

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

"The "I" Struggle"

Rom. 7:14-25

May June 1, 1986

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul concludes that the law is: a. Holy for it discloses sin. b. Just for it condemns sin to death. c. Good for its purpose is spiritual life. d. Spiritual for it is divine.
2. But law cannot save (3:30) and law cannot sanctify (7:7-13). Paul has shown that the commandment is o.k., but sin works by the commandment to death (vv. 7-10). Now, the argument moves to "not I, but sin that dwells in me."
3. Thirty times "I" is mentioned in this chapter, but not once the Holy Spirit. Chapter 8 mentions the Holy Spirit 20 times.
4. Consider, then, the great sections of this chapter to show that only grace, faith, and Christ provide the victory a child of God needs.

1. CONFESSION # ONE vv 14-17

a. Statement v. 14.

With regard to the law, there is no question. It is spiritual because it deals with moral issues and its objectives are those of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, Paul, describing one who did not have knowledge of all that salvation provides, explains such an one as carnal. The Greek has "fleshen" (not natural, 1 Cor. 2:14). The power of the indwelling sin nature is described as "sold under sin." The verb is perfect passive and relates to slavery.

b. Proof vv. 15, 16

Here is an explanation of the statement (v. 14). It is a confession of enslavement. Self is unable to hinder what it disapproves. "Allow not" should be "I know not" i.e. "I do not recognize the true nature of what I do at the bidding of sin." Paul uses three verbs expressing conduct: do, practice, and work out to a result. There is confession of wrong doing here, but also great hatred of evil. "Would" is "will."

c. Conclusion v. 17

Since Paul hates what he does and does what he hates, he consents to the law as good, but ascribes his failure to indwelling sin. "Dwell" is to be at home in. Paul hates the service of sin, but has not yet stated his hatred of sin itself.

2. CONFESSIO # TWO vv. 18-20

a. Statement v. 18a

Here is an expression similar to v. 14, but it is more specific. Sin dwells in him, not only as a house, but from cellar to roof. Nothing good dwells in him. What a statement.

b. Proof vv 18b, 19

Here is a dirge. The will to do good was ever present within reach, but the execution of the good was what Paul could not find. Inclination and act are contrasted as being like good intention and bad action. Good he cannot do and evil he cannot shun. The same three verbs of v. 15 are repeated in v. 19.

c. Conclusion v. 20

Paul is not his own master. Rather, there is a tyrant in the place of power who is alien to the true self that wishes to be holy. Dwell is verb to live in like a house. The real culprit within is sin (nature).

3. CONFESSIO # THREE vv. 21-25

a. Statement v. 21

The verb "I find" is the third in the triad: We know (v. 14), I know (v. 18) and now I find (v. 21). There is a consciousness of a moral contradiction and conflict within--a desire to do good, yet evil always present. This is the "law," i.e. an unvarying principle.

b. Proof vv. 22, 23

This section parallels vv 15, 16 and vv 18, 19. Controversy reigns in his soul. The struggle can be diagramed:

Inward man		My members
Law of God	vs	Another law
Law of Mind		Law of sin

The "inward man" is opposed to outward, but may not necessarily be the new man (Eph. 2:10). "Law of God" is probably Mosaic and "law of mind" is the inward man's delight in it. Opposed is "another"(of a different kind) law which is an unvarying principle which carries on a successful campaign leading to captivity to the law of sin in one's members. He is in helpless subjection to the law (unvarying principle) of sin in his life.

c. Conclusion vv. 24, 25

The outcome of this contradiction and conflict is a cry of agony (v. 24). "wretched" is not the same as "guilty" for that is settled (5:1). Indwelling sin can only be dealt with by God's help (v.25). Unaided man is sunk, but Christ's work provides victory (cf. 6:1-13). "Body of death" is the helpless wretchedness described. Glory to →

God, there is deliverance through Christ as federal head in death (vv. 1-6). Amen.