

Law effort, will!!!

3/7
11:20 AM

Romans 7: 14-20
Greek 206A 3/7/83
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THE TENSION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
Romans 7: 14-20

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TRANSLATION

- Law!

- Vs. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, having been sold under sin.
- Vs. 15 For I do not know what I am accomplishing. Because what I want to do, I don't practise, but what I hate, this I do.
- Vs. 16 And if I do what I don't want to do, then I agree that the law is good.
- Vs. 17 But now it is no longer me bringing it about, but sin dwelling in me.
- Vs. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my sinful nature. For I want and am ready to do one thing, but the will to accomplish the good is not there.
- Vs. 19 For I don't do the good I want to do, but the evil I don't want to do, this I keep on doing.
- Vs. 20 And if what I don't want to do, I do, then it is no longer me bringing it about, but the sin dwelling in me.

EXEGETICAL IDEA

THE REASON FOR CONFLICT IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE...
BECAUSE OF THE LAW AS YOU HAVE NOTED IN YOUR INTRODUCTION
SPIRITUAL

Subject: The dramatic tension in the believer's life...

Complement: ...occurs because of the principle of indwelling sin. NOT BECAUSE OF THE LAW

Full Statement: The dramatic tension in the believer's life occurs because of the principle of indwelling sin.

EXEGETICAL OUTLINE

- I. The law has proven that there is a dramatic tension in the life of the believer (vss. 14-16).
 - A. As a representative Christian, Paul contrasts his own state with that of the perfection envisioned in the law (vs. 14).
 - B. Paul states the tension, that he is torn between wanting to do one thing, but doing another (vs.15).

NOT THE SUBJECT OF THESE VERSES

- I. C. The experience of this dramatic tension testifies to the validity and benefit of the law (vs.16).
- II. The source of the Christian's inward struggle is found in the presence of indwelling sin (vss. 17-20).

- not the SUBJECT of THESIS W.*
- A. Paul affirms the existence and principle of indwelling sin, (vs. 17).
- B. Paul illustrates the effect of indwelling sin in that it produces the inclination to do evil, despite any desire to do good (vss. 18, 19).
- C. Paul reaffirms that the cause of this tension is indwelling sin (vs. 20).

COMMENTARY

Introduction.

The passage before us is given by Paul to illustrate that which is given in the preceding section, namely that the law has certain positive effects in bringing a man to the knowledge of sin. That the passage is illustrative is first indicated by the six-fold use (in seven verses) of the particle γάρ. The usage of γάρ is primarily explanatory (Robertson, Grammar, 1190; Cranfield, 355). Secondly it is indicated by the subject matter itself. Verses 14 through 16 show that the goodness of the law is witnessed by the tension the believer experiences in wanting to obey it, but being inclined not to. Verses 17 through 20 explain how sin takes its opportunity through the commandment (vs. 8), because its lodging is internal. The grouping of verses 14 through 20 taken as a unit is suggested by E. F. Harrison, John Murray and the N.I.V.

- I. The law has proven that there is a dramatic tension in the life of the believer (vss. 14-16).

That this passage is speaking of the believer's "A.D." experience, rather than "B.C." is assumed throughout. A full-support of this interpretation is beyond the scope of this one section of verses. However, various supporting points to that interpretation will be given, as they relate to the specific verses in question.

- A. As a representative Christian, Paul contrasts his own state with that of the perfection envisioned in the law (vs. 14)

A first exegetical observation is that verses 2 through 13 include predominantly aorists and imperfects and that verses 14 through 25 include predominantly present tenses. Wallace notes (pp. 169, 170) that since Paul speaks in the first person, these presents cannot be historical presents

I AGREE

(dramatic), therefore negating the appeal to the idiom. Thus, grammatically, it seems Paul must be speaking here as a mature Christian. *ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστίν* sums up the idea of the first half of the chapter--the source of the law is God, it has His authority, and as will be seen, it has His goodness. The contrast Paul gives is with himself (as an example) that he however is not spiritually perfect, but rather is *σαρκινός* (the reading to be preferred to *σαρκικός*). He means here that even he, as long as he lives in this mortal life, has carnality remaining in him. The effect is that while the *σαρκινός* reading is preferred, the intended meaning is taken to be equivalent to *σαρκικός*. However, the Christian's carnality is different from the non-Christian's. Cranfield (356-57) and Murray (260) support this interpretation, with Murray offering that "sold under sin" indicates being subjected "to a power that is alien to his own will" and that Paul "reproaches himself for the sin he commits and bemoans his being carried away captive by it," (261). He has set the stage for illustrating the Christian's great inner tension, by showing the Romans that even he (surely worthy of the bishopric) is in marked contrast to God's righteous law.

OR historically
UNDERSTOOD
TO REFER TO
TO THE FALL
COU. 3 →
ΠΕΤΡΑΜΕΝΟΣ
PRES. TENSE
PAST EVENT
WITH ABIDING
RESULTS

B. Paul states the tension, that he is torn between wanting to do one thing, but doing another (vs. 15).

It is probable that the testimony of a great many Christians confirms the truth of this verse. On the other hand, if it is said that non-Christians are by nature sinful, so that they are considered enemies of God, how can they in general "want to" do good in keeping the law? Even more so, how can we say that a non-Christian hates practicing sin? Rather, Paul knows not what he is accomplishing. He registers a characteristic note of bewilderment over the predicament he experiences. Murray notes (262), "What passes into execution is what he hates, the opposite of his delight and characteristic volition." Cranfield notes (358) that "the verb *πράσσειν* is less definite than *κατεργάζεσθαι* and *ποιεῖν*, and so more appropriate for denoting an inconclusive activity." The tension to do that which he hates is strong.

C. The experience of this dramatic tension, testifies to the validity and benefit of the law (vs. 16).

Before moving on to further discuss the struggle the Christian must face, Paul again reminds his Roman readers that this all goes to show the goodness of the law. Apparently, the Roman tendency on temptation was to think of the law as accursed (vs. 7), but the very fact that it pointed out Paul's inability to escape coveting

γὰρ ?
"ὀδὸν" ἢ
βουλομαι ?

εἰ ?

(vss. 7-13), and his inclination to do that which he doesn't want to do (vs. 16). The very existence of the conflict within the Christian proves the goodness of the law. BAGD (780) translates the last phrase, "I agree with the law (and thus bear witness) that it is good." Cranfield (360) notes with affirmation Calvin's emphasis (150) that συμφημι (used only here in the New Testament) involves "a thoroughly serious consent, 'with most eager desire of his heart,' that is a real engagement to God's law." If he who is "carnal" (vs. 14) is equivalent to being unsaved, and in fact at enmity with God (8:7), how can he say that his disposition to the law is συμφημι?

THE EXISTENCE OF PAUL'S STRUGGLE DOES NOT "PROVE" THE GOODNESS OF THE LAW.

II. The source of the Christian's inward struggle is found in the presence of indwelling sin (vss. 17-20).

PAUL IS BUT AFFIRMING THAT THE PROBLEM IS WITH HIMSELF AS A SINNER & NOT WITH THE LAW WHICH IS "GOOD".

Paul now elaborates and restates the struggle the Christian must face. The vocabulary of the first section is repeated (θέλω, κατεργάζεσθαι, πράσσω), and some of the same ideas repeated. The point is to show that the struggle with the tension in the Christian life, which witness to the law's goodness, is caused by an internal quality, indwelling sin. This section is the heart of the Christian's struggle in trying to live a godly life, and shows even Paul as keenly subject to that struggle.

GOOD TRANSLATED AS

A. Paul affirms the existence and principle of indwelling sin (vs. 17).

Here Paul states that there is a principle of indwelling sin, even in the believer, and that the self is really powerless to do good because of it. This is no excuse for man, however, as is manifest everywhere in Romans. The νυνί and ούκετι are logically placed (Cranfield, 360), and do not indicate a temporal arrangement. The verse falls logically on the heels of vs. 16. The minor textual problem of ἐνοικῶσα (A, B, vg^{ms}) versus οἰκῶσα (A, C, D, F, G, Ψ, Byz., lat) is resolved in favor of the latter (contra Expositors) in both the Nestle²⁶ and UBS³. The sense does not change with either variant, and Cranfield offers the suggestion that it is explained as assimilation to vs. 20.

WHAT IS ΕΝ ΕΜΟΙ? WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE? MIND, SOUL, WILL, ETC?

The fact of the tension is the point of this verse. And as Cranfield notes, "the fact that there is real conflict and tension is a sign of hope."

B. Paul illustrates the effect of indwelling sin in that it allows the desire to do good but the inclination to do evil (vss. 18, 19).

Verse 18 confirms what was said in verse 17, hence the connecting γάρ. The sinful nature includes no good

towards God at all. Robertson (705) notes *τοῦτ' ἔστιν* as used without regard to number, gender or case of the word in apposition to it, and as a mark of a more formal literary style. Paul is therefore emphasizing and qualifying that in his flesh, the sinful nature, there is nothing good, even though the desire to do good is there, as provided by the Holy Spirit. This writer has translated it "For I want and am ready to do one thing" as it seems this is what *θέλειν παράκευται* is saying. Dana and Mantey (217) and Robertson (431) give the phrase as the substantial use of the infinitive for the subject, emphasizing the contrast of the first phrase ("For I want . . . to do . . .") with the second ("but the will to accomplish the good is not there"). Expositor's offers the idea that "the want of will is the very thing lamented (p.642).

The verse seems to teach that the flesh is wholly sinful. This implicates the old nature as being totally apart from God in every regard. Since Paul does not exclude the mind here as being depraved (vs. 22 is not taken to mean that), it must be included that it too is included in the term *σάρκι*.

The side by side occurrence of *οὐ οὐ* is given by Robertson (1158) as indicative of a deliberate emphasis again on the substance already stated in vs. 15b. (the (the variants here are not well supported by the sources). Here, the thing willed is the good and the thing not willed but practiced is the evil. Again, how could this be so of the unsaved man?!!

- C. Paul reaffirms that the cause of this tension is indwelling sin (vs. 20).

It is not to be taken lightly that this verse appears as a repetition of vs. 16a and 17. Let there be no confusion, Paul is saying. The reason he (and his readers) must face the tension of opposing wills is because of the internalization of sin, the dwelling of sin *ἐν ἐμοί*. Barrett offers (p. 148) that "the effect of this reiterated conclusion is to emphasize the distinction between the true self--"I"--and the sin-dominated flesh, which has its way and carries out actions of which "I" disapprove and does not carry out the good actions of which "I" approve. However, Barrett acquits the conscience as being in full compliance with the law, a pre-supposition with which this writer cannot agree. - *σάρκι!*

Finally, the question arises from the thought of verse 20, what are the duration and limits of this tension? How long can outbreaks of carnality be tolerated? These are the tasks of the exegesis of I Corinthians, however, and must be deferred to that book. - *σάρκι!!*

σάρκι → καρδί

δε!

Conclusion.

This section was chosen as it stands as something of a digression in the overall major sub-section of Romans, namely Chapters 4-8. These chapters show the victory of salvation. But that victory is not accomplished over night. It is a gradual purging of sin and starving out of indwelling sin, which no Christian is without. There stands before us (by God's grace) the law. It is spiritual and good. But we cannot keep it. In fact, the more one strives, the more failing is experienced. The process ends first in the true recognition of one's own wretchedness, but finally in a flinging of one's self upon the grace of Jesus Christ. This is the normal Christian life, and the purpose of Paul's exposition.

Theological Implication.

If this passage is taken as descriptive of the Christian's "A.D." rather than "B.C." experience, then the possibility of perfectionism seems lost. If Paul is writing the above verses about his own Christian walk, and even he had such a struggle and tension, then does that not say that even the most mature will still struggle? Dan Wallace notes, "The utter sinfulness of sin is something we cannot truly recognize unless we are maturing in the Lord and realizing our total dependence on Him for our sanctification." One cannot but wonder at the profession of supposed perfectionists and eradicationists. The highest humility is in recognition of one's true barrenness and wretchedness apart from Christ.

APPENDIX

Textual Problem: Romans 7:18 (19)A. External Evidence

1. List of Variants:

- a. τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ οὐ γὰρ
- b. τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐχ εὐρίσκω οὐ γὰρ ✓
- c. τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ γινώσκω οὐ γὰρ

2. Classification of the evidence:

Variant	Byzantine	Alexandrian	Western	Other
a.	cop ^{sa,bo} , goth, arm, Methodius, Epiphanius	Ⲱ, A, B, C, G, Ⲯ, ⲱ, Ⲳ, ⲳ, Ⲵ, 81, 1739, Origen	436, Augustine x1 v	1881, Cyril
b.	K, Byg, lect, 451, 629, syr ^{p,h} , Chrysostom, Theodoret, John-Damasius	P, Ψ 33, 104, ix, 200-100, 100, 326, 1241, Origen ^{lat}	D, F, G, 88, 181, Ⲱ, ⲱ, Ⲳ, ⲳ, Ⲵ, ⲵ, 330, 614, Lt ^{ar, d, dem...} vg, Ambrosiaster, Jerome	1877, 1962, 1984, 1985, 2492, 2495 Euthalius
c.			88 ^{m9} xii	2127 xii

3. Evaluation of the evidence:

a. Date and character of the witnesses:

The question of our problem really relates to variants a and b since variant c has too little support to justify serious inclusion in the competition. The first reading is well supported as to date and character of the mss. (Ⲱ, A, B, C) as well as representation in both the Byzantine and Alexandrian families. While the second reading is well represented in all three families, its earliest witness is D which is from the sixth century, with the next earliest witness from the

ninth century. Although variant b has the greater number of witnesses, variant a is the choice based on date and the best witnesses (W, A, B, C).

b. Geographical distribution:

The first reading enjoys its strongest representation in the Alexandrian region, but is also found minimally in the Western and Byzantine areas. The second reading is more evenly represented in all areas.

c. Genealogical solidarity:

The situation here parallels that of the geographical distribution. Neither variant is solely represented by one family.

4. Conclusion on external evidence:

Since the first reading enjoys by far the earliest representation and is not absent from the other areas, it is the choice based on external evidence alone.

B. Internal Evidence (evaluating first two readings only).

The basic problem here is the inclusion of *εὐρίσκω* in the second reading versus *οὐ οὐ* of the first (cf. Robertson, 1158) is not unheard of elsewhere in the New Testament, it is not ruled out as improbable based on a supposed error of duplication (error of sight). So, we are faced with the question of insertion of *εὐρίσκω*. It seems most likely that the word was added due to a harmonistic, intentional change, the scribe not liking the *οὐ οὐ* when he saw it. However, neither reading changes the meaning of the text. If variant a is taken, the meaning of *οὐχ εὐρίσκω* is implied, hence the translation chosen (see p. 1). Therefore, variant a is the marginal choice based on internal evidence.

C. Conclusion of Textual Problem.

Variant a is the choice primarily on the basis of external evidence, plus the seeming absence of any overwhelming internal factors favoring variant b.

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