

## Rom 8:1-8 Thorough Word Studies

### νομος

Vine – used of a force or influence impelling o action – Rom 7:21, 23 that principle which governs the new nature invirtue of the new birth the principle by which sin exerts its influence and power despite the desire to do what is right. Rom 8:2 law of spirit of life – “the animating principle by which the Holy Spirit acts as the Imparter of life. cf. Jn 6:63

Wuest – the law here is not a written law but a regulative principle which exercises a control over the life of the believer

Vincent – regulative principle

Expositors – cf. 7:23 – admits the possibility of taking of principle, consistent fact in experience but take as = Mosaic law

Detzler – new law under the Holy Spirit produces life instead of death

Richardson – “the wider and more personal communication which is indicated by Torah” “the reference is to an underlying or immanent principle of life or action.”

Brown – Law in OT is not a uniform concept, in Jesus’ day law was used in absolute sense of law code as a whole separated from covenant. Paul used for Pentateuch and whole of Scripture, “divine commands in the widest sense” Rom 7:23, 25; 8:2

Little Kittel – Paul uses law of OT law though his usage is not uniform. “The law of Rom 7:21 is perhaps to be taken in this way, i.e., the rule that when we want to do right...other instances are the law of sin (Rom 7:25), the law of the Spirit of life (8:2)...”

Morris – The Epistle to the Romans – “Paul uses the term “law” in the sense “principle”, though usually with the added idea that there is some element of coercion.”

Paul uses law mostly to refer to the OT law but in this context he speaks of “another law” 7:23, he contrasts this other law with the OT law in 7:23;24;8:2 in 8:2 the “law of sin and death” does not refer to the OT law because the OT law is not sin, 7:7. The “law of the Spirit of life” does not refer to the OT law because it sets free which the OT law is unable to do – 8:3 in both these instances, Paul is probably referring to a ‘principle’ that is further defined as coming from and exerting influence of ‘sin and death’ and ‘spirit of life’. This is not Paul’s normal use but fits the context best.

### σαρξ

Little Kittel – used of opposite to life of God, earthly weak existence – opposite of πνευμα, not sinful in itself, but only in putting trust in its weakness. Either in licentiousness or legalism – ‘works of the flesh’ is the seat for sin, not in its sinfulness, but in its weakness. κατα σαρκα is ‘basic orientation of all life’

Brown – transitoriness & perishableness of weakness compared to God’s strongness – of which is generally human – sometimes in contrast with divine. *κατα σαρκα* = ‘self-centered, self justifying standards of secular man’ Leaving out spiritual – man’s existence apart from God, has therefore a drive that is opposed to God. There is nothing good in flesh Rom 7:18. Attached to works of flesh & legalism as way of self-justification which doesn’t work and is destroyed by God’s effectual work. Man’s creatureliness and frailty = “man as a sinner before God. The outlook of the flesh is the outlook orientated toward the self, that which pursues its own ends in self-sufficient independence of God.” cf. Gal 3:3; Phi. 3:3-7 “the mental outlook of the flesh is both hostile to God and also incapable of genuine obedience to the law (Rom 8:7) For the desire to use the law as a means of justification before God makes obedience for its own sake impossible. That is why to live in accordance with the flesh is in compatible with living according to the Holy Spirit (8:4,5,9) Fleshly man puts himself at the center trusting in his own ability to secure life even if need be, by cultivating ‘religion’. Man under the spirit casts himself on God as his father (8:15; cf. Gal 4:6) abandoning all self-reliance, in complete dependence on God.”

Wuest – flesh is the indwelling evil nature

Expositors – overcorrupt human nature

Morris – “Paul sees the flesh not as evil, but as weak – so weak, he is saying here, that the law could not bring about salvation. The fault is not in the law, but in the flesh.”

Elwells – the central and dynamic principle of fallen humanity and sinfulness

ISBE – “The merely natural” or “the natural as a norm in opposition to the Spirit” the natural, created human aspect. Not sinful, merely weak, limited and temporal. Because of its limitation it is liable to sin. Can then become sinful flesh, sinful not in being material, but in living by its own standard.

The overall thought of this section, as well as ch. 7 is that *σαρξ* designates the flesh, not in its sinfulness, but in its weakness and inability as contrasted with the power and ability of God’s Spirit

φρονουσι

Robertson – to think, to put the mind on

Wuest – to direct the mind to something, to seek or strive for deliberate setting of ones mind upon a certain thing

Vincent – to direct the mind to something

Morris – mindset, preoccupation, concentration

Expositors – mind, moral interest, thought and study, denotes more than mental process, not only concentration of thought but desire, affections & will as well as reason, attention or occupation of the being

Vine – moral interest or reflection, not mere unreasoning opinion