

THE BOOK OF ROMENS

"Flesh and Spirit"

Romans 8:5-11

June 23 1986

INTRODUCTION

1. This section is part of the greater portion (vv. 1-11) which concerns deliverance from the flesh by the Holy Spirit's power.
2. Already God has shown the fact of "no condemnation" (v. 1). This is possible because of the freedom "in Christ" (v. 2). It is Christ's work at Calvary which effected what the law could not do (v. 3). Hence, those who walk by the Spirit's power do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (v. 4).
3. Now the mention of "flesh" and "spirit" (v. 4) leads naturally to a larger statement of the contrast between these two concepts. Vv 1-4 show a man cannot be holy unless justified; vv. 5-11 show a man cannot be justified unless holy. Holiness in life is evidence of justification. This is proved by:-

1. TWO PRINCIPLES v. 5.

Here is an explanation why the righteousness of the law is not produced in the person who is not "in Christ."

a. They who are "after the flesh."

These are unsaved, unjustified persons. These "mind" the things of the flesh. That is their interest--the affairs of their old nature. They are not able to rise higher. The verb "mind" has reference to attention or occupation of the person caused by its natural disposition. Thinking is bad, unsaved bad.

b. They that are "after the spirit"

These are saved, justified persons. These "mind" the things of the Spirit. That is their interest--the affairs of the new nature. This would include salvation, person of Christ, fellowship of saints, word of God, prayer, etc. All of this is their occupation. How transforming! The combatants are clear in this chapter: flesh is found 13 times and Spirit 21 times. Hence flesh quality battles Spirit quality. The dominant occupation shows one's relationship to God.

2. TWO ISSUES vv 6, 7.

a. Flesh mind

The word mind is not "the minding," nor "the action of minding," but the result of this action i.e. what the flesh with its fleshly minding brings forth

in thoughts and acts is, in its last outcome, death (6:21, 23). The rationale is provided (v. 7). There is personal animosity, hatred, dislike, and opposition directed against God Who is the one fount of life and peace. Moreover, every thought product of the flesh rebels against God's law. The flesh mind does not subject itself to God's law nor is it able to subject itself. There is an additional "for" in the last phrase giving the phrase a climactic force.

b. Spirit mind

What the Spirit with His minding brings is life and peace. What a contrast. The evidence of spiritual life is clear. A concomitant of the spiritual life is peace, i.e. the enjoyment of harmony, friendship, and communion with God. Hence the fruit of the spiritual life is sweet.

3. TWO SPHERES vv. 8, 9

Here there is a change from standard or principle to sphere in which people live.

a. In the flesh

This means to abide in an unrenewed nature. This person cannot please God. Why? They are set on pleasing themselves. Synergism in conversion is rejected; for salvation is in toto the gracious work of God.

b. In the Spirit

With an emphatic personal pronoun, Paul shows the Romans to be in the spirit. How is this known? Because it is believed the Spirit of God is in fact at home in them (3:30 for same construction). The presence of the Spirit is evidence of whose we are or whose we are not! It's that simple.

CONCLUSION

What a glorious end to this section. Because Christ is in the believer, it is admitted the body, due to the presence of sin, is dead. However, the Spirit is life due to the presence of righteousness (v. 10). Moreover, the Spirit Who raised Jesus, because He indwells the believer, will also make alive toward God the believer's body. What a glorious future! Amen.