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The Divine Work of Redemption in Romans 8

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Abstract.....	1
Introduction	2
A. A)polu/trwsij in Paul.....	3
1. Usage.....	3
2. The Audience of Romans.....	4
B. The Nature of the Divine Work of Redemption in Romans 8	6
1. The Scope of Redemption.....	6
2. The Focus and te/loj of Redemption	7
3. The Ministry of the Spirit and the Son.....	8
4. The Mind of the Flesh versus The Mind of the Spirit.....	9
5. Widening of Context: Transition to Larger Audience	16
C. Conclusions and Theological Implications	18
Bibliography	21
Books, Monographs and Commentaries:	21
Essays:.....	22

Abstract

The argument of Romans 8 affirms that there is no condemnation under the Law (Torah) for those who are in Jesus Christ through faith. Jesus Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh and died for all, so that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in all

¹ See now www.Cairn.edu.

believers, especially those who knew and followed the Law prior to their conversion. The Law could not be obeyed by those who are ‘in the flesh’, because the fleshly mind would not subject itself to the Law of God--it was at enmity with him. The Spirit himself was the one who imparted eternal life to believers’ mortal bodies, so that believers could present their bodies to God for righteous acts rooted in the direction of the Spirit, pursuant to the revelation of the glory of the children of God, which was under development through various life trials in the context of a personified material creation. This development was undergirded by the intercessory prayers of the Spirit and the Son (in light of the inherent weaknesses of believers with respect to prayer). The children of God therefore overwhelmingly conquer, and cannot be separated from God’s love as manifested in Jesus Christ.

Introduction

Any reading of Romans 8 must consider that section of the missive part of an extended argument that is already unfolding in the context of Paul’s verbal (dictated) composition of Romans (and will be terminated at the end of that particular chapter).² Such a reading acknowledges the need for a wider understanding of the text with respect to its surrounding material as it relates to its overall structure. A discourse reading (in other words) furnishes a means to read any given text at various strata of meaning (word, phrase, sentence and discourse) to determine, as closely as possible, the configuration of the author’s thought. This does not mean it is the final word.³ This is noted apart from linguistic concerns by Leander Keck, who observes that the core of Romans reads “like a discourse”, and is to be understood in light of the whole.⁴

The focus of the current essay concerns the theme of the divine work of redemption in Romans 8. The discussion will fall along two trajectories: first to be discussed will be the particulars of the divine activity from the stance of an attempted close reading. Commentary

² Cf. Rom. 16.22.

³ Louw 1992: 17-19.

⁴ Keck 2005: 21.

on the nature of that activity will be the second item of discussion from the perspective of what I perceive to be an implicit Trinitarian framework in Romans. This will begin first with a treatment of the term $\alpha\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon/\tau\rho\omega\varsigma\iota\upsilon\varsigma$ as it occurs in the Pauline literature,⁵ followed by an analysis of the term within that corpus. Second, the nature of the divine work (activity) will be examined, followed by a treatment of its scope, focus and $\tau\epsilon/\lambda\omicron\upsilon\gamma$. Within the context of this aspect of the discussion, the issues of the intercessory ministries of the Spirit and the Son (Paul's order) will be addressed, in addition to the idea of suffering as a means of $\alpha\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon/\tau\rho\omega\varsigma\iota\upsilon\varsigma$.

Finally, theological implications will be drawn from the content of the discussion along with a summary of what is gleaned from the context of Romans 8.

A. $\alpha\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon/\tau\rho\omega\varsigma\iota\upsilon\varsigma$ in Paul

1. Usage

In addition to the focal text in Romans 8 (v. 23), the term $\alpha\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon/\tau\rho\omega\varsigma\iota\upsilon\varsigma$ occurs six times in the Pauline literature, and a total of ten times in the New Testament.⁶ In the Pauline texts, the term is descriptive of Christ as the redemption of believers (1 Cor. 1.30); but it also points to redemption itself being resident in him (Rom. 3.24). In the other instances, the term highlights the future transformation (glorification/resurrection) of believers (Eph. 1.14, 4.30), and the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1.14; Eph. 1.7). In the three instances outside the Pauline texts (Lk. 21.28; Hbr. 9.15, 11.35), redemption points to the Second Advent (Lk. 21.28), the forgiveness of sins (Hbr. 9.15), and the potential release from an earthly prison (Hbr. 11.35). The term appears in the framework of Romans 8 to be applied to all believers in the church at Rome, signifying the eschatological expectation of ultimate redemption: indeed the *terminus ad quem* of the process of salvation begun at the moment of justification, continued through the progression of sanctification, and

⁵ The approach taken in this essay is that of the canonical reading of all of the letters ascribed to Paul as genuine. This is buttressed by the internal evidence of the letters themselves. Discussion of the effect of the Tübingen school on the question of Pauline authorship exceeds the limits of the current essay.

⁶ 1 Cor. 1.30; Rom. 3.24, 8.23; Col. 1.14; Eph. 1.7, 14, 4.30; Lk. 21.28; Hbr. 9.15, and 11.35.

pending completion *via* glorification (resurrection)—“the final eschatological wrap-up.”⁷ More precisely, *th\`n a)polu/rwsin* (in context) is directly referent to *ui(oqesi/an* (‘adoption’) in the preceding clause. In Paul’s discussion, redemption *is* adoption, and that adoption will be manifested as glorification—again, directly referent to the notion of the glory of the children of God as seen in v. 21 (*th~j do/chj tw~n te/known tou~ qeou~*); v. 19 (*th\`n a)poka/luyin tw~n ui(w~n tou~ qeou~*); v. 18 (*th\`n me/llousan do/can a)pokalufqh~nai ei)j h(ma~j)*) and v. 17 (*i#na kai\ sundocasqw~men*). *a)polu/trwsin* is demonstrated here in the apostle’s thought as that which is revelatory, is about to be revealed, and is accomplished with (and in) Christ, *in proportion to sympathetic suffering with him*. But currently that adoption is being worked out in the lives of Paul and his audience. Furthermore, *a)polu/trwsij* applies not only to the children of God but also to the fallen cosmos—it will be redeemed in conjunction with the final deliverance of the children of God from the futility of the present age.

2. The Audience of Romans

In Rom. 8.23, Paul’s focus at this stage of his discussion⁸ is *the glorification of believers*. His discussion is rather extensive and complex, commencing from Rom. 1.16. His audience is not homogeneous: it is composed of Jews and Gentiles,⁹ and throughout this complex argumentation Paul is by turns addressing one or the other group within the whole congregation. Jewett cites the 1988 study of A.J.M. Wedderburn (*The Reasons for Romans*) which

⁷ Fee, 102 n 111.

⁸ Fee terms this a guaranteed future resurrection (Fee 2007: 248).

⁹ Calvin sees no distinction, affirming that the reference here is to all believers “who have been sprinkled in this world with only a few drops of the Spirit.” See David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, eds. *Calvin’s Commentaries: The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*. Translated by Ross Mackenzie. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980: 175. Witherington (2004) argues for a largely Gentile audience with a Jewish-Christian presence (8). Stowers (1994) sees the reference as pertinent to the Gentiles only, and notes their sonship through Christ. He also suggests that the audience in Rom. 7 is Gentile, not Jewish—Paul is using ‘speech-in-character’ (*proswpopoi/a*) to personify the moral degeneracy he addresses with respect to his evangelization of the Gentiles (40, 264-284). From a contextual perspective (not to mention the weight of scholarly consensus on the background to the Romans letter), I find Stowers’ argument unconvincing.

suggests that the Roman congregations were split into two groups: one had broken with Jewish Law, while the other remained wedded to it. These factions were in conflict with each other, with each *bloc* calling the legitimacy of the other into question.¹⁰ Campbell thinks Paul dictated Romans to counter militant Jewish opponents.¹¹ Matera notes the current scholarly approach to the background of the letter as opposed to the traditional: any hard distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers is a thing of the past. Some of the Gentiles (formerly God-fearers) may have been Torah-observant. The church at Rome may have been primarily Jewish at its inception, but by the time of the letter's composition there would have been a significant Gentile presence. They perhaps would have represented a number of household churches, which may have reflected tensions between Gentile believers who were not previously God-fearers and Torah-observant Gentile Christians. In turn there may have been tensions between Jewish Christians and the former groups.¹²

The portion of the audience the apostle is concerned with (at the beginning of Romans 8) appears to be Jewish (or Jewish and proselyte: cf. Rom. 7.1 and 8.1). The beginning of Romans 8 draws the distinction between the law of the Spirit of life in Christ and the Law of sin and death: the latter has been identified and discussed by the apostle in the content of the seventh chapter (Rom. 7.7-11, 24-25).¹³ It seems clear from the context that those individuals Paul is still addressing are those who know the Law (i.e., those who practice it). To be sure, in the outworking of his argument in chapter 8, the

¹⁰ Jewett 2002: 37, 39-40, 42-43.

¹¹ Campbell 1994: 321.

¹² Matera 2010: 7-8.

¹³ Bruce (1994) notes that Paul does not seem to have had an attack of conscience prior to his conversion to Christ; but in the process of his sanctification has now been made aware of the corruption within him (Bruce 1994:139-148). Fee notes that the knowing expressed here by the apostle pertains to his experience (167 n. 18). This militates against the argument by Witherington (2009) suggesting that the "I" of Rom. 7.7-13 is a case of "impersonation" ('speech-in-character', *proswpopoiia*) of Adam by the apostle (see note below), reflective of his rhetorical expertise (61-76). Keck (2005) does not settle on any particular view, seeing problems in each proposal. He prefers the view of the subject of the "I" as the Adamic self over the suggestion that this is an autobiographical exercise by the apostle (Keck, 180).

composition of the audience becomes more inclusive, as he shifts to the theme of a)polu/trwsij.

B. The Nature of the Divine Work of Redemption in Romans 8

1. The Scope of Redemption

The ambit of redemption in Romans 8 can be discerned from the apostle's comments in

8.19ff, concerning the earnest expectation of creation itself regarding the glorification of the children of God.¹⁴ This earnest expectation was the 'cry' of a creation that had been subjected in futility (th~| ga\r mataio/thti h(kti/sij u(peta/gh) but also in hope (v. 20).¹⁵ The descriptive imagery by the apostle Paul appears to point unequivocally to the Fall (and its effect on creation),¹⁶ which is dealt with in part by Paul's comments on the domination of death "from Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5.12-14),¹⁷ and more immediately by the apostle's reference to the sufferings of the present time (ta\ paqh/mata tou~ nu~n kairou~; Rom. 8.18)--a parallel idea to the statements of 8.19 and 20 relating to creation ('expectation of glory in subjected futility').¹⁸ The decisive factor supporting this view is apparent in the following

¹⁴ Curiously, Bruce (1994) links v. 19 and 23, by connecting the notions of 'adoption' (as sons) with the 'revelation' of the Son of God, citing 1 Cor. 1.7. It must be said however, that there is nothing in this context linking the revelation of the sons of God with the Second Advent, though the idea is not impossible (163).

¹⁵ The apostle here personifies creation itself (in the sense of 'nature') in the framework of his discussion. Calvin does not treat h(kti/sij in this vein, seemingly rendering the term as 'dumb creatures', and 'elements and parts of the world touched by present misery,' which would appear to contradict the idea of personification itself. However, there is some theological warrant for the Reformer's interpretation, if we allow that he is simply teasing out the implications of h(kti/sij. Notwithstanding this concession, it seems best to take Paul's term here in a generic sense, without needing the theological (and illustrative gloss) added by Calvin. Thus kti/sij might best be taken as 'creation (nature)', as it better fits the context (entire) of Romans 8 (*Calvin's Commentaries (Romans)*, 172). Hahne (2006) argues for this meaning, suggesting that h(kti/sij refers to the "subhuman material creation" ('nature'). See Hahne, 176-181; see also Murray 1968: 302.

¹⁶ Gen. 3.17, 5.29, 8.21.

¹⁷ The domination of death that Paul seems to be referring to is predicated on the sin of Adam which facilitated its entry into humanity (Bruce, 123). Moo (2004) suggests that Rom. 8.1-13 is resumptive of the argument of Rom. 5.12-21 (191). Witherington (2004) agrees that the apostle is likely thinking about the Fall and its effects (see footnote above), in view of the contrast between Adam and Christ (223).

¹⁸ It is suggested by some scholars that Rom. 8.18-25 draws upon an early Jewish belief in transcendent glory as reward for suffering in the current age. Interest in apocalyptic as background to the NT was not in evidence until recently: though there had been some movement towards this, focused [Footnote continued on next page ...]

verse (8.21): *that same creation* shall be set free from the bondage of corruption at the same time the children of God are glorified in liberty.¹⁹ But currently, the creation groans painfully (as do the children of God who have the firstfruits of the Spirit) in light of the impending redemption for both (vv. 22-23).²⁰ The groaning of the fallen cosmos parallels the groaning of the redeemed in a context of suffering. All of this points to the renewal (redemption) of creation in conjunction with that of believers in Jesus Christ. The suffering of believers is not to be treated in this framework as something separate from the corruption of the created order.²¹ The creation would no longer be subject to corruption, but incorruption (αἰφροῖα)--which would properly reflect the glory of the incorruptible God (τοῦ αἰφραῖτου Θεοῦ; Rom. 1.23). The notion of a renewed or reconstituted creation here strongly implies a transformed cosmos (more particularly, a transformed earth) in conjunction with the final transformation of the children of God.²²

2. The Focus and τε/λοῖ of Redemption

The end goal of redemption can be seen in Rom. 8.29: in the foreknowledge of God (προϋπιγνωσθέντων) those who have been chosen are marked out so as to be molded (conformed) into the image of Jesus Christ his Son, who is the titular and federal head of those who are called.²³ Believers are to be *image bearers* of the Second Person of the Godhead, and the nature of this calling is such that the τε/λοῖ of their redemption is an accomplished fact from the perspective of the Triune God:²⁴ all who were marked out beforehand were called, justified and glorified (Rom. 8.30).²⁵

This calling is effectual to the extent that no charge or condemnation can be attached to those who are foreknown and called,

inquiry did not assume definite proportion until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which supplied the impetus for the current state of the question (Hahne 2006: 13-32).

¹⁹ Bruce prefers the rendering “liberty of the glory” (164).

²⁰ “...the hope of new life for all creation” (Bruce, 164).

²¹ Hahne, 172.

²² Räisänen 2002 does not hold to this view; for him, Romans 8 does not reflect Paul’s belief in an earthly kingdom. Rather, the apostle is “using cosmological traditions to serve his own paraenetic intentions. He prefers the idea of a final kingdom, not a transitional Messianic one (17-20).

²³ Christ is the firstborn of all creation in the old order, and is the head of a new order through resurrection (Bruce, 167).

²⁴ It is not, however, accomplished from the viewpoint of human history.

²⁵ Bruce suggests that Paul may be imitating the Hebrew prophetic perfect (Bruce, 168).

and no earthly or heavenly circumstance can interpose itself between God and his chosen children as regards his love. Furthermore, all heavenly and/or earthly conditions are potentially utilized in the process of effecting conformity to the image of the eternal Son (Rom. 8.28),²⁶ and in that selfsame progression, believers overwhelmingly conquer through the one who loved them: Christ (a)ll' e)n tou/toij pa~sin u(pernikw~men dia\ tou~ a)gaph/santoj h(ma~j). The development of believers in conformity to Christ is orchestrated (in the apostle's thinking) by the activity of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Ministry of the Spirit and the Son

The activity of the Holy Spirit is evident at the beginning of Paul's statements in Rom. 8, first commencing in the description of the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" who sets believers free from the Law of sin and death: he is the one who liberates them from the demands of Torah and the consequences for failure (again we are reminded that his audience *at this juncture* in the Romans letter is Jewish and/or Gentile proselyte). The locus of the apostle's current discussion is tethered to the content of Romans 7, where Paul affirms that the attempt to keep the commandments of the Law produces deadly fruit. Paul's impassioned cry at the end of the seventh chapter is emblematic of the inner experience of the Jewish and/or Gentile proselyte believer: it is a *bifurcation of inclinations*, with the desire to keep the Law of God (Torah) coupled with the inability to keep it.²⁷ The apostle models the frustration that surely arises from this inner conflict,²⁸ and then follows it with the solution: thanksgiving to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, *whose physical death is substitutionarily and identicatorily effectual* to such believers--in

²⁶ Bruce likes the NEB rendering: "He pleads for God's people in God's own way, and in everything, as we know, he co-operates for good for those who love God" (168).

²⁷ It refers primarily to the Jewish believer, but it may well have been the inner experience of the Gentile God-fearer who was committed to Torah as he (or she) understood it in a synagogue setting.

²⁸ Such modeling may have been based on Paul's own inner experience of conflict. The regular use of the present tense, coupled with the correlative passages in Gal. 5.16-18 and Rom. 3.11b-12 strongly suggest that Paul is not speaking of his pre-conversion experience. It is likely that the *para/deigma* (rhetorical illustration) in Rom. 7.13-25 points to Paul's prior and early experience after conversion. His discussion in Rom. 6.12ff. would therefore be based on an *advanced understanding of his current relation to the Law* that is then illustrated in the following chapter. For a fuller discussion, see Anderson 1999: 229-34 (see especially n. 92).

that the perceived conflict is neutralized by the realization that the Savior's death has averted the condemnation that the Law (Torah) brings *in their inner experience* (Rom. 7.21-24).²⁹ *This is the significance of Rom. 8.1*: there is no judgment for those (Jews and Gentile proselytes) who are in perichoretic relationship (mutual indwelling) with Jesus Christ ("in Christ Jesus").³⁰

4. The Mind of the Flesh versus The Mind of the Spirit

This strongly suggests that the contrast in Romans 8 between the 'mind of the flesh' and the 'mind of the Spirit' is not to be understood *in the general sense*: Paul is still addressing the audience that is the focus of Romans 7; and he does not transition to the whole audience (Jew and Gentile) until Rom. 8.14-15, which functions as a conclusion to the previous discussion and a shift to the subsequent material (Rom. 8.16-17 appears to complete this movement).³¹ If this inference is correct, then the phrase 'mind of the flesh' should probably be understood as a description of the mind of the unbelieving Jew or Gentile proselyte, while the expression 'mind of the Spirit' would be a description of the Jewish or Gentile proselyte believer.³² More will be said on this below.

Following this line of thought allows observation and commentary with respect to the apostle's focus on the Spirit and His activity in a different yet familiar vein: Rom. 8.1 is a conclusive statement by the apostle following the material in Romans 7. There is no condemnation (*kata/krima*)³³ for those who are in Christ,

²⁹ Stuhlmacher (1994) suggests that the fulfillment of the legal demand of the Law occurs in the Spirit's power because of the sacrifice of Christ: from God's perspective, sinners who have trusted in Christ are no longer seen as breaking the Law (120).

³⁰ Cf. Jn. 17.21-23.

³¹ Bruce's discussion of vv. 14-17 connects the notion of indwelling with the word 'led'; this strongly implies that the previous material in Rom. 8 should demonstrate the same connection. This would lend support to the idea of continuity from Rom. 7, correlative with the (now) redeemed status of the believers he is addressing (Bruce, 156-159).

³² Both ideas are irrevocably opposed; the former is death, and the latter life (Bruce, 154).

³³ The term occurs elsewhere in Romans (5.16, 18) and carries the same meaning as found in 8.1 ('condemnation'). The specific use of the term supports the idea of continuity and development (intensification) in Paul's argument. Before the Law was given (vv. 13-14: ...*a@xri ga\r no/mou...a)po\ A)da\m me/xri Mwu+se/wj*) *kata/krima* was a reality, but was not charged to mankind in the formal sense: this would be case the case with the inauguration of the Mosaic [Footnote continued on next page ...]

because they are under the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ. The Jewish or Gentile proselyte is now under what Paul terms the ‘Law of the Holy Spirit’ as it pertains to ethical living.³⁴ Furthermore, this Law has set them free from the righteous condemnation of the Torah, because of the incarnation of the Son of God in the ‘likeness of sinful flesh’ (...e)n o(moiw/mati sarko\j...),³⁵ who bore the brunt of the Father’s judgment *in his flesh* (...kai\ peri\ a(marti/aj kate/krinen th\ n a(marti/an e)n th~| sarki/ k.t.l..).³⁶ This was done so that the *righteous requirement of the Law* (to\ dikai/wma tou~ no/mou) would be fulfilled (plhrwqh~| e)n h(mi~n) in those Jewish and/or Gentile proselytes (it is assumed Paul identifies with them) who had confessed Jesus as Messiah, and who as a result no longer walked (lived) according to the flesh, but by the Spirit (Rom. 8.1-4, 10.9-10).³⁷

covenant, which would intensify the expression of sin, not because the Law was sinful, but to point out the scope of the transgression of Adam and its effect through subsequent generations.

³⁴ The idea pertains to all believers in Paul’s thinking. The distinction here relates to the flow of the argument leading back to Rom. 7.1. The objection could well be advanced that Paul’s audience is composed of Jews and God-fearers only, or of Gentiles who are God-fearing. But this objection fails to account for the rhetorical diatribe the apostle deploys at points in the missive in response to Rom. 2.3 and 3.21-22, 26 (3.1, 3.3, 3.9, 4.1, 4.9, 4.10, 6.1, 6.15 and 7.7): the fact that Paul distinguishes between Jews and Gentiles at the beginning of his correspondence

(Rom. 2) is itself an argument for the distinction suggested here. Paul’s query in Rom. 7.1 is best seen as an iteration and extension of the diatribe employed at earlier sections in the body of the epistle as noted above, since Rom. 6 functions as a discourse on the new *versus* old life (see especially v. 14). Paul is in effect juggling the groups that comprise his audience. Rom. 7 would therefore be an extended treatment of the rhetorical questions that anticipate (in Paul’s thinking) the objections of the Jewish *bloc* with respect to questions of the Law, *which are connected organically to the praxis of first century Judaism* (perhaps represented by varied forms) among Jewish Christian opponents. There is therefore no need to distinguish, as Campbell 1994 does between Jewish Christian opponents and Judaism (325-331).

³⁵ Rom. 8.3.

³⁶ The idea of e)n th~| sarki/ is more precisely expressed with the pronoun, thus ‘in His flesh,’ based on contextual considerations. This is supported by Gathercole 2004 (177): the flesh of Jesus is the “location of punishment and condemnation.”

³⁷ Dunn (1988) comments on the verb plhro/w separately from the prepositional phrase e)n h(mi~n, Therefore Paul’s intent here is to signify that the divine purpose of the Law is fulfilled, similar in some sense to Mt. 5.17. He allows for the emphasis on divine agency over against human ability, but discounts the possibility that the aorist subjunctive plhrwqh~| might refer to fulfillment of Torah *prior to any ethical praxis by the Christian* (423-424). But it might be suggested that this is precisely the sense when the scope of Paul’s argument is taken in full: the entirety of Romans 7 raises the helplessness of the ‘I’ in that chapter to please God; Romans 5 speaks of the righteous act/obedience of the one man (Christ), [Footnote continued on next page ...]

The phrase τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου (v. 4) is most immediately referent in Rom. 5.18, which speaks of the one act of righteousness ('one righteous act') of Jesus Christ which resulted in the justification of all men; and this in all likelihood should be understood as pointing to the crucifixion of Christ: ³⁸ the *righteous act of the Law* that is fulfilled in Paul and the relevant section of his audience *is the physical death of Jesus Christ*. ³⁹ It is the requirement of the Law for those who transgress, but the one who came in the *likeness of sinful flesh* (without being sinful himself) has met the requirement as a substitution, so that many transgressions would be judicially subsumed and terminated in that one act (οὐκ ἓν καὶ δι' ἐνὸς δικαίωματος εἰς πάντας ἀναγράψουσι δικαίωσιν ζωῆς). ⁴⁰ The meaning

which is redemptive for a sinful humanity, and Rom. 3.23 is culminative in its declaration that all (Jews and Gentiles) have fallen short of God's glory, with the emphasis in that text on the failure of the Jew to live up to the righteousness of the Law and the Prophets (3.19-21). Matera echoes this line of thinking: "Here it is important to pay attention to Paul's language. The apostle does not say that 'we might do the just requirement of the law' but that 'the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.' For Paul, the law has been perfectly fulfilled through Christ's singular act of obedience. Consequently, he does not speak of believers 'doing' the many prescriptions of the law. Instead, he writes that the singular requirement of the law is now fulfilled in those who no longer walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit because they are in Christ, the new Adam" (193).

³⁸ To be sure, the term is used (in different senses) elsewhere in Romans (1.32, 2.26). The term as used in Rom. 5.16 differs from the meaning of the occurrences in 5.18 and 8.4: it is contrasted in the same verse to *kata/krima*, which is also anarthrous. This argues strongly for the *contrasted meanings* of 'condemnation' and 'justification'. The term as used in 5.18 is in the genitive singular and has the exact nuance I am suggesting for 8.4 (not to mention the fact that it occurs in a passage closely related to discussions of Romans 8 (Rom. 5.12-21). The contrasted term τὸ δικαίωμα in 5.18 would be *παρά τω μatoj*; both lack the article but are qualitatively definite due to the content of Paul's argument: through one man (Adam) 'the' transgression resulted in condemnation to all; *conversely*, through one man (Christ) 'the' righteous act resulted in 'justification of life' (also anarthrous, but with an immediate discourse antecedent in Rom. 4.25 suggesting definiteness: τὸ δικαίωμα ἡμῶν). The qualitatively definite term 'righteous act' in 5.18 can be seen as anticipating the phrase in Rom. 8.4 (τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου). Other occurrences in the NT are: Lk. 1.6; Hbr. 9.1, 10; Rev. 15.4, and 19.8. The latter two verses (plural of *dikai/wma*) have the meaning 'righteous acts', the first three carry the meaning of 'requirement', 'ordinance', which admittedly is the overwhelming meaning found in the LXX, whether in the singular or plural. This meaning is generally not found in Josephus, but that investigation needs to be done in more detail and exceeds the parameters of the current work.

³⁹ Fitzmyer (1993) is inclined towards the sense of "regulation, requirement, commandment" of the Law, though he does not feel that Paul is explicit as to the nature of the requirement: the Law's purpose as legal claim on humanity is the prominent idea (487).

⁴⁰ Dabourne (1999) expresses doubt concerning the nuance of 'justification' for the noun *dikai/wsi j* because (as she correctly points out) it occurs only twice in the NT—in Rom. 4.25 and [Footnote continued on next page ...]

‘the just decree’ (as in ‘justifying decree’) as indicative of the meaning to\ dikai/wma tou= no/mou *is unlikely*, in light of the occurrence of its direct precursor dikaiw/matoj in Rom. 5.18. This allows a reading of Rom. 8.4 that makes legitimate room for the term dikai/wma to be conceived as a single act, instead of a ‘life-giving decree according to the covenant’.⁴¹

There is a distinction between the flesh and the Spirit on this issue for Jews and Gentile proselytes: if unconverted, they are marked by Paul as minding the things which are of the flesh. Those who had been ‘transitioned’ to Messiah by faith are designated as minding (in the sense of ‘being oriented to’) the things of the Spirit. The unbelieving Jew or Gentile proselyte was oriented to the flesh for two reasons: 1.) Because of the Law (Torah’s) effect upon the conscience (inner disposition): *consciousness of the requirements of Torah generated potential and/or actual transgressions in their lives.* 2.) Because without Christ, conformity to the requirements of Torah was impossible for such individuals. In those who were unconverted, this would not necessarily produce a crisis until and unless there was an encounter with (and apprehension of) the claims of the Gospel, attendant with acceptance of the Messiah.⁴²

In a convert to Messiah on the other hand, this would potentially produce the despair so aptly and illustratively expressed in the apostle’s words in Rom. 7.24. This despair would of course have its source in the sense of hopelessness that comes from the activity of the law (‘principle’) of sin in Paul’s physical body (and in the bodies of

5.18 (93). But the presence of kata/krima as result and para/ptwma as cause is best seen in contrast to dikai/wsin zwh~j and as *contextually congruent* with Rom. 5.16.

⁴¹ Wright 1993: 211-214.

⁴² Paul’s personal recollections of his life before conversion are illustrative: in Gal. 1.11-17, he is staunchly committed to his ancestral traditions in Judaism; in Phil. 3. 2-7, he is a ‘Hebrew of Hebrews’, a Pharisee (v. 5); and he states that he was ‘found blameless’ (geno/menoj a@mempto~j)--which need not be interpreted as his own estimation. In 1 Tim. 1.8-15, he affirms the goodness of the Law (cf. Rom. 3.31, 7.7-12), but with the caveat of proper use: the Law is for every kind of violator. It is instructive to note that the apostle includes himself in the categories of 1 Tim. 9-10, calling himself a ‘blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor,’ ‘a foremost sinner’ (vv. 13-15). It would appear that there is a distinction between the state of his conscience prior to and after his conversion: in the former state, perhaps a relatively unaffected conscience; in the latter, a clear sense of the nature of his transgressions in light of his relationship to Messiah. It should be noted that an ascription of 1 Timothy to a deutero-Pauline collection does not have this interpretive option.

his Jewish and/or God-fearer audience).⁴³ But, as he affirms in Romans 8, those who had been converted would be oriented to the things of the Spirit, precisely because they had called upon Messiah, and because their recollection was part of their conscious experience (vv. 9-10). The tension of their inner experience (and Paul's)—of desiring God's Law with their minds, but also being conscious of their sinfulness (with the occasional capitulation to sin as a potential problem) was to be no longer indicative to the converted Jews and/or proselytes of a state of condemnation: it was instead to be regarded as the hope of final deliverance from sin (Rom. 7.25).

The fleshly mind (pertaining to the unbelieving Jew or Gentile) was oriented towards death, while the Spirit-led mind (resident in those believing) *was inclined towards* life and peace (these are likely 'echoes' of the themes of eternal life and of peace with God; see for example, Rom. 6.23 and Rom. 5.1ff). The fleshly mind produced nothing but death, which is what the apostle had stated earlier as he turned his attention to those who knew the Law: he was able to speak of a time when they (and he) were "in the flesh" (ο#τε γα\r h}men εν th~| sarki/).⁴⁴ The desires of sin originated in the holy operations of Torah (δια\ tou~ no/mou) "in our members" said Paul, and this state of affairs produced fruit resulting in death (ει)j to\ karpoforh~sai tw~| qana/tw|).⁴⁵ But now, those *who had been* in the flesh were now released from Torah, because they had died to it--the 'matrix' in which they were once held (εν w{ | kateixo/meqa). Those who were now free could serve in newness of the Spirit,⁴⁶ and not in the oldness of the letter--that is, of Torah (Rom. 7.5-6).⁴⁷

⁴³ Murray, 268-69.

⁴⁴ Rom. 7.5a.

⁴⁵ Rom. 7.5c.

⁴⁶ Paul has already given mention to this newness in Rom. 5.5 and 6.4: the agent of the outpouring of God's love in the hearts of believers is the Holy Spirit, with the simultaneous gift of the life of God.

⁴⁷ Cf. 2 Cor. 3.1-18 for the contrast between the ministries of the Law and the Spirit. Since Romans is generally considered to have been composed after 2 Corinthians, we may speak (for the sake of argument) of a definite correlation in Paul's thought.

The designation ‘fleshly mind’ in Rom. 8.6-7 (το\ fro/nhma th~j sarko/ j) is therefore probably not *to be viewed primarily* as a universal reference to the state of humanity by the apostle (though it could in a certain respect be applied that way), but as a reference pointing back to Rom. 7.1-6 as its proper antecedent, pertinent to the *bloc* Paul is addressing at this juncture, serving to alert them to their current relationship to the Law in view of their conversion to Messiah: ⁴⁸ additionally, he is casting a portrait of those who have not trusted in Messiah (which would include God-fearing Gentiles—though they were not given the Torah: cf. Rom. 2.14).

The opposite phrase ‘Spirit-led mind’ (my translation of το/ fronhma tou~ pneu/matoj) is Paul’s referral to those who had trusted in Messiah and were no longer under the condemnation of the Law. The apostle immediately follows his statement on the deadly fruit of the fleshly mind with its justification: to wit, the fleshly mind is in a state of hostility towards God: it is not subject to Torah, *and is intrinsically incapable of doing so* (Rom. 8.5-7). As a result, those who are in the flesh (the unbelieving Jew or Gentile proselyte who knows and lives by Torah) cannot please Him, because in their unchanged condition they are incapable of being subject to Torah (v. 8).

But, as the apostle reminds this group within his larger audience (see Rom. 7.1), they are not in the flesh anymore; they are in the Spirit, if indeed (ei@per) the Spirit of God dwells in them. Those in whom there is no indwelling of the Spirit do not belong to Christ. ⁴⁹ But if Christ indwells the Jewish or Gentile proselyte believer through the Spirit (ei) de\ Xristo\j e)n u(mi~n), indeed “the body (sw~ma) is dead because of sin” (a clear iteration of the context of Romans 7: in particular, v. 24), but the Spirit is life because of righteousness; that is, he (the Spirit) *gives life to the believing Jew or Gentile proselyte because of the righteousness that has been imputed*

⁴⁸ Murray, 284-87.

⁴⁹ (ei) de\ tij pneu~ma Xristou~ ou)k e@xei ou{toj ou)k e@stin au)tu~.’

to them through faith in Christ (vv. 9-10).⁵⁰ Particularly, this meant that the Spirit of the one who raised Christ from the dead (i.e., gave life to his (then) lifeless mortal body) would also give life to the mortal bodies of those who were indwelt by the Spirit--the mortal bodies of the believing Jew and/or Gentile proselytes, which were 'bodies of death' due to sin (ta\ sw\mata tou~ qana/tou: cf. Rom. 7.24) would receive life out of death: that is, they would have the life of resurrection imparted to them (involving a progressive renewal of their inner moral and ethical inclinations), so that they could live and walk in dependence upon the Spirit without the condemnation of Torah (v. 11).⁵¹ Their bodies were no longer solely a 'repository' for the activity of sin; they were also a permanent dwelling for the Spirit, who would impart the resurrection life of their glorified Messiah to them. Barrett expresses a similar view when he refers to the resurrection of Christ as an anticipatory eschatological event foreshadowing the coming age: *in the interval* between the resurrection and the inauguration of the *eschaton*, the Holy Spirit would bring "life-giving activity"—even to the mortal bodies of the children of God.⁵²

As a consequence, living according to the flesh (the Law) was unthinkable, considering the fact that such believers were debtors of the Spirit.⁵³ Living by the flesh (Torah observance) was an exercise in futility: to go down this path would result in the manifestation of 'death' (moral and ethical failure)—in their bodies, *in tandem* with the principle of sin exerting a deadly effect. Putting the deeds (acts) of

⁵⁰ See Bruce, 155. The reader is also referred back to Paul's discussion of the imputation of righteousness in Rom. 4. 1-13.

⁵¹ R. Dean Anderson (1999) notes that zw|opoih/sei should not be taken as a reference to the future resurrection of the body, but rather as a reference to "ethical revitalization" (233 n 95)—a trajectory that had its beginning in chapter 6 of the letter.

⁵² Barrett 1957: 159-160.

⁵³ As Dunn (1988) puts it, "Paul begins to draw out the consequences of the preceding analysis. His conclusion is not that flesh is no longer a problem for the believer, that the possibility of living in terms of the flesh is no longer open to his hearers, as a careless reading of vv. 5-9 might have suggested. On the contrary, living by the flesh is a real possibility for his readers, even though they are 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit'; the law of sin and death may still become (again) the determinative factor in their lives rather than the law of the Spirit of life." (457).

such mortal bodies to death by the Spirit⁵⁴ was conducive to the life of God becoming operant and dynamic in such believers (vv. 12-13).⁵⁵ In this way Christians would live eschatologically in the newness of the Spirit, filled with faith's certainty.⁵⁶ Paul's argument ultimately is this: the Law cannot save or prevent sin in the Torah-observant Jew and/or the Gentile God-fearer. The sinful habits ('Torah violations') were to be put to death by the Spirit (ei) de\ pneu/mati ta\j pra/ceij tou~ sw/matoj qanatou~te). Moral and ethical deeds were to be done in dependence on the Spirit.⁵⁷

5. Widening of Context: Transition to Larger Audience

Indeed, those who were led by the Spirit of God were sons ('children') of God (v. 14). Those who had believed had not again received the spirit of slavery so as to fear (directly referent to the idea of 'serving in the oldness of the letter'--Rom. 7.6).⁵⁸ Rather, the Spirit of adoption (sonship) had been received, which fostered the inward heart cry of both Jew and Gentile (whether in Aramaic or Greek): A)bba o(path/r (v. 15).⁵⁹ This heart cry was the indication by this selfsame Spirit with the spirits of believers (both Jew and Gentile) that they were the children of God (v. 16). If they were children, they were also heirs of God; indeed co-heirs with Christ---if they suffered with him so as to share in His glorification

⁵⁴ This is directly referent to the content of Rom. 6.11-23, which involves diatribe with the Jewish interlocutor.

⁵⁵ This language and meaning is readily observed in Gal. 2.16 and 5.16-25; in this earlier letter, we find the demarcation between sa/rc and pneu-ma that is expressed in Rom. 8.10-13.

⁵⁶ Stuhlmacher, 122.

⁵⁷ This strongly parallels Gal. 5.16: "...pneu/mati peripatei~te kai\ e)piqumi/an sarko\j ou) mh/ tele/shte."

⁵⁸ The reader will note again the thematic congruence with 2 Corinthians 3.

⁵⁹ The use of the Aramaic word was already entrenched with Aramaic speakers and was integrated into usage in Greek-speaking congregations. Paul would have assumed that the expression A)bba o(path/r was in use in congregations he did not found or visit (Dunn, 461). Käsemann (1980) notes that the Aramaic A)bba simply had the correspondent o(path/r appended to it in Gentile-Christian environments (228).

(‘ei@per sumpa/sxomen i#na kai\ sundocasqw~men’; v. 17).⁶⁰

The Spirit also helpfully intercedes for believers in the throes of their weaknesses, because of their inability to pray in line with God’s ultimate purpose for their lives. This intercession is ‘wordless groaning’ (stenagmoi~j a)lalh/toij): petitions to the Father to conform His children to the image of His Son (th~j ei)ko/noj tou~ ui(ou~ au)tou~; Rom. 8.26-30).⁶¹

The Son also intercedes (e)ntugxa/nei) for believers at the right hand of God (e)n decia~| tou~ qeou~). No one can bring a charge of condemnation against the elect of God: the Father is the one who justifies (qeo\j o(dikaiw~n), and the Son is the one who died (Xristo\j I)hsou~j o(a)poqanw/n) and was raised. God did not spare his Son, but gave him up for sinners, *because he was for believers*. The one who was given up is now raised, and he intercedes for all (vv. 31-34). This intercession is so effective that no separation of believers from the love of the Savior is possible; not in the material realm, with its “troubles, difficulties, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword,” which usually culminates in death (vv. 35-36). Nor is separation possible in the metaphysical realm, whether via “death, life, angels, principalities, present or eschatological realities, powers, height(s), depth(s) or anything else created”—these things (emblematic of suffering) cannot keep believers from the love of the Father which is in the Son (vv. 38-39).⁶² Believers in truth *overwhelmingly conquer* through Christ who loved them (v. 37). The intercession of the Son is aimed at the victory of believers through all adverse circumstances, through the victory he himself gained at the cross. This active intercession occurs *in tandem* with the intercession of the Spirit: effecting in believers the victory of their Savior simultaneously with conformity to his ei)kw/n.

The order (ta/cij) of the Persons does not follow the normal delineation of Father, Son and Spirit in Paul. Paul’s inversion of the

⁶⁰ As noted previously, it is at this stage that Paul shifts to the entire audience with the employment of more inclusive language.

⁶¹ Witherington follows Cranfield in the view that glossolalia is not the apostle’ meaning (Käsemann’s view): these phenomena “are imperceptible to the believer” (225-226).

⁶² Jewett, 49-58.

order as it relates to the Son and Spirit in Romans 8 is therefore not surprising. Yet there is evidence from the Pauline literature indicating that the apostle is cognizant of the order of the Persons,⁶³ and one need only look to his language regarding the outpouring of the Spirit into the hearts of those who have received Messiah (Rom. 5.5). The Son's intercession for believers therefore precedes (in order) the intercessory ministry of the Holy Spirit in the transcendent inner relations of the Triune God.⁶⁴ The victory of the believer is secured ultimately through the heavenly petition of the resurrected Christ on his/her behalf. Victory through all difficulties and unfavorable situations is aimed squarely at the goal of conformity to the image of God's Son (kai\ summo/rfouj th~j ei)ko/noj tou~ ui(ou~ au) tou~; v. 29b).

The trajectory of the movement of God's divine purpose *is inaugurated at the point of weakness of a fallen humanity redeemed in the midst of a corrupted creation* (in which both the creation and fallen humanity 'groan' together—Rom. 8.20-23), and culminates at the glorification (transformation) of the children of God and the renewal of the fallen cosmos. The Spirit's intercessory ministry *anticipates and works out* the details of the overwhelming victory of all believers (in the individual and corporate dimensions of their lives) through the atoning death of Jesus Christ in the cradle of the everlasting love of God for his redeemed creation. And he (the Spirit) does this through 'wordless' petitions that *override* the flawed communications of the redeemed, so as to bring about the likeness of each believer to the firstborn of many (ei)j to\ ei}nai au)to\n prwto/tokon e)n polloi~j a)delfoi~j; Rom. 8.29).

C. Conclusions and Theological Implications

Here, then, is what can be said concerning the intercessory ministry of the Spirit and the Son, in summing up the preceding discussion: the Spirit's intercessory ministry can be seen first in the

⁶³ Gal. 1.3; 1 Thss. 1.1; 2 Thss. 1.2; 1 Cor. 1.3; 2 Cor. 1.2; Rom. 1.7, 16.20; Col. 1.2; Phm. 1.3; Eph. 1.2; Phil. 1.2; 1 Tim. 1.2; Tit. 1.4; 2 Tim. 1.2.

⁶⁴ I would refer the reader to the gospel of John, chapters 14-16. The sending language pertaining to the Son (and the Spirit, subsequently) supports such a view.

act of indwelling those who believe in Messiah. Furthermore, this ownership by God is affirmed in the spirits of those who have believed in Messiah, so that God is known and addressed as Father. Second, as believers put to death the ‘deeds’ (likely the idea of ‘sinful habits’, or ‘Torah violations’) of the body, the Holy Spirit *imparts Jesus’ resurrection life* to His followers, the children of God—in their ‘moral and ethical space’ (their bodies). Third, the Holy Spirit *intercedes* for believers in line with the Father’s will, which is to reproduce the likeness of his Son in the lives of those who have believed in Him. Fourth, *the Holy Spirit* works out the life settings (situations) of believers to *the good end*—God’s purpose in Jesus Christ (*transformation*).⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Romans 8.28 can legitimately be understood as pointing to the Holy Spirit being the *agent* of transformation, based on the verb *sunergei-*, which is in the active voice and a third person singular. The verb appears to require an antecedent element in the text: it would not be *o(de\ e)raunw~n ta\j kardi/aj* (v. 27)---‘the[Father] who searches the hearts’ (and who knows the mind of the Spirit); nor does it appear to be possible to suggest that Paul or his amanuensis meant an implied *o(qeo/j* in v. 28. To deploy either of these options would be tautological (and perhaps solecistic). Therefore I would suggest that the antecedent should be *to\ pneu~ma* (v. 26), which seems to best fit the overall context of the Spirit’s activity on behalf of believers (cf. Gal. 5.16-25 and 2 Cor. 3.18-4.12). Furthermore, even though P⁴⁶ supports the reading *sunergei~ o(qeo/j*, this is countered particularly by the combined witness of **Σ** and two Greek fathers (Clement and Origen) with the reading *sunergei~*. Dunn notes that that at least four versions (RSV, NIV, NJB, NEB) take *pneu~ma* as the unexpressed subject, but holds to Cranfield’s argument (see below) (481). Fitzmyer highlights the existence of four separate interpretations of the verse (based on text-critical concerns: 1.) An intransitive reading of the verb (*sunergei~*)with an indirect object (‘works together with’); 2.) A transitive reading of the verb with *pa/nta* as direct object; 3.) An intransitive reading of the verb with *pa/nta* as the subject; and 4.) An intransitive reading of the verb with *pneu~ma* as subject. Fitzmyer inclines to the third option (523). Cranfield (1990) notes that eight possibilities present themselves: 1.) *pa/nta* in the longer reading taken as an accusative of respect; 2.) transitive verb and *pa/nta* as object; 3.) *o(qeo/j* with shorter reading and *pa/nta* as accusative as respect; 4.) *o(qeo/j* supplied with shorter reading, transitive verb and *pa/nta* as object; 5.) *pa/nta* as subject of the verb with shorter reading; 6.) *to\ pneu~ma* taken as subject of verb in v. 28 with subject of verb in v. 27 as antecedent while preferring the shorter reading; 7.) *pa/nta* as subject of transitive verb with shorter reading; 8.) Conjectural emendation of *pa/nta* to *to\ pneu~ma*. Of those eight possible solutions Cranfield inclines to the fifth (*pa/nta* as subject of the verb with shorter reading), taking *pa/nta* as a referent to *ta\ pagh/mata tou~ nu~n kairou~* (Rom. 8.18a)—which I agree with (Cranfield, 424-429). However, an alternative view is still possible (*pace* Cranfield): the shorter reading can be upheld, for the reasons previously noted: *sunergei~* can have an antecedent (*to\ pneu~ma* in v. 26). The phrase *toi~j a)gapw~sin to\n qeo\n* conveys special emphasis (Cranfield, 424). It is possible, even legitimate, to render the verse thus: ‘And we know that for those who love God (*to\n qeo\n*), he [the Spirit: *to\ pneu~ma*] works all things for good—for those who are called according to [his] purpose.’ ‘His’ is implied, since it is not present in the *koinh/*, and it is a reference to God (the Father) who is the one who calls or elects. This solution would allow continuity with Rom. 8.29, since the special emphasis on *to\n qeo\n* in v. 28 is not lost. I would therefore suggest (*pace* Cranfield) that the subject of *sunergei~* is not *pa/nta*, but *to\ pneu~ma*. This dovetails well with 2 Cor. 3.18.

The Son's intercession focuses on the victory of the elect, which is 'rooted and grounded'⁶⁶ in the victorious death of Christ. This intercession is done by the one who has every right to bring a charge or decree of condemnation, but who instead has chosen to intercede out of love. No separation is possible from the one who refrains from accusation and instead prays for the elect. The love of Christ is of such a nature and quality that nothing can separate the believer from him.

From the preceding discussion, we can see the theme of suffering and its redemptive value retrospectively along these lines: the general suffering experienced by all the Jewish and Gentile believers Paul addresses in his letter does not compare to their future state of glory. The personified creation 'waits' expectantly for the redemption of God's children, from the state of subjection in futility by God as a result of the Fall.⁶⁷ That futile subjection was the 'slavery of corruption' (th~j doulei/aj th~j fqora~j; Rom. 8.21). Suffering in the created order arose (and is sustained to the present moment) because of the consequent inherent corruption of the fallen cosmos. *That suffering was/is refracted into the lives of believers*, who groan in sympathy with the 'travail' of the fallen order. The Spirit groans 'wordlessly' in intercession for believers *who are fundamentally incapable* of adequately praying in the framework of God's eternal purpose to conform his children to the image of the Firstborn Son, *and he (the Spirit) uses the very material of suffering* produced in the context of that fallen cosmos according to the permutation and particularity of each life enfolded in the resurrected Christ. No form of suffering can separate the believer from God's love, because the Son who previously suffered now intercedes in the midst of believers' afflictions. The Son's loving intercession and the Spirit's activity within the fallen cosmos furnish the eschatological narrative of believers' conquering victory through him.

The implications for the redeemed must also be given mention and can be encapsulated in the following statement: the portrait of ultimate redemption through suffering painted by the apostle Paul

⁶⁶ Cf. Ephesians 3.17.

⁶⁷ Hahne, 172.

strongly implies that the redeemed children of God are better served when the primary focus of their lives (from an individual or community stance) is the eternal purpose of God. The work of the Son and Spirit points strongly to the eternal security of the one who is redeemed, and we affirm this *on the basis of the transcendent nature* of the intercessory ministries of the Son and Spirit highlighted in Romans 8.

In sum, Paul's commentary in Romans 8 concerns salvation (in its ultimate sense) in the context of Trinitarian activity; ⁶⁸ the inner relations of the Godhead are somewhat unveiled as it relates to bringing about the *irrevocable and inevitable* conformity of the children of God to Christ. The discussion as viewed from the position of Romans 8 as a starting point finds Paul's discussion focused on the Jewish *bloc* of the church at Rome (which also includes former Gentile converts to Judaism). This discussion expands outward (to the entire audience of the church at Rome) towards the middle of the apostle's discussion in Romans 8. Paul's view of the Law with respect to its nullification in matters of sanctification for this group is put on display, concluding the argument he built upon earlier statements in the Romans missive.

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⁶⁸ Binitarian and Trinitarian relations can be discerned with the content of Romans 8 (Father-Son; Father-Spirit; Son-Spirit); though the Trinitarian relations are strongly implied and not explicit.

Testamentum Imperium – Volume 3 – 2011

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