

EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 8.1-14

A Paper

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By

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Introduction

The following paper will be an exegetical commentary of Romans 1.1-14. This will include an examination of the Greek text¹, a translation of the text, and an overview of important grammar and syntax issues, noted textual variants², and commentary. It will conclude with a synthesis of the meaning/intent of this passage.

Exegesis and Commentary on the Text

¹ Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.³

Therefore, now [there is] no condemnation for the ones in Christ Jesus.

This section begins with the inferential participle ἄρα which indicates that what it forthcoming is proceeding from what has just been presented in chapter seven. The adverb νῦν enhances the participle and this is likely referring back to the conclusion reaches in 7.24-25 that Christ is the one who delivers from the “body of death”. Because of this the result is that there is no condemnation (Οὐδὲν... κατάκριμα). The qualifier (who this is applied toward) is the dative of sphere ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ which echoes the Adam-Christ discussion from 5.14-21.

² ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

1 We will be using the Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition. Copyright (c) 1993 Deutsch Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. If there are significant textual variants it will be noted in the commentary.

2 All textual variants of importance will be discussed in footnotes in order to preserve the flow of the exegetical commentary.

3 There are later manuscripts that include μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν which is an interpolation from v. 4 (see Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. 455).

The coordinating conjunction γὰρ has an explanatory function. Therefore, an aspect of what it means of be “in Christ” is the νόμος that is characterized by Spirit (τοῦ πνεύματος = descriptive genitive). Subsequently, the Spirit is characterized as/by life (τῆς ζωῆς = descriptive genitive). It is this Spirit that has set the reader free (ἠλευθέρωσέν) from an antithetical law. This law is characterized by sin (τῆς ἁμαρτίας = descriptive genitive) and death (τοῦ θανάτου = descriptive genitive).

³ Τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου ἐν ᾧ ἡσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί,

For the law was powerless in that it was weak through the flesh, [therefore] God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and with reference to sin he judged the sin in the flesh.

Again, a coordinating conjunction has an explanatory function. The Spirit is necessary because the law was powerless in overcoming sin (ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου = accusative + attributed genitive). The law is powerless not in and of itself, but through the flesh (διὰ + genitive = agency). It is because of fallen human nature that the law cannot function correctly.

While the Spirit is the solution at one end the source of this solution appears to be God sending his own (reflexive pronoun) Son. The Son was sent “in the likeness” of sinful flesh (ὁμοιώματι refers to a likeness, a representation). Therefore, the Apostle is being very specific in affirming that Christ was genuinely human while being equally specific that he was not like humans who have descended from Adam (again, the concepts in this passage are grounded in the earlier Adam-Christ contrast).

It appears that the Apostle deduces that the Son coming in flesh is the means by which he was able to judge sin in the flesh (ἐν τῇ σαρκί). He introduces a play on words showing that the

reason why believers have no condemnation is because the Son condemned/judged sin (κατάκριμα in v.1 w. κατέκρινεν in v. 3). Since sin itself has been judged it no longer has the power to judge.

⁴ ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῆ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα.

In order that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, the ones walking not according to flesh but according to Spirit.

The subordinating conjunction ἵνα functions as a purpose conjunction (in order that). The Son judged sin in the flesh *in order that* the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled. Due to the complexity of this statement it is best to designate τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου as an aporetic genitive (the righteousness characterized by law).

The aorist passive πληρωθῆ indicates that this fulfilling does not occur because of the believer, but rather the Spirit does it “in us” (ἐν ἡμῖν). “We” are defined by a negative—the ones who does not walk according to flesh—and a positive—the ones who walk according to Spirit. The present active participle περιπατοῦσιν indicates that this is something that is currently (progressively?) occurring.

⁵ οἱ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φρονοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ κατὰ πνεῦμα τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος.

For the ones who are according to flesh are disposed to the flesh, but the ones according to Spirit, are the ones of the Spirit.

Again, we have another coordinating conjunction (γὰρ) with an explanatory function. The reason we walk according to the Spirit is because we are the ones of the Spirit. There is a “disposition” (= φρονοῦσιν translated here as “disposition” for lack of a better word) based on who someone is ontologically. The reasons non-Christians walk according to the flesh is because

they are the ones of flesh. ὄντες indicates that is the nature of the very existence of these two groups of people. Once again, we find concepts grounded in the Adam-Christ juxtaposition.

There is a Spirit group and a flesh group.

⁶ τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη·

For the disposition to the flesh is death, but the disposition of the Spirit is life and peace,

And again, we have a coordinating conjunction with an explanatory function. In vv. 4-6 the Apostle contrast the Spirit-flesh. On the one hand, those of Spirit fulfill the law. Those of Spirit are defined by the Spirit. These same ones are directed toward life and peace. On the other hand, by default, those without the Spirit cannot fulfill the law. These one remain defined by their fleshly existence and those who remain fleshly are death-bound. Again, this is all grounded in the Adam-Christ contrast.

⁷ διότι τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἔχθρα εἰς θεόν, τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται·

because the disposition of the flesh is enmity toward God, for unto the law of God they are not subordinate, for they are now even able,

This v. begins with a subordinating conjunction. It provides reasons for why flesh = death and Spirit = life. The disposition of the flesh is equated to enmity with God (τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς is appositional to ἔχθρα). Inherent in this statement is the suggestion that *those who are not in the sphere of Spirit* are not able to be in anything but enmity toward God.

The coordinating conjunction γὰρ connects those who are fleshly are not able to be subordinate (or submitted) to the law of God. Another coordinating conjunction further explains that those who are of flesh are not subordinate to the law because they are not able. It is implied

here that those who are Spirit *are able to submit to the law of God*. This is why those who are of Spirit are able to find life and peace.

⁸ οἱ δὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ὄντες θεῷ ἀρέσαι οὐ δύνανται.

but the ones who are in flesh are not able to be pleasing unto God.

The coordinating conjunction *δε* likely has a correlative function rather than adversative. The subject has not yet shifted. The Apostle is still writing about those who are flesh. He writes of them as being (*ὄντες*) “in flesh”. *ἐν σαρκὶ* is likely a dative of sphere as we continue to see the Adam-Christ theme to which he has been alluding.

The statement “not able to please” (*ἀρέσαι οὐ δύνανται*) at the end of v. 8 rhetorically reemphasizes the previous point made in v. 7. Those who are of flesh are not able to be subordinate to the law of God. Therefore, it is likewise true that those who are of the flesh are not able to be pleasing to God.

⁹ ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι, εἴπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. εἰ δέ τις πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ.

But you are not in the flesh but in Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if someone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of him.

The coordinating conjunction *δε* functions adversatively here. The Apostle is contrasting his readers with those who are fleshly. Again, this is not so much about a pattern of actions *as it is* about an ontologically reality (*ἐστὲ*). The readers are not of the sphere of flesh (*οὐκ... ἐν σαρκὶ*) but of the sphere of Spirit (*ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι*). Again, it ought to be emphasized that there are continual parallels here to the earlier Adam-Christ juxtaposition. It is here that the Apostle has been very intentional in displaying how those who are “in Christ” = those who are “in Spirit”. Only those in Christ can be those in Spirit.

As to make sure the point has been clarified the subordinating conjunction εἴπερ emphasizes that those who are not flesh are those who are Spirit *only if* the Spirit of God (πνεῦμα θεου) “dwells” in them. The genitive of reference functions here to clarify which S/spirit must be dwelling within the reader. It must be the Spirit of God.

The use of οἴκεῖ seems to echo temple reference made by the Apostle elsewhere but it is not as explicit. That he addresses his audience in the dative plural (ἐν ὑμῖν) should not be exaggerated. There is no intention of making this a specifically corporate statement but rather it is intentionally addressing every reader.

¹⁰ εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην.

But if Christ is in you, indeed the body is dead because of sin but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Again, we have a coordinating conjunction that is functioning adversatively (δὲ). The Apostle is contrasting those who are not of God because the Spirit does not dwell in them. The conditional sentence (εἰ) appears to function rhetorically since it is evident from the bulk of this section that he considers his audience to be Spirit people.

It is interesting that he equates the presence of the Spirit with the presence of Christ (Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν) showing that *it is not possible* to have the Spirit by some other means than by through identification with Christ. Furthermore, this supports the ongoing thesis that being “in Christ” is accessible only by being “in Spirit” and being “in Spirit” is only possible by being identified with Christ.

τὸ...σῶμα νεκρὸν has death functioning as a sort of appositional adjective. The body is equated with death. This is “on account of” of “because of” (διὰ + accusative) sin. The

adversative coordinating conjunction δὲ functions to contrast the dying flesh with Spirit which is life (we have another apposition in πνεῦμα ζωῆ).

The second contrast is that the body = death because of sin and likewise the Spirit = life *because of righteousness* (διὰ δικαιοσύνην; διὰ + accusative). It does not appear that

“righteousness” here is equated with correct behavior but rather with the statement in vv. 3-4 regarding the Son of God coming in order that we may be able to fulfill the purpose of the law.

¹¹ εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν.

But if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make alive your mortal bodies through his Spirit, the one who lives in you.

δὲ has a correlative function once again since the thought has not changed. Again, the conditional sentence (εἰ) appears rhetorical since his readers have been assumed to be Spirit people (though the principle is being made that if someone is not part of the church this person is not considered as sharing in the forthcoming statement). “The Spirit” who has already been designated as the one that is “of God”, and the means by which someone is “in Christ” and by which Christ is in them, is qualified again as the “of the one who raised Jesus from the dead”. The Apostle intentionally equates the resurrecting Spirit with the one who is of the one who raised Jesus and who now “dwells” (οἰκεῖ) in believers. It is because of this indwelling that the same one who raised Christ from the dead (rhetorical repetition) will make alive. ζωοποιήσει is a future active indicative which emphasizes that the Spirit will do in the future what he has already done for Christ, namely resurrect.

The Apostle emphasizes that our mortal bodies (τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν) will be resurrected. In v. 10 he just emphasized the body is dead because of sin. Now he says that this body will be resurrected. It appears that the emphasis may be upon the reality that the Spirit who is redeeming within the person eventually will complete the process by redeeming the very thing (the body) that sin has deconstructed.

The means by which this will occur is “through his Spirit” (δια...αὐτοῦ πνεύματος). Again, it is the Spirit that is the one who actually does the raising/resurrecting of the believer. This event in occurs within believers (ἐν ὑμῖν = locative dative).

¹² Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ὀφειλέται ἐσμέν οὐ τῇ σαρκὶ τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν,

Now therefore, brothers, we are indebted not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh,

As with v. 1 we have an inferential participle enhanced by the adverb indicating the Apostle is about to begin another subject dependent on the previous one. Since we have the Spirit and since we will be resurrected by the Spirit it is the logical conclusion that “we are not indebted (ὀφειλέται) to the flesh to live according to the flesh.” Throughout this passage it is indicated over and over that believers have a choice as to whether or not they will allow the Spirit to work in them. It appears that there is a restoration of human willpower when one is filled with the Spirit that is not found in those who are fleshly.

¹³ εἰ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε, μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν· εἰ δὲ πνεύματι τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε, ζήσεσθε.

for if you live according to flesh, you are destined to die, but if in Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The coordinating conjunction **γὰρ** function as an explanation of the previous statement. The first class conditional statement (**εἰ** + indicative) assumes that someone will live according to the flesh (**κατὰ σάρκα**) and if this is the so that person is destined (**μέλλετε**) for death.

δὲ functions here adversatively. The second first class conditional statement (**εἰ** + indicative) again begs the question assuming that one is in Spirit. Those who are in Spirit currently (**θανατοῦτε** = present active indicative) put to death the deeds of the body. The result is that in the future they (you) will live (**ζήσεσθε** = future middle indicative).

¹⁴ ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ εἰσιν.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God these ones are sons of God.

γὰρ again functions to further explain the previous statement. Those who are in Spirit but to death the deeds of the body subsequently are the same ones led by the Spirit. The Spirit is again modified by the genitive of reference reminding the reader of the specificity of the identity of the Spirit—it is the Spirit of God. It is these very ones who are led by the Spirit who are the sons of God.

Conclusion

The Apostle reintroduces the concept of two spheres that we find in chapter five but this time rather than the contrast being between Adam and Christ it is now between Spirit and flesh. It is likely that there is a parallel analogy being presented in which the Apostle is displaying that being “in Christ” is equated with being “in Spirit” (i.e. you cannot be in Christ without the Spirit and equally you cannot be in the Spirit without Christ). Whether or not one is able to submit to the law of God in a way that pleases God is not determined by behavior, per se, but rather by ontology. Those who are Spirit people will by default begin functioning in the Spirit. Those who are still flesh people cannot do anything other than act of that nature.

