better than the law does.

Nowhere in his lengthy response to the question in Romans 6:1 (6:2—8:17) is Paul’s stance against the sinful lifestyle and for the righteous lifestyle expressed as clearly and concisely as in 8:12-13. This passage epitomizes many of Paul’s key points. More clearly than anywhere else, Romans 8:12-13 affirms that the Spirit enables believers to resist sin. Furthermore, 8:13 explicitly repeats the promise of life and

warning of death issued in 6:21-23. Thus, 8:12-13 comprises an implied imperative which repeats the sentiment of Paul's entire exhortation, especially the explicit imperatives of 6:11-13, 19. The thrust of the implied exhortation in 8:12-13 is, "With the help of the indwelling Spirit, put to death sinful practices and live the lifestyle of righteousness."¹⁷⁷

Romans 8:12-13 asserts that believers will die eternally for continuing in the sinful lifestyle. This assertion challenges the theology known as eternal security of the saints. Yet, believers can have assurance of salvation. These and other concepts are discussed in the next chapter, "Implications for Theology."

¹⁷⁷ Dunn, 448, maintains that Romans 8:12 has imperatival force. Esler, 246-47, 404, says Romans 8:12-13 shifts from indicative to imperative in meaning, though not in mood.

Chapter Five

Implications for Theology

As exegesis is the bridge from text to theology, theology is the bridge from exegesis to praxis. Theology undergirds and determines the ministry praxis. Therefore, it is appropriate to list and clarify some theological implications of this paper's exegesis of Romans 6:1—8:17 before suggesting implications for practical ministry.

Three Key Theological Tenets in Romans 6:1—8:17

This paper's exegesis has raised in relief three theological tenets of Paul. *First, believers will die eternally for moral apostasy.* This is explicitly asserted in Romans 6:21-23 and 8:13, but the whole tenor of Paul's response to the question posed in 6:1 affirms this tenet. That is, Paul's response is an exhortation for believers to reject the sinful lifestyle because the sinful lifestyle leads to condemnation and death. Importantly, in his response to the question in 6:1, Paul never appeals to the argument that believers who are condemned in the final judgment were never genuinely converted in the first place.¹⁷⁸ Instead, Paul acknowledges the conversion of his addresses (6:2-4) and addresses them as "brothers" (7:1; 8:12) as he adjures them with rationale, commands, and positive and negative reinforcement to reject the sinful lifestyle because their eternal life depends upon it.

¹⁷⁸ This argument is reflected in Thomas Schreiner, "Did Paul Believe in Justification by Works? Another Look at Romans 2," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 3 (1993): 155; Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, ed. Jeff Purswell (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 338-43; Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 683; and Grenz, 455.

This first tenet aligns with other New Testament passages which indicate that believers can be condemned eternally for either moral or theological apostasy, including Acts 5:1-11; 8:20-23; Romans 2:6-10; 11:22; 1 Corinthians 6:8-11; 9:24—10:14; 11:32; Galatians 1:8-9; 5:4, 19-21; 6:7-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:6-19; 6:4-12; 10:26-39; 12:14-17; James 5:19-20; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 3:11-18; 2 John 8; Jude 5; Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:5, 16; 18:4. In fact, the bulk of all the letters from Romans through Revelation were written to exhort believers to remain firm in their faith and in their commitment to God’s moral ethic in order to stay on the path to eternal life.¹⁷⁹ This tenet therefore argues against the theology known as perseverance of the saints and against the modern doctrine known as “eternal security.” The doctrine of eternal security is capsulized by its proponents in the cliché “once saved, always saved.”¹⁸⁰

Second, believers are commanded to live the moral lifestyle that leads to eternal life. At conversion, believers are fully forgiven and saved by God. Their salvation is assured at that point; they do not earn their salvation over a lifetime of good works. Yet, as stated above in the first tenet, believers who abandon their commitment to God’s

¹⁷⁹ Regarding the Pauline literature, Stuhlmacher, 47, concludes: “For Paul there was no salvation possible in the case of a believer who impugns or repudiates the gospel.” Keener, *Romans*, 71, adds: “Paul most certainly did not regard faith as saving if it failed to persevere in Christ.” Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, 19, 228, 231, 272, 286-97, 325, 411-12, 430-41, 462, 511, 755, 765-66, 769-70, 802, 817, repeatedly asserts that believers are capable of moral and theological apostasy, and that the behavior of believers affects whether they will eventually inherit eternal life.

¹⁸⁰ Perseverance of the saints is the fifth point of Calvinism’s TULIP, and the position expressed in the seventeenth chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Perseverance of the saints is advocated by Grenz, 454-55; Grudem, 336-38; and Horton, 680-86. Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 203-04; and Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, 228, explicitly oppose the concept of “once saved, always saved.”

lifestyle and live the sinful lifestyle will die eternally for their moral apostasy.¹⁸¹

Therefore, Paul mandates the righteous lifestyle in Romans 6:11-13, 19, and promises in 6:21-23 and 8:13 that the righteous lifestyle leads to eternal life.¹⁸²

Nearly every book in the New Testament commands believers to shun sin and remain faithful to the righteous lifestyle. Key passages include Matthew 5:17-48; Acts 24:25; 26:20; Romans 2:6-8; 13:8-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 10:1-13; Galatians 5:13-25; Ephesians 4:17—5:20; Colossians 3:5-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:12-14; Hebrews 12:1-17; James 4:1-8; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 2:11-12; 3:8-12; 4:1-11; 2 Peter 1:4-11; 2:18-20; 3:10-11, 14; 1 John 2:15-17. These passages demonstrate that the behavior of believers is a central concern of the New Testament authors. Simply put, God wants his people to practice moral behavior.¹⁸³ The many warnings and imperatives in the Bible which exhort moral behavior, especially 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 and Hebrews 12:1-17, indicate that humans are not so depraved that they are incapable of learning right

¹⁸¹ The following statement of Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Justification by Grace—To the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul,” *New Testament Studies* 32, no. 1 (January 1986): 86, is in accord with this second tenet: “Salvation is by grace and people do not have to be godly or obedient before they come to God in Christ, but every part of Paul’s writings would reject that they remain ungodly in Christ.”

¹⁸² Contra Lints, 48, who states, “The accusation [of antinomianism expressed in the question in Rom. 6:1] is not answered by an appeal to greater moral responsibility on the part of the believer.” This is a perplexing assertion in light of the imperatives enjoining moral responsibility in Romans 6:11-13, 19. Lints, 56, also said, “The danger of immorality . . . is restrained in the life of the believer not by appeal to penal consequences,” and, 47, “Nowhere in Romans 6 does Paul broach the possibility that the believer’s obedience sustains his or her union with Christ.” Again, these are perplexing assertions in light of Paul’s urgent exhortations in 6:2—8:17 and warnings of eternal death (which results in cessation of union with Christ) in 6:16, 21-23; and 8:13.

¹⁸³ So also Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, 19, 816-18. A central proposition of Witherington is that theology and ethics in the New Testament are intertwined because, among other reasons, one aim of theology is to shape behavior, God’s saving work enables righteous behavior, and behavior affects final salvation (14-16, 168, 272-73, 288-90, 295-96, 334-35, 385, 462, 599, 816-18).

from wrong, escaping temptation and, with the Spirit's help, controlling their own behavior (cf. Rom. 8:2-14; Gal. 5:16, 18, 25).

Theologians use the word “sanctification” to refer to the progressive purification, or transformation, of the believer's behavior and lifestyle. The concept of sanctification is derived from the word *ἁγιασμός*. Theologians typically perceive in New Testament occurrences of *ἁγιασμός* and its cognates (e.g., *ἁγιάζω*, *ἅγιος*) at least two dimensions of sanctification: positional sanctification and progressive sanctification.¹⁸⁴ Positional sanctification, also called definitive sanctification, refers to the position before God which God confers on believers by virtue of their new status in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; Heb. 10:10; 13:12). Progressive sanctification, also called conditional sanctification, refers to the postconversion purification, or transformation, of the believer's behavior. Progressive sanctification is a process over the lifetime of the believer in which both the Holy Spirit and the believer have roles to play. The assertion in Romans 8:13b, “But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,” shows that both the Spirit and the believer are involved in the transformation of the believer's conduct. Progressive sanctification is the work of the Spirit (Rom.

¹⁸⁴ For concise discussions of these two dimensions of sanctification cf. Grenz, 442-44; R. E. O. White, “Sanctification,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 1052; and Graham A. Cole, “Sanctification,” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 720-22, who summarily reports, “Some theologians further distinguish between definitive or positional sanctification and progressive or conditional sanctification. The former concerns the believer's being set apart for God's service and as God's person. The latter concept refers to the believer's growth in Christlikeness.” In the entry for *ἁγιασμός*, Bauer, 10, acknowledges both a process of sanctification and its resultant state, holiness.

Cottrell, *Power from on High*, 344-50, demonstrates that *ἁγιασμός* and its cognates in the New Testament can refer to one of three different “aspects” or “categories” of sanctification: initial, progressive, and final sanctification. Similarly, Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, 19, 272, 817, whose “three tenses of salvation”—new birth, progressive sanctification, and final glorification—resemble Cottrell's three aspects of sanctification.

15:16; Gal. 5:22; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2), but the believer must cooperate with the Spirit and pursue holiness (Rom. 8:13-14; Gal. 5:16, 18, 25; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:15-16).¹⁸⁵ Paul uses *ἀγιασμός* in Romans 6:19, 22 to refer to postconversion progressive sanctification of behavior. Other passages where *ἀγιασμός* or one of its cognates carry the sense of progressive sanctification include Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 12:14; and 1 Peter 1:2, 14-17.

An important corollary to this second tenet is that living the moral lifestyle of God fulfills the law. Paul hints at this in Romans 8:4a and explicitly states it in 13:8-10. According to Romans 13:8-10, obeying the command in the law to love one's neighbor (Lev. 19:18) fulfills the law because love does no harm to its neighbor. Love, therefore, is the essence of God's ethic and morality. The concept of fulfilling the law, often in conjunction with the command to love one's neighbor, is also expressed in various ways in Matthew 7:12; 22:34-40; Romans 2:27; 8:4; Galatians 5:14; and James 2:8.¹⁸⁶ These passages affirm that the gospel message proscribes antinomianism (i.e., immorality) and mandates fulfillment of the law via love and moral behavior.

*Third, the indwelling Spirit enables believers to resist sin, live God's lifestyle of righteousness, and thereby fulfill the intention of the law.*¹⁸⁷ This is implicit in Romans

¹⁸⁵ Grenz, 443-44.

¹⁸⁶ For the idea of summing up or fulfilling the law, these passages use a variety of words, including *ἀνακεφαλαιόω* (Rom. 13:9), *κρέμαμαι* (Matt. 22:40), *πληρόω* (Rom. 8:4; 13:8; Gal. 5:14), *πλήρωμα* (Rom. 13:10), and *τελέω* (Rom. 2:27; James 2:8).

¹⁸⁷ The Spirit enables righteous living according to Paula Fredriksen, "Paul's Letter to the Romans, the Ten Commandments, and Pagan 'Justification by Faith,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 4 (2014): 806-08; T. Paige, "Holy Spirit," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 409-10; Byrne, 235-36, 240-41; Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:455, 458, 476-77; Dunn, 424; Fee, 558-59; Keener, "'Fleshly' Versus Spirit Perspectives," 225; Keener, *Romans*, 100; Kruse, "Paul, The Law and the Spirit," 112, 129; Lard, 263;

7:6 and 8:2-16, which echo Ezekiel's promise in Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:26-27 that the indwelling Spirit would be given to God's people to enable them to fulfill the law.¹⁸⁸ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit within individual believers is referenced in other New Testament passages, including Romans 2:29; 5:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13; and 1 Thessalonians 4:8. The role of the Spirit in the enablement of believers to resist sin is referenced in Galatians 5:16, 18, 25. This understanding of the work of the indwelling Spirit in individual lives illuminates passages such as Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19 in which Paul exhorts Christians to avoid grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit.

In summary, God's people are expected to conduct themselves according to God's ethic and are enabled to do so by the Spirit of God who dwells within them.¹⁸⁹ The moral

Matera, 185-86; Meiser, 139; Schreiner, *Romans*, 396-97; Stuhlmacher, 118; Talbert, 204, 209; Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 214-15; and Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," 10:592-93. Righteous behavior enabled by the indwelling Spirit is a constant theme in Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, but see 271-74 for a summary on this theme in the Pauline corpus. Snodgrass, 82, states, "The bestowal of the Spirit makes available an existence that was not possible prior to the work of Christ." Snodgrass, 86, also asserts that "a life pleasing to God is now possible by the increased activity of the Spirit." N. T. Wright, "Justification by (Covenantal) Faith to the (Covenantal) Doers: Romans 2 within the Argument of the Letter," in *Doing Theology for the Church*, ed. Rebekah A. Eklund and John E. Phelan Jr. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 105, contributes: "That same Spirit will now complete the task by producing, in the present time . . . a way of life which corresponds to the divine intention of the life-giving Torah."

¹⁸⁸ As stated in chapter three, the passages in Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:26-27 and Romans 8:9-11 refer to the literal indwelling of God's Spirit, not to the symbolic or figurative indwelling of the Spirit via only the word of God (Scripture). Spirit indwelling via the word only is argued by Boles, 206-08; and Woods, 277-80. Commentators who advocate the literal indwelling of the Spirit include Cottrell, *Power from on High*, 337-42; Kearley, 37-43; and Lard, 156-57, 257-58.

¹⁸⁹ Recent scholars have noted that while there are some similarities between Paul and contemporary Greco-Roman philosophers in regard to moral progress, one significant difference is that for Paul the agent for mastery of the sinful desires is the indwelling Spirit of God. See discussion in Aune, 232; and James Ware, "Moral Progress and Divine Power in Seneca and Paul," in *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald (New York: Routledge, 2008), 267-78. Ware, 267, 269-71, 278, notes that Seneca's view of divine help in moral progress, most clearly stated in Seneca's *Epistle* 41.1-4, is the closest analog to Paul among the philosophers. However, Ware incorrectly contends that Seneca did not conceive of the divine as a power external to humanity. A portion of Seneca, *Epistle* 41.1-2, reads: "We do not need to uplift our hands towards heaven, or to beg the keeper of a temple to let us

lifestyle is adopted by believers without overtones of earned salvation via the concept of commitment, which is discussed below.

Salvation by Commitment

To summarize the foregoing, Paul maintains that ultimate reception of eternal life is dependent upon moral living. But, doesn't this smack of salvation by works of righteousness, or "earned" salvation? And doesn't this theology lack assurance for believers? The answer to both of these questions is "No," due to the concept of commitment.

Romans 6:1—8:17 indicates that final salvation depends upon commitment to a way of life. Final salvation does not depend upon sinlessness, flawless perfection, or attainment of some level of righteousness as if righteousness is a metric by which the path to salvation is measured.¹⁹⁰ As demonstrated at the beginning of chapter two, Romans 6:1—8:17 focuses on one's choice of lifestyle, not on sporadic sin. Those in Christ are forgiven of sins if they walk in the light and if they confess their sins (1 John 1:7-9). Again, Paul's response to the question in Romans 6:1 is epitomized in Romans 8:13: believers who walk, or live, according to the flesh will die eternally. That is, believers who renounce their commitment to God's lifestyle and "continue in sin" will

approach his idol's ear, as if in this way our prayers were more likely to be heard. God is near you, he is with you, he is within you. This is what I mean, Lucilius: a holy spirit indwells within us." Keener, "'Fleshly' Versus Spirit Perspectives," 219-20, points out Seneca, *Epistle* 73.16, which reads, "The gods are not disdainful or envious; they open the door to you; they lend a hand as you climb. Do you marvel that man goes to the gods? God comes to men; nay, he comes nearer—he comes into men."

¹⁹⁰ Similarly Bates, 122-23; Bryan, 135; Schreiner, *Romans*, 145; and Snodgrass, 79, 82-84, regarding Paul's view of sinless perfection. Bates, 122, a strong proponent of the necessity of good works for salvation, makes this statement regarding perfection: "Perfect allegiance is neither demanded for salvation in this earthly life nor is it possible."

die eternally; in contrast, believers who by the Spirit put to death the sinful lifestyle will live eternally (cf. also 6:21-23).

According to Romans 6:1—8:17, righteousness is not achieved, but lived or walked. This is because righteousness is a way of life. As explained in chapter two, *δικαιοσύνη* in Romans 6:1—8:17 is a label or moniker for the moral lifestyle of God’s ethic, not a forensic status as in Romans 1-5.¹⁹¹ The lifestyle of righteousness is thus a way of living, as expressed by the words *ζάω*, *περιπατέω*, and *ὄντες* in Romans 6:2, 4; 8:4, 5, 8, 12, 13. It is a pursuit of holiness, self-control, and peace with others as described in passages such as Acts 24:25; 26:20; Romans 2:7; 12:18; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 5:22-25; Hebrews 12:1-17; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 3:8-11; and 2 Peter 1:5-11. Therefore, the lifestyle of righteousness is a way of life to which one commits, not a plateau or level of achievement which one must strive to attain in order to earn salvation.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Westerholm, “The Righteousness of the Law,” 254-57, citing 1 John 3:7 as exemplar, argues that in spite of the fact that the verb *δικαίω* is commonly used in judicial contexts to mean justify or acquit, the “ordinary meaning” of the noun *δικαιοσύνη* throughout scripture is not justification, but right conduct. Fredriksen, 801-03, 808, concurs, citing Greek speaking Jews who used *δικαιοσύνη* as code for right conduct and for the second table of the Decalogue. Fredriksen cites Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.116-19, as an example. E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York: Penguin Press, 1993), 92, 300, adds Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 15.375; and Philo, *Who is the Heir of Divine Things?* 168-72. Other references, mostly from Josephus and Philo, are cited in E. P. Sanders, *The Question of Uniqueness in the Teaching of Jesus*, Ethel M. Wood Lecture, 15 (London: The University of London, 1990), 19. Given this information, Fredriksen, 807, observes: “Paul’s use of *δικαιοσύνη* and its related verbal forms presents daunting challenges to English, which lacks much-needed precision.”

¹⁹² Pace Lints, 35-56, who proffers a recent defense of the classic Reformation *sola fide* (faith only) theology. This theology assumes that any credence given to believers’ good works or moral lifestyle in the process of sanctification steps away from reliance on God’s grace. Lints’ theology fails to adequately articulate or integrate the role of passages such as Romans 6:1—8:17 which exhort good behavior and warn that sinful behavior will alter a believer’s final salvation. For example, Lints, 36-37, says that it is an “erroneous assumption that good works (in contrast to faith) are necessary to sanctification in order to avoid the problem of antinomianism” and “faith alone constitutes the means by which sinners are reconciled to the living God.” This stance not only assumes an erroneous antinomy between faith and good works but also leaves no room for one’s involvement in one’s own behavior. Such a stance contradicts Romans 8:13 which indicates that believers have power of choice and have the ability to put to death the

By way of definition, the commitment demanded by the gospel entails both mental decision as well as follow-through in behavior. Without both, there would be no commitment at all. Therefore, intention alone bereft of action is not commitment. In addition, commitment is an act of submission to God. The commitment described in Romans 6:1—8:17 is an act of submission, not an achievement or performance to boast about or upon which to base a claim before God.¹⁹³ Those who remain committed to God's ethic continually serve God and allow themselves to be led and guided by God's Holy Spirit, as expressed in Romans 8:13-14 and Galatians 5:16, 18, 25. The imagery in Romans 6:13 and 6:19 expresses submission: committed believers continually present their bodies to God as God's instruments and as God's servants for righteousness. In a word, their way of life is submission to God.

Other words, such as dedication, allegiance, and loyalty, describe this commitment.¹⁹⁴ Significantly, this type of commitment is also closely akin to, if not the same as, the English word "faithfulness." Whereas the English word "faith" often connotes (if not denotes) mere mental assent, the word "faithfulness" connotes ongoing behavior which substantiates the mental resolve.¹⁹⁵ In fact, scholars have argued that

sinful lifestyle with the help of the Spirit. Romans 8:13 succinctly expresses that both God *and the believer* have roles to play in the sanctification of the believer's lifestyle.

¹⁹³ Pace Lints, 37, 47, who upholds the view that any emphasis on good works in sanctification runs the risk of becoming a "boast" before God per Romans 4:2. The referent for "boast" in Romans 3-4 (3:27; 4:2) is debated in scholarship.

¹⁹⁴ Matthew Bates, in his monograph, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone*, supports the concept of commitment, but from a different perspective than presented here, and Bates prefers the word *allegiance* (cf. especially 2-5, 77-100).

¹⁹⁵ The discussion of Watson, 212-13, regarding faith in Romans is particularly relevant in regard to the concept of commitment presented here. Watson concludes, "Faith is not a private, internal decision, but the public renunciation of one way of life and the adoption of another."

“faith” is a poor translation of πίστις because πίστις carries the connotation of words such as faithfulness and allegiance rather than merely faith.¹⁹⁶ Thus, believers who stop being committed to God’s lifestyle have essentially stopped being faithful. Stated another way, abandoning commitment to God’s lifestyle amounts to abandoning one’s faith.¹⁹⁷

The transformation of believers’ lifestyle is the fruit of the sanctifying work of the indwelling Spirit, according to passages such as Galatians 5:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; and 1 Peter 1:2, but believers must cooperate with the Holy Spirit for this fruit to be produced.¹⁹⁸ According to passages such as Romans 8:13-14; Galatians 5:16, 18, 25; and Ephesians 4:30, believers must allow the Holy Spirit to lead them, and believers must not frustrate the sanctifying work of the Spirit. In short, believers need God’s grace because

¹⁹⁶ Both Fredriksen, 807; and Bates, 3-9, 77-83, recently argued that “faith” is an inadequate translation for πίστις. Bates, 3-5, 78-80, argues that πίστις should not be translated “faith” because πίστις has a broader range of meaning than “faith,” including “fidelity, faithfulness, commitment, and pledged loyalty” (3). For support, Bates cites Josephus *The Life* 110 (4n4); *Antiquities of the Jews* 12.47, 147, 396 (80); *The Jewish War* 1.207; 2.341 (80); 1 Maccabees 10:25-27 (4, 79n3); 3 Maccabees 3:2-4; 5:31 (79); and Additions to Esther 13:3-4 (80). In addition, for translations for πίστις, Bauer, 818 (sense 1), suggests “faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, commitment,” and lists many other ancient sources as supporting evidence. Cf. Snodgrass, 85, who criticizes cognitive definitions of faith that do not do justice to the concept of obedience.

¹⁹⁷ The cluster of ideas encompassed by the concept of commitment presented here is comparable in principle, with qualifications, to the concept of “covenantal nomism” described in E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 75, 236, 422, 426-28, 511-15, 543-45, 552. Put in Sanders’ terms, but with qualifications, the concept of commitment as advocated in this paper dictates that “getting in” the community of saved believers requires making an initial commitment to God and to God’s ethical lifestyle, and “staying in” requires remaining proactively committed to God and to God’s ethic (cf. Acts 26:20, which references initial repentance, commitment to God, and ongoing commitment to the ethical lifestyle). The divine role throughout is grace, which freely provides atonement, forgiveness for past and future sins, and Spirit-enablement for righteous living. Again, the behavior that jeopardizes a believer’s final salvation is abandonment of one’s commitment to God and to God’s lifestyle. The overly simplistic characterization of covenantal nomism which says one “gets in” by grace and “stays in” by obedience regrettably neglects the human role in getting in and the divine role in staying in.

¹⁹⁸ So Grenz, 443-44; and Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, 247-48, 260-61, 816-18.

flawlessness in moral behavior is unattainable, but in return God requires commitment to his ethic and to the process of sanctification.

Assurance of Salvation

Again, righteousness is not achieved; rather, righteousness is a way of life that is adopted and lived. All humans are walking or living on one of two paths, the path of sin or the path of righteousness.¹⁹⁹ Believers are responsible to stay on the path of righteousness. Believers who stay on that path, who remain committed, have assurance of eternal life.

Believers in Christ who remain committed have complete assurance of salvation because they know whether or not they remain committed to God and to God's way of life even when they occasionally fail in execution. Committed believers know that God forgives the sins of those who walk in the light and confess their sins (1 John 1:7-9). Believers who are prone to anxiety may worry over their salvation, but probably need not worry because their very anxiety demonstrates their desire to remain committed to God and to God's ethical lifestyle. Again, Romans 6:1—8:17 does not address occasional losses in the struggle against temptation; rather, it addresses those who cease struggling against sin entirely, who volitionally choose to "continue in sin" sans qualm or scruple. And, as demonstrated in chapter two, Paul's warnings in Romans 6:1—8:17 are directed

¹⁹⁹ Recall that Paul uses *περιπατέω* to refer to one's manner of life in Romans 6:4 and 8:4.

to those who intentionally or negligently relinquish their commitment to God in favor of consciously pursuing the sinful lifestyle with little or no compunction.²⁰⁰

At several points in his response to the question in Romans 6:1, Paul assured his addressees of their eternal salvation. This positive reinforcement was part of his rhetorical strategy to encourage them to reject the sinful lifestyle and remain committed to God's righteous lifestyle. These passages include Romans 6:8-9, 22-23; and 8:13b-17. Paul concludes his response to the question in 6:1 on a tone of glorious assurance which continues all the way through the end of Romans 8. Romans 8:18-39, a section which exhorts believers to remain faithful to God in the face of affliction, is a long series of assurances to believers.

The Concept of Commitment and Judgment according to Works

The concept of commitment helpfully illuminates, and may resolve, the apparent paradox between passages which stress justification by faith apart from works and passages which stress that the final judgment is based upon works.²⁰¹ The problem is that

²⁰⁰ The stance that Romans 6:1—8:17 addresses the abandonment of God's lifestyle in favor of the sinful lifestyle, and does not address the sporadic falterers of those who remain committed to God's lifestyle, is defended in the "Introduction" section of chapter two.

²⁰¹ New Testament passages which state that final judgment will be based on works or behavior include Matthew 16:27; John 5:29; Romans 2:6-10; 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 6:7-10; Ephesians 6:8; 1 Peter 1:13-17; Revelation 2:23; 20:12-15; 22:12.

Cf. also Matthew 7:21-23; 12:36-37; 25:31-46; John 13:15-17; Acts 24:25; 26:20; Romans 12:1—13:14; 1 Corinthians 6:8-11, 18-20; 7:19; 9:24-27; Galatians 5:13—6:6; Ephesians 2:10; 4:1, 17-32; 5:1—6:9; Philippians 1:27-28; 2:15-16; Colossians 3:1—4:1, especially 3:25; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 4:1-11; 5:1-10; 1 Timothy 5:24-25; 6:18-19; 2 Timothy 4:7-8, 14; James 1:25; 2:14-26; 1 Peter 3:8-12; 4:1-7; 2 Peter 1:3-11; 3:11-14; Revelation 14:13; as well as this paper's subject pericope, Romans 8:12-13. It is noteworthy that Galatians and Romans, the two Pauline books which develop justification by faith apart from works, also strongly advocate the necessity of good works.

Listing many references, James W. Thompson, "'The Doers of the Law will be Justified': Romans 2 Reconsidered," *Restoration Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2018): 2-4; Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 105 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 60, 86-88, 132, 295-300; Schreiner, *Romans*, 112n1; and

passages which promote good works seem to contradict the theology of justification by faith.

A case in point is Romans 2:6-10, which is perhaps the most controversial passage because its assertion that final judgment for all people will be based upon works, or deeds (*κατὰ τὰ ἔργα* in 2:6), is so undeniable.²⁰² There are two predominant responses to the assertion in Romans 2:6-10 that judgment will be based upon deeds, or behavior. Neither response gives full weight to the *prima facie* assertion in the passage. One longtime Protestant response is codified in several 16th and 17th century confessions of faith and can be summed up in this way: good works are merely the fruit or result of salvation, not the basis of final judgment.²⁰³

Snodgrass, 77, 90n38, 90n44, report that judgment according to deeds is rife in canonical and noncanonical Jewish literature. James Thompson, 2-4; and Yinger, x, 286, also cite many references which demonstrate that judgment by deeds is a consistent theme in Pauline literature.

²⁰² Romans 2:6 plainly states without overt reference to *πίστις* that final judgment is based on *τὰ ἔργα*. Therefore, 2:6 is notorious for its seeming contradiction with the theology derived from Romans 3-5 (particularly 3:20, 21, 28; 4:5; 5:1) that justification is by faith apart from works. For a detailed review of passages in Romans 3-5 which Romans 2 seems to contradict, cf. James Thompson, 1.

For lists and reviews of modern interpretations of Romans 2:6-10 and attempts to reconcile it with Pauline passages which promote justification by faith, cf. Philip La Grange Du Toit, "Paul's Radicalisation of Law-obedience in Romans 2: The Plight of Someone under the Law," *In die Skriflig* 50, no. 1 (2016): 1-2; Cranfield, 1:151; Schreiner, *Romans*, 114; and Snodgrass, 73-75. The detailed reviews of modern interpretations in the monographs by Kevin W. McFadden, *Judgment According to Works in Romans: The Meaning and Function of Divine Judgment in Paul's Most Important Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 4-17; and Yinger, 6-15, comprehend all Pauline passages which assert judgment by deeds.

²⁰³ In defense of the fruit interpretation, John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 109-116, quotes many of the 16th and 17th century confessions of faith. Other commentators who adopt this interpretation include Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 64-67; Fitzmyer, 297; McFadden, 138, 162-63; Moo, 143; Schreiner, "Did Paul Believe," 154-55; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 145. Scholars who lean toward this "fruit" interpretation are resistant to admit the possibility that a believer can fail to realize final salvation. Although it is true that deeds reveal the inner heart, this is not the point of Romans 2:6-10; 6:21-23; 8:12-13 or other judgment passages. The clear point of these passages is that believers will die eternally for living the sinful lifestyle.

In a similar vein with the fruit interpretation, Lints, 36-37, 44-45, argues that moral sanctification is accomplished via living by (passive) faith rather than by (active) moral exertion. Again, this articulation does not satisfactorily account for the passages which mandate proactive morality for final salvation. The

The second predominant response is that Romans 2:6-10 is speaking hypothetically. That is, Romans 2:6-10 asserts salvation by perfect obedience which is impossible and therefore hypothetical. In all versions of this interpretation, the rhetorical strategy of Romans 2:6-10 is to demonstrate the impotence of moral behavior for salvation, thus preparing the way for the presentation of justification by faith in Romans 3:21—4:25.²⁰⁴ One objection to the hypothetical interpretation which many commentators seem to fail to notice is that this rhetorically based interpretation of Romans 2:6-10 does not explain all the other Pauline and New Testament passages which assert that final judgment will be based on deeds (these passages are listed in footnote 201 above).

Neither of these two commonly held interpretations satisfactorily capture the thrust of Paul's statements in Romans 2:6-10. Neither interpretation gives equal weight to both the justification-by-faith passages and the judgment-by-deeds passages. Scholars therefore need to continue to seek an articulation of the New Testament passages that

commentaries on Romans 2:7 by Jewett, 204-05; and by Dunn, 86, explicitly take issue with the theory that Paul advocates passivity in human moral endeavor.

²⁰⁴ Scholars who hold or lean toward versions of the "hypothetical" interpretation of Romans 2:6ff, although they may not use that term, include Hultgren, 112-13; Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 269-72; Matera, 68; Westerholm, "The Righteousness of the Law," 253-54, 259-60; and Ziesler, 83-84. Cf. also Westerholm, *Justification Reconsidered*, 19, 21, 83-85, 97.

Moo, 142-43, confusingly adopts both the hypothetical interpretation (explicitly rejected but subsequently articulated by Moo at the bottom of 142), and the fruit interpretation (bottom of 143). McFadden consciously adopts both a version of the hypothetical interpretation (126, 144-46, 156, 161) and the fruit interpretation (138, 162-63). In my estimation, these two interpretations are mutually exclusive because Romans 2:6-10 cannot both set aside a judgment based on works, as the hypothetical interpretation asserts, and affirm a judgment based on works, which the fruit interpretation assumes albeit with its own definitions.

reference τὰ ἔργα or the concept of deeds which satisfactorily accounts for both the justification-by-faith passages and the judgment-by-deeds passages.²⁰⁵

The concept of commitment is a step toward such an articulation. For example, the concept of commitment provides a solid exegesis of Romans 2:6-10 without eroding in the least justification by faith presented in Romans 3:21ff. Echoing Psalm 62:12 and/or Proverbs 24:12, Romans 2:6 summarizes the point of all of Romans 2: At the final assize, God will judge all people, Jews and gentiles, not on the basis of privileges such as possession of the mosaic law, theological knowledge, moral teaching, physical circumcision, ethnic identity, or election, but on the basis of deeds, or behavior.²⁰⁶ Then, 2:7 clarifies the “deeds,” or behavior, God demands with a statement which expresses

²⁰⁵ After listing many New Testament passages which affirm the necessity of good works for final salvation, N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 185-86, issues a similar observation: “Unless we offer a reading of Paul within which all this [all the judgment-by-deeds passages] makes sense . . . we have not done our job as exegetes, still less as theologians.”

²⁰⁶ Basically, all of Romans 2:1-29 argues that obedience trumps Jewish privilege; that is, Jewish privilege has no efficacy in final judgment. Interpreters who concur with this interpretation of Romans 2 include Kyoung-Shik Kim, *God Will Judge Each One According to Works: Judgment According to Works and Psalm 62 in Early Judaism and the New Testament* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2011), 168, 177-82, 192, 196; Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law*, 2nd ed., *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, 29 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987), 102; Dunn, 77-78, 91-92; Fitzmyer, 296-98, 305; Hultgren, 111-12; Käsemann, 53-54; McFadden, 55-62; Moo, 125-27; Osborne, *Romans*, 59; Schreiner, *Romans*, 102-03; Talbert, 79-81, 87; and Watson, 197-202, 216, whose defense of this position is lengthy and detailed. So also Lard, 70, 78, 81-82, who baldly states: “The aim of the Apostle is to extirpate from the mind of the Jew all thought of security based on the naked ground of being a Jew” (78). So also Snodgrass, 79-80, who helpfully describes those whom Paul castigates in Romans 2—for presuming their privileges will save them in spite of their sinful deeds—as “sinning moralists” and “the disobedient privileged.”

Contra Esler, 151; Jewett, 196-208; Matera, 57-59; Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans*, 37, 100-04; and Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 73, 78. Witherington argues Romans 2:1-16 continues the censure of gentiles begun in 1:18-32 and therefore must not be lumped with 2:17ff. Jewett and Matera both assert that Romans 2:1-16 does not target Jews in particular but all pretentious religious bigots, an interpretation which Watson, 197-99, convincingly refutes at length.

Pace also Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” 10:445; and Wright, “Justification by (Covenantal) Faith,” 97, who uniquely propose that Romans 2:17-29 informs Jews that they have failed in their vocation to bring salvation to the world. While this observation may be one outcome or derivative of what Paul asserts in Romans 2, it is not Paul's main point in Romans 2.

commitment to God's way of life: "To those who by perseverance in doing good are seeking glory and honor and immortality, God will give eternal life." The words *ὑπομονή* and *ζητέω* express proactive, ongoing commitment to a way of life.²⁰⁷ These words certainly do not suggest sinless perfection. Nor do these words promote some sort of point-in-time attainment of a level of achievement which merits salvation. Thus, verse 7 defines τὰ ἔργα of verse 6 as a way of life, not as absolute sinlessness nor as individual deeds which can somehow be quantified, summed, and stock-piled in order to outweigh or atone for bad deeds in order to earn salvation. This is reinforced by verse 8 whose terms express a persistent way of life in the disobedient lifestyle.²⁰⁸ Therefore, the "works" or "deeds" upon which final salvation depends are "perseverance in doing good" or, ongoing commitment to God's moral lifestyle.²⁰⁹ Thus, Romans 2:6-10 is not saying that the basis of final judgment is some level of achievement or earned salvation. Rather,

²⁰⁷ Cf. Jewett, 204-05, for ancient and secondary sources which indicate that *ὑπομονή* in Romans 2:7 should be rendered "perseverance" rather than "patience" because the context demands a vigorous form of moral endeavor rather than a passive waiting for divine intervention. Dunn, 86, argues that the present participle aspect of *ζητοῦσιν* in Romans 2:7 reinforces *ὑπομονή*, and concludes that "what is in mind is a sustained and deliberate application . . . rather than a casual or spasmodic pursuit of the goal."

²⁰⁸ For example, the term *ἐριθεία* refers to contentiousness and selfish ambition (Bauer, 392). Regarding *ἐριθεία*, Lard, 79, states, "It means contentious against the truth, on the one hand, and contentious for injustice, on the other."

²⁰⁹ Commentators who agree with the interpretation of Romans 2:6-10 affirmed here include Bates, 107-11; and Snodgrass, 72-87, especially 80-84. Both Bates and Snodgrass unequivocally maintain that Paul did indeed assert in Romans 2:6-10 that salvation for all people, including believers, will be based on deeds. Both explain how this is a plausible interpretation of Romans 2. Snodgrass's, 82, 86, 92n78, *coup de grace* is the incisive point that if there is no judgment by deeds there is no need for justification; therefore, judgment by deeds is the presupposition of justification by faith. Cf. also Lard, 78-82; Stuhlmacher, 46-47; and Watson, 213, for similar stances.

Moreover, in their exegesis of Romans 2, Bates, 107-11; Snodgrass, 72-87; and Watson, 213, come close to expressing a concept of salvation by commitment to God's ethic, although none uses the word "commitment" in their explication of Romans 2. Rather, Snodgrass, 84, uses the phrase "living obediently." In discussion not dedicated specifically to Romans 2, Bates, 3, uses several words, including "commitment," to describe the faithfulness that God demands from believers.

Romans 2:6-10 is saying that the basis of final judgment is whether or not a believer remained committed to God's way of life, or committed to the process of sanctification. Did the believer cooperate with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit or not? If he did, his sins before and after baptism are forgiven. If he did not, no amount of "good works" can erase his disloyalty to God and to God's way of life.

Romans 2:6-10 can be summarized in this way: final salvation for believers is dependent upon postconversion good works narrowly defined not as sinlessness nor as stock-piled self-righteousness, but as Spirit-enabled commitment to God's ethic. As indicated in Romans 8:13, believers who choose not to avail themselves of the Spirit's help will certainly die eternally (*μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν*).²¹⁰ Therefore, the advent and atoning death of Jesus did not set aside judgment by deeds, but merely provided the means (forgiveness and the indwelling Spirit) by which humans can be prepared for final judgment by deeds. With forgiveness and the enablement of the indwelling Spirit, believers in Christ can produce the fruit of righteous behavior which pleases God, as mentioned in Romans 7:4 (cf. 8:4, 8, 13-14).²¹¹

In conclusion, the concept of commitment wends a balanced way between the justification-by-faith passages and the judgment-by-deeds passages, giving equal weight to both. As stated above, the concept of commitment is defined as faithfulness or

²¹⁰ Bates, 107-11; and Watson, 213, unequivocally concur with the interpretation of Romans 2:6-10 presented here. Watson, 213, summarizes his interpretation of Romans 2:6-10 in this way: "Salvation or condemnation will be decided at a judgment according to works—i.e., according to whether people have lived in the light of their Christian confession or denied it in their practical conduct."

²¹¹ So also Snodgrass, 86: "A life pleasing to God is now possible by the increased activity of the Spirit. Therefore, the statements of Romans 2 [that final judgment will be according to deeds] are not set aside, but a new revelation of God has become available in Christ to establish righteousness."

allegiance to God. Therefore, initial justification is based on faith (initial commitment) and final judgment is based on faithfulness (postconversion commitment). Paul in Acts 26:20 succinctly expresses all these concepts, including initial commitment to the righteous lifestyle, commitment to God himself, and postconversion commitment to the righteous lifestyle: “I preached that they should repent, and turn to God, and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds” (NIV 2011).

Chapter Six

Implications for Ministry

This chapter is divided into two broad divisions: the church's mission to nonbelievers and the church's ministry to the flock of baptized believers.

The Church's Mission to Nonbelievers

What is the gospel message which the church ought to be proclaiming to nonbelievers? Romans 6:1—8:17 in general, and 8:12-13 in particular, emphasize two particular aspects of the gospel message. First, God frees people from enslavement to sin by giving them the indwelling Holy Spirit who enables them to resist sin and walk in righteousness. Second, God requires believers to commit to the righteous lifestyle. These are only two aspects of the gospel message. In order to accurately represent these two aspects of the gospel message, they must be placed within the framework of the gospel message as a whole.

Broadly speaking, the gospel message includes two elements: what God has done to save humans from sin and the human response to the gospel which God requires. First, God sent his son to die as an atoning sacrifice for sin. In Romans 6:1—8:17 Paul briefly alludes to Christ's death at least three times (6:2-10; 7:4; and 8:3) because the atoning death of Christ is the foundation of the way of grace. That is, the atonement provided by Christ's death is the basis of all the good things God offers in the gospel message. The good news is that God forgives sins based on the atoning death of Christ, but that is not all that God does. Romans 6:1—8:17 reminds us that God also frees people from

enslavement to sin. Stated another way, God provides freedom from the penalty for sin as well as freedom from the enslaving power of sin.²¹² Specifically, Paul asserts in 6:6-7 that when a person is baptized into the death of Christ, the believer's former sinful self (literally, the "old man") is crucified with Christ in order that the baptized believer might no longer be enslaved to the sinful lifestyle. This certainly is good news. The church's joyful activity is to broadcast this good news. How does God free believers from the enslaving power of sin? Romans 8:2 reveals that freedom from sin is effected by the indwelling Spirit which God gives to believers.²¹³ According to 8:2-14, the indwelling Spirit enables believers to resist sinful desires and deeds and to live the righteous lifestyle that leads to life and peace (8:6). This is a fulfillment of the prophetic promise of Ezekiel 36:27. The enablement and eternal life provided by the Holy Spirit are especially clear in Romans 8:13: "By the Spirit, put to death the sinful practices of the body and you will live."

Second, Romans 6:1—8:17 emphasizes that the human response to the gospel which God demands includes not only faith in Jesus Christ, but also faithfulness to God's ethical lifestyle. The proclamation of grace can be misunderstood, as evinced by Romans 3:8 and 6:1. As in Paul's day, converts in every age can get the mistaken notion that grace sets aside God's moral standard and therefore their chosen lifestyle does not matter. On the contrary, grace does not set aside God's moral ethic or allow unfettered antinomianism. Rather, the way of grace sets believers free from enslavement to sin in

²¹² Some commentators distinguish between the penalty for sin and the enslaving power of sin. E.g., Cottrell, *Romans*, 1:456; and Moo, 472-73.

²¹³ Romans 5:5 asserts that God gives his Holy Spirit to believers. Cf. also Acts 2:38.

order to enable them to walk in God's moral ethic. Romans 6:4 asserts that the very purpose of baptism into Christ (one purpose at least) is to spiritually die with Christ and be buried with Christ in order to be raised from the water of baptism to walk in the new, righteous manner of life. Believers need God's grace because they will sin again, but in return God demands that believers commit to his ethic, or his lifestyle of righteousness. God forgives the sporadic failures and falters of believers who remain committed to righteousness, but according to Romans 6:21-23 and 8:12-13 God will not forgive believers who abandon their commitment to the righteous lifestyle. Therefore, the gospel message which the church proclaims must stress that at baptism a person not only accepts God's offer of forgiveness of sins, but also dies to sin. That is, he or she renounces the sinful lifestyle and commits to God's lifestyle of righteousness. Stated another way, the gospel message which is preached should clearly teach that those who are baptized are making a commitment to live God's ethic.

Commitment, or faithfulness, to God's ethical lifestyle is nothing less than the repentance demanded by the gospel message. Jesus demanded repentance (Matt. 11:20; Luke 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 24:47). The gospel message of the apostles called people not only to believe in Christ and be baptized into Christ, but also to repent and practice deeds which demonstrate their repentance (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20).

A keystone of the gospel message and of biblical soteriology is this concept: Righteousness in behavior is the fruit of the sanctifying work of the indwelling Spirit of God in the life of each believer (Gal. 5:22), but each believer must cooperate with the Spirit.²¹⁴ Believers must allow their lifestyle and behavior to be led by the Spirit (Rom.

²¹⁴ So Grenz, 443-44.

8:13-14; Gal. 5:16, 18, 25). Believers must not grieve the Holy Spirit with their activities and treatment of others (Eph. 4:30). Therefore, believers also have a role to play in the postconversion, progressive sanctification of their own behavior, as indicated by the imperatives and exhortations in passages such as Romans 6:19; Hebrews 12:14; and 2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:11, 14.²¹⁵

Since the gospel demands faithfulness to Christ's commands as well as initial faith in Christ, the word "faith" is an inadequate translation of πίστις. Thus, the church should reconsider the traditional translations "faith" and "belief" for πίστις. Recently, Matthew Bates suggested the translation "allegiance." Bates argues that the πίστις required in the gospel is allegiance and obedience to Jesus's commands for holy living. In support of this thesis, Bates demonstrates that ancients often used the word πίστις to express the allegiance and obedience subjects were expected to give to their kings.²¹⁶ Bates argues that at his ascension Jesus was enthroned as king.²¹⁷ Therefore, when the Bible commands πίστις in Jesus it means allegiance and obedience to King Jesus.²¹⁸ Accordingly, Bates advocates, first, that the gospel story which the church proclaims ought to be reshaped so that the climax is the enthronement of Jesus as king. Second, Bates advocates that the response to the gospel story which the church calls for ought to

²¹⁵ Similarly, Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, 247-48, 260-61, 816-18.

²¹⁶ Bates, 3-5, 78-80.

²¹⁷ Bates, 29-41, 47-75, with recaps at 74-75 and 77.

²¹⁸ Bates, 8-9, 41-44, 77-100, with recaps at 98-101.

include swearing allegiance to King Jesus.²¹⁹ For these reasons, Bates calls the church to abandon the translation “faith” in favor of “allegiance” for πίστις (emphases are mine, not Bates’):

Nevertheless allegiance is frequently missing in discussions of faith, the gospel, and salvation. Some still need to be convinced that *enacted obedience is essential to salvation*. Those who are already persuaded need a more robust theological grammar to help articulate this truth. For even among the persuaded, why does the proclamation of the gospel in our churches and in our communities so often leave allegiance out? . . .

. . . In discussing final salvation we are on the firmest ground when we drop “faith” language altogether, speaking instead of allegiance alone. The adoption of “allegiance” language is pressing for the church, for “*faith*” and “*belief*” blot out vitally important dimensions of meaning in the *pistis* word family that need to be recovered. . . .

. . . I hope that the correct identification of the high point of the gospel as Jesus’s kingship and a retargeting of “faith” as allegiance will reinvigorate the life and mission of the church today.²²⁰

In summary, Romans 6:1—8:17, particularly 8:12-13, reminds the church to emphasize two particular points of the gospel message: God offers freedom from slavery to sin, and at baptism believers die to sin, that is, they commit to God’s righteous lifestyle.

The Church’s Ministry to Believers

Romans 6:1—8:17, and 8:12-13 in particular, emphasize that believers who continue in the sinful lifestyle will die eternally. Other New Testament passages warn believers that sinfulness will cause them to lose their saved status and the gift of eternal

²¹⁹ Bates, 9, 77, 101, 195-213, especially 199. Again, as stated in chapter five, Bates prefers the word “allegiance” over “commitment,” but these two words are compatible and mutually reinforcing.

²²⁰ Bates, 8-9. In addition to Bates’s monograph, the exegesis of Romans 2 by Snodgrass also augments the principles of morality and commitment presented in chapters five and six of this paper.

life, including Acts 5:1-11; 8:20-23; Romans 2:6-10; 6:21-23; 8:13; 11:22; 1 Corinthians 6:8-11; 9:24—10:14; 11:32; Galatians 1:8-9; 5:4, 19-21; 6:7-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:6-19; 6:4-12; 10:26-39; 12:14-17; James 5:19-20; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 3:11-18; 2 John 8; Jude 5; Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:5, 16; 18:4. Since believers will reap eternal death for moral apostasy, two of the church's important services to believers are moral exhortation and moral education.²²¹

First, the church provides moral exhortation. The church exhorts believers to shun the sinful lifestyle and remain committed to the righteous lifestyle. The local church leadership in every locale and in every age can do no less than the New Testament writers did for their addressees, the believers of the first century church. Nearly every book in the New Testament commands and exhorts believers to shun sin and remain faithful to the righteous lifestyle. Key passages include Matthew 5:17-48; Acts 24:25; 26:20; Romans 2:6-8; 6:11-13, 19; 13:8-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 10:1-13; Galatians 5:13-25; Ephesians 4:17—5:20; Colossians 3:5-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:12-14; Hebrews 12:1-17; James 4:1-8; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 2:11-12; 3:8-12; 4:1-11; 2 Peter 1:4-11; 2:18-20; 3:10-11, 14; 1 John 2:15-17. Righteousness in conduct is one of the foremost themes in all New Testament books. In fact, all the letters in the New Testament, Romans through Revelation, were written to believers and most exhort believers to remain firm in their faith and in their commitment to God's moral ethic in their treatment of others.

Hebrews 12:14 succinctly sums up the exhortation which believers give to fellow

²²¹ Witherington, *The Indelible Image*, 19, 228, 231, 272, 286-97, 325, 411-12, 430-41, 462, 511, 755, 765-66, 769-70, 802, 817, repeatedly asserts that believers are capable of moral and theological apostasy, and that the behavior of believers affects whether they will eventually inherit eternal life.

believers: “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord” (NIV 2011).

Exhortation of the flock does not occur solely within the walls of the church building or worship facilities. Several passages, including Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20; and Jude 22-23 direct believers to go to fellow believers who are caught in sin in order to save them. James 5:20 says, “My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner’s soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (NRSV).

More important than exhorting Christians what *not* to do, the church must exhort Christians what *to* do. The command to love God from Deuteronomy 6:5 and the command to love one’s neighbor from Leviticus 19:18 are the central commands of Jesus and the New Testament writers. Jesus said the whole law (ὅλος ὁ νόμος) and the prophets hang (κρέματα) on these two commands (Matt. 22:40). Paul stated in Galatians 5:14 that the entire law (ὁ πᾶς νόμος) is fulfilled in the command, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” In Romans 13:8-10 Paul asserted that the law is fulfilled, and individual commands are summed up, in the command to love one’s neighbor. James 2:8 says, “If you actually are fulfilling the royal law according to the scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well.” According to Romans 13:10, love is the fulfillment of the law because love does not harm or wrong others. Therefore, God’s ethic is summed up in the command to love one’s neighbor. Indeed, Leviticus 19:18 is one of

the most frequently quoted Old Testament texts in the New Testament.²²² Therefore, the church must exhort believers to love God and love others.

Second, the church provides moral education. The church educates and trains believers to identify sin in their world. Satan and his agents (e.g., false teachers and the surrounding culture) blur and obscure whether an activity is sinful or not. Satan's weapon is deceit. According to 2 Corinthians 11:14, he disguises himself as an angel of light. The New Testament authors warn believers to be wary of Satan's deception, the deception of false teachers, and self-deception: Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24; Mark 13:5-6; Luke 21:8; Acts 20:29-31; Romans 16:17-19; 1 Corinthians 3:18; 6:9-10; 15:33-34; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 11:13-15; Galatians 6:3, 7-8; Ephesians 4:14; 5:6; 6:11; 1 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 3:13; James 1:12-16, 22, 26; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 7; Jude 3-4, 17-19.

The culture we live in attempts to deceive people regarding specific sins. Some activities have become acceptable in our society to the point that some Christians may not know they are sinful. Such activities include gambling, playing state sponsored lotteries, abortion, premarital sex, homosexuality, drug abuse, greed, materialism, and using God's name in vain. Similarly, political parties and groups have successfully recategorized in the minds of some people moral issues, such as abortion and same-sex marriage, as political issues. This is done, in part, in order to exclude the church and other moral-based groups from the political debate. The church must be in the forefront of reminding believers that these activities will always be moral issues whether they are political issues or not. Moreover, churches and individual Christians need to challenge in private and

²²² Leviticus 19:18 is quoted in Matthew 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; and James 2:8.

public venues the implicit premise that certain political issues are morally neutral. The church must fearlessly stand against the culture and political trends which make evil good and good evil (cf. Isa. 5:20).

Postmodern culture and philosophy have convinced many people that there is no objective truth or absolute moral standard. Perhaps Judges 21:25 characterizes such a society: “In those days . . . all the people did what was right in their own eyes” (NRSV). The Bible unequivocally argues for objective truth and absolute morality and argues against subjective truth and relative morality.²²³ The church must teach the Bible view of truth and morality.

The church needs to constantly shine a light not only on sin, but also on the moral standard of God in order to help believers distinguish between God’s morality and the culture’s deceit. Acquiescing to the morals of the surrounding society is easy. Adopting the world’s philosophy takes little effort. In contrast, learning and living God’s morals takes much effort since God’s morals run against the stream of the morality and belief system of the surrounding culture. Therefore, the church must supply much educational, emotional, and exhortational support to believers. Furthermore, the church provides an invaluable service to Christian parents when it reinforces the morality that is being taught in the Christian home. Churches need to regularly present lessons which help believers identify sins and immoral activities.

²²³ Objective truth is one of the key themes of the Gospel according to John in particular (e.g., John 1:14, 17; 3:19-21; 8:44-47; 14:6; 17:17).

Conclusion

Since eternal life is at stake, proclaiming the gospel to nonbelievers and exhorting believers to stay on the path of righteousness are two primary tasks of the church. The church's joyful activity is to persuade nonbelievers to accept God's offer of forgiveness and freedom from sin in Christ. The church's privilege is to provide support and encouragement to believers as they strive to "pursue peace with everyone and pursue holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

Works Cited

- Aletti, Jean-Noël. "Romans 7,7-25: Rhetorical Criticism and its Usefulness." *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 61 (1996): 77-95.
- Anderson, Chip. "Romans 1:1-5 and the Occasion of the Letter: The Solution to the Two-Congregation Problem in Rome." *Trinity Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 25-40.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926.
- Aune, David Charles. "Passions in the Pauline Epistles: The Current State of Research." In *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, edited by John T. Fitzgerald, 221-37. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Banks, Robert. "'Walking' as a Metaphor of the Christian Life: The Origins of a Significant Pauline Usage." In *Perspectives on Language and Text*, edited by Edgar W. Conrad and Edward G. Newing, 303-13. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987.
- Bartchy, S. Scott. "Slavery (Greco-Roman)." In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman, 6:65-73. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Bates, Matthew W. *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Blass, Friedrich W., and Albert Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Translated and revised by Robert W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Block, Daniel I. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Boles, H. Leo. *The Holy Spirit: His Personality, Nature, Works*. 1942. Reprint, Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1967.
- Bryan, Christopher. *A Preface to Romans: Notes on the Epistle in Its Literary and Cultural Setting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

- Byrne, Brendan. *Romans*. Sacra Pagina Series, 6. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996.
- Cartledge, Paul A. "Slave Trade." In *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, edited by Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Christine F. Salazar, 13:526-29. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Cicero. *On Invention*. In *Cicero: De Inventione, De Optimo Genere Oratorum, Topica*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949.
- Cole, Graham A. "Sanctification." In *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 720-22. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.
- Cottrell, Jack. *Power from on High: What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2007.
- . *Romans*. 2 vols. College Press NIV Commentary. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996.
- Cranfield, C. E. B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. 2 vols. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975-82.
- Das, A. Andrew. *Solving the Romans Debate*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Du Toit, Philip La Grange. "Paul's Radicalisation of Law-obedience in Romans 2: The Plight of Someone under the Law." *In die Skriflig* 50, no. 1 (2016): 1-8.
- Dubois, Page. "Slavery." In *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, edited by George Boys-Stones, Barbara Graziosi, and Phiroze Vasunia, 316-27. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Dunn, James D. G. *Romans 1-8*. Word Biblical Commentary, 38A. Dallas: Word Books, 1988.
- Elliott, Neil. *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, 45. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.
- Ensor, Peter. "The Meaning of 'We . . . Died to Sin' in Romans 6:2." *Expository Times* 126, no. 5 (2015): 221-30.
- Epictetus. *Epictetus: The Discourses as reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments*. 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925-28.

- Esler, Philip F. *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.
- ESV Study Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008.
- Euripides. *Euripides*. 4 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912.
- Fee, Gordon D. *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, 33. New York: Doubleday, 1993.
- Fredriksen, Paula. "Paul's Letter to the Romans, the Ten Commandments, and Pagan 'Justification by Faith.'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 4 (2014): 801-08.
- Gehrke, Hans-Joachim. "Slavery." In *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, edited by Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Christine F. Salazar, 13:529-40. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Gieniusz, Andrzej. "'Debtors to the Spirit' in Romans 8.12? Reasons for the Silence." *New Testament Studies* 59, no. 1 (January 2013): 61-72.
- Goodrich, John K. "From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God: Reconsidering the Origin of Paul's Slavery Metaphor in Romans 6." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 23.4 (2013): 509-30.
- Grenz, Stanley J. *Theology for the Community of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Grieb, A. Katherine. *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*. Edited by Jeff Purswell. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- Heinrichs, Johannes. "Slavery." In *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World*, edited by Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Christine F. Salazar, 13:529-40. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Holloway, Joseph O. *Περιπατέω as a Thematic Marker for Pauline Ethics*. San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992.

- The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books: New Revised Standard Version.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- The Holy Bible: New International Version.* Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1984.
- The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version.* 2nd ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1971.
- Horton, Michael. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Hultgren, Arland J. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Jewett, Robert. *Romans: A Commentary.* Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Josephus. *Josephus.* 10 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926-65.
- Käsemann, Ernst. *Commentary on Romans.* Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Kearley, F. Furman. *God's Indwelling Spirit.* Birmingham, AL: Parchment Press, 1974.
- Keck, Leander E. "What Makes Romans Tick?" In *Pauline Theology.* Vol. 3, *Romans*, edited by David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson, 3-29. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Keener, Craig S. "'Fleshly' Versus Spirit Perspectives in Romans 8:5-8." In *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, edited by Stanley E. Porter, 211-29. *Pauline Studies*, 5. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- . *Romans.* New Covenant Commentary Series, 6. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009.
- Kim, Kyoung-Shik. *God Will Judge Each One According to Works: Judgment According to Works and Psalm 62 in Early Judaism and the New Testament.* Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2011.
- Kruse, Colin G. "Paul, The Law and the Spirit." In *Paul and His Theology*, edited by Stanley E. Porter, 109-30. *Pauline Studies*, 3. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- . *Paul's Letter to the Romans.* Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

- Lambrecht, Jan. "The Implied Exhortation in Romans 8,5-8." *Gregorianum* 81, no. 3 (2000): 441-51.
- Lamp, Jeffrey S. "The Rhetoric of Righteousness: An Overview of Paul's Argument in Romans 5-8." *Asbury Theological Journal* 60, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 55-66.
- Lard, Moses E. *Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1875.
- Lints, Richard. "Living by Faith—Alone? Reformed Responses to Antinomianism." In *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice*, edited by Kelly M. Kopic, 35-56. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.
- Longenecker, Richard N. *The Epistle to the Romans: Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
- . *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Lowe, Chuck. "'There is no Condemnation' (Romans 8:1): But why Not?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42, no. 2 (June 1999): 231-50.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. "MH ΓΕΝΟΙΤΟ in the Diatribe and Paul," *Harvard Theological Review* 73, no. 2 (January-April 1980): 231-40.
- Martyn, J. Louis. *Galatians*. Anchor Bible Commentary, 33A. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Matera, Frank J. *Romans*. Paideia. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- McFadden, Kevin W. *Judgment According to Works in Romans: The Meaning and Function of Divine Judgment in Paul's Most Important Letter*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2013.
- Meiser, Martin. "The Torah in the Ethics of Paul." In *The Torah in the Ethics of Paul*, edited by Martin Meiser, 120-41. Library of New Testament Studies, 473. London: T. & T. Clark, 2012.
- Moo, Douglas J. *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Moulton, James Hope. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Vol. 3, *Syntax*, by Nigel Turner. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963.

- Myers, Charles D. Jr. "Romans, Epistle to the." In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman, 5:816-830. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Napier, Daniel. "Paul's Analysis of Sin and Torah in Romans 7:7-25." *Restoration Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2002): 15-32.
- NIV Study Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th rev. ed. Edited by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research Münster/Westfalen, under the direction of Holger Strutwolf. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.
- Osborne, Grant R. "The Flesh Without the Spirit: Romans 7 and the Christian Experience." In *Perspectives on Our Struggle with Sin: Three Views of Romans 7*, edited by Terry L. Wilder, 6-48. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011.
- . *Romans*. IVP New Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916.
- Paige, T. "Holy Spirit." In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, 404-13. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Parker, Barry F. "Romans 7 and the Split Between Judaism and Christianity." *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 3 (2006): 110-33.
- Philo. *Philo*. 10 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929-62.
- Piper, John. *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007.
- Plutarch. *Plutarch's Moralia*. 16 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927-2004.
- Räsänen, Heikki. *Paul and the Law*. 2nd ed. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 29. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987.
- Reasoner, Mark. *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

- Sampley, J. Paul. "Romans in a Different Light: A Response to Robert Jewett." In *Pauline Theology*. Vol. 3, *Romans*, edited by David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson, 109-29. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Sanders, E. P. *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. New York: Penguin Press, 1993.
- . *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977.
- . *The Question of Uniqueness in the Teaching of Jesus*. Ethel M. Wood Lecture, 15. London: The University of London, 1990.
- Schreiner, Thomas. "Did Paul Believe in Justification by Works? Another Look at Romans 2." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 3 (1993): 131-55.
- . *Romans*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Schweizer, Eduard. "σάρξ, σαρκικός, σάρκινος." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Friedrich, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 7:98-151. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.
- Seifrid, Mark A. "Romans 7: The Voice of the Law, the Cry of Lament, and the Shout of Thanksgiving." In *Perspectives on Our Struggle with Sin: Three Views of Romans 7*, edited by Terry L. Wilder, 111-65. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011.
- Seneca. *Seneca's Tragedies*. 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917.
- . *The Epistles of Seneca*. 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917-25.
- Snodgrass, Klyne R. "Justification by Grace—To the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul." *New Testament Studies* 32, no. 1 (January 1986): 72-93.
- Stowers, Stanley K. "The Diatribe." In *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament: Selected Forms and Genres*, edited by David E. Aune, 71-83. *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*, 21. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988.
- . *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Stuhlmacher, Peter. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*. Translated by Scott J. Hafemann. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.

- Talbert, Charles H. *Romans*. Smith & Helwys Commentary. Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys, 2002.
- Thompson, James W. “‘The Doers of the Law will be Justified’: Romans 2 Reconsidered.” *Restoration Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2018): 1-7.
- Thompson, Richard W. “How is the Law Fulfilled in Us? An Interpretation of Rom 8:4,” *Louvain Studies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 31-40.
- Turner, M. “Holy Spirit.” In *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, 551-58. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Venter, Dirk J. “Romans 8:3-4 and God’s Resolution of the Threefold Problems of Sin, the Incapability of the Law and the Weakness of the Flesh,” *In die Skriflig* 48, no. 1 (2014): 1-7.
- Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Walters, James C. *Ethnic Issues in Paul’s Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Roman Christianity*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993.
- Ware, James. “Moral Progress and Divine Power in Seneca and Paul.” In *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, edited by John T. Fitzgerald, 267-83. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Watson, Francis. *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Wedderburn, A. J. M. *The Reasons for Romans*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991.
- Westerholm, Stephen. *Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.
- . “The Righteousness of the Law and the Righteousness of Faith in Romans.” *Interpretation* 58, no. 3 (July 2004): 253-64.
- White, R. E. O. “Sanctification.” In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd. ed., edited by Walter A. Elwell, 1051-54. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Wiefel, Wolfgang. “The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity.” In *The Romans Debate*, rev. ed., edited by Karl P. Donfried, 85-101. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991.

- Willard, Dallas. "Spiritual Formation and the Warfare Between the Flesh and the Human Spirit." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 6, no. 2 (2013): 152-59.
- Witherington, Ben III. *The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament*. Vol. 1, *The Individual Witnesses*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.
- . *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Woods, Guy N. *Questions and Answers Open Forum: Freed-Hardeman College Lectures*. Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman College, 1976.
- Wright, N. T. *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.
- . "Justification by (Covenantal) Faith to the (Covenantal) Doers: Romans 2 within the Argument of the Letter." In *Doing Theology for the Church*, edited by Rebekah A. Eklund and John E. Phelan Jr., 95-108. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014.
- . "The Letter to the Romans." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 10:393-770. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002.
- . *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*. 2 Vols. Christian Origins and the Question of God, 4. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.
- Yinger, Kent L. *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 105. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Ziesler, John. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. TPI New Testament Commentaries. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989.
- Zondervan NASB Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.