

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Reasons for this study

The focus of this study is to discover the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7. This will be done first by examining Rom 7, within its context and determining the experience of the emphatic “I.” Then, comparing the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7, as found within its context of Rom 1-8 with what Paul wrote elsewhere on the experience of new life in Christ for Christian believers. Finally, comparing this experience with the experience of Wesley called “perfection” and the Mystical experience called the “spiritual marriage”. The decision to discover the identity of the emphatic “I” by this approach, that is researching the context of Rom 1-8, then focusing the research on Rom 7 coupled with the comparison of the experience of the emphatic “I” with the experiences of Wesley’s “perfection” and the Mystical “spiritual marriage” is based on the realization that a study of the text of Rom 7, within its context of course, has not lead to a clear understanding and agreement of the identity of the emphatic “I”. The various opinions in disagreement with each other, found within the literature regarding the identity of the emphatic “I” is proof enough to support this statement. To make up for this lack of clarity based on the textual study alone, the decision was made to add to the textual study the comparison of the emphatic “I” with the experiences of Wesley’s “perfection” and the Mystical “spiritual marriage” to aid in the discovery of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7. A further reason for utilizing this approach is that the context is vitally important to a text. For instance, the context of Rom 7 is, in its comprehensive sense the epistle to the Romans. The context of the epistle to the Romans is the theological understanding of Paul and his

contemporaries. This theological understanding, or wider context to the epistle to the Romans, is not found simply within Romans, but is found within the total Pauline corpus. Paul did not write the epistle to the Romans in isolation from either the rest of his writings, his theological understanding nor in isolation from the theological understanding of his contemporaries. One can go on to say the context of Rom 7 is: (1) the epistle to the Romans (2) Paul's theological understanding found within the wider Pauline corpus (3) the theological understanding of Paul's contemporaries.¹ Therefore, to include this wider context for understanding the identity of the emphatic "I" is a natural step.²

My proposal, therefore, will attempt to dispel the mist of ambiguity, the variety of opinions that causes confusion, threatens the unity of the church and stymies Christian sanctification. The identity of the emphatic "I" of Rom 7 is in the center of this storm. By the emphatic "I", I mean Paul's frequent and repetitive use of the first person singular in Rom 7. The reason for narrowing the focus of this study to the identity of the emphatic

¹ Paul himself states that he went to Jerusalem twice and shared with the disciples. The first time he met with Cephas and stayed with him for 15 days (Gal 1:18). The second time that Paul went to Jerusalem and met with the other disciples was 14 years later (Gal 2:1). During this second visit to Jerusalem, Paul met with the disciples and at that time he "submitted to them the gospel" which he was preaching amongst the gentiles (Gal 2:2). Paul's report of this meeting was that not even Titus was compelled to be circumcised (Gal 2:3) and that the other disciples agreed that Paul was entrusted with the gospel to the Gentiles while Peter was entrusted to the gospel to the circumcised (Gal 2:7). The result of the meeting was that it was recognized that God's grace was working through Peter *and* through Paul (Gal 2:8, 9). What this tells us is: that before the writing of the N.T. documents, there was an oral understanding of the gospel that, at least in essence was agreed upon by the disciples and Paul. This is confirmed by Paul in Gal 1, 2 and by Peter where Peter calls Paul's writings scripture (2 Pet 3:15, 16). This common, agreed upon, oral understanding of the gospel, then, is part of the wider context of Rom 7.

² See also J.G. Van der Watt who writes: "one should be cautious in speaking of the 'soteriology of John, James, Hebrews, Peter or Paul', implying that they represent independent, inclusive, and complete soteriological systems" ("Soteriology of The New Testament: Some Tentative Remarks," in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed J.G. Van der Watt; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 505-522). In addition N.T. Wright claims that some of the extra-Biblical books, such as Wisdom of Solomon "provide significant partial parallels, and possibly even sources for some of the ideas of the New Testament, not least in the writings of Paul" (*Simply Christian* New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 177).

“I” is that this identity is of utmost importance to the church. If the identity of the emphatic “I” is a person under the law, then for Christians, this chapter of Romans has no relevance. This identification would also cause a serious problem with Rom 7’s placement in the sequential order of the epistle to the Romans.³ If the identity of the emphatic “I” is a mature, spiritual Christian believer, this will add to the Christian Church’s understanding of itself.

The identity of the emphatic “I” is a scholarly problem and is the purpose of this study. Christians, who live in unredeemed bodies, are looking for redemption. They are groaning with the burden of their unredeemed bodies. Rom 8:18-24, at least, means that Christians struggle with, are in pain over and are in conflict with their unredeemed bodies. The opinion of this study is that Rom 8:18-24 is the summary and Rom 7 is the fuller description of the struggle of Christians in unredeemed bodies. Thus, it can be stated that Rom 8:18-24 and Rom 7 are describing the same experience. The discovery of the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is of prime importance. This is why the place to begin in this search is with the text itself. The reason for this is that in the Protestant tradition, Scripture has a central place. Standing within this tradition, it is thus important to begin with Scripture. It is to be noticed that in the second Epistle of Peter, Peter included Paul’s writings in the category of Scripture (2 Pet 3:15, 16). This categorization

³ There are many outlines of the order and structure of Romans. For a discussion on this issue see chapter 2 of this study. The order of Romans is important because within the order and “flow” of Romans, it can be seen that Rom 5-8 discusses life after justification. (Rom 5:1 begins with “After being justified...”). This phrase introduces the section of Rom 5-8 that follows. According to the flow and the “order” of Romans starting at 5:1 it must be seen that Rom 5-8 discusses life “after justification.” Thus, Rom 7, being in the section that discusses life after justification, also must be discussing life after justification. J. Smart concurs when he states that Rom 5-8 “traces the dimensions of the revolutionary change which the new righteousness makes in human life” (*Doorway To A New Age: A Study of Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (New York: Joint Commission on Education and Cultivation Bd. of Missions, United Methodist Church, 1972), 27).

is important when, according to the view that undergirds this study and undergirds Paul's own thinking, which is that Scripture is inspired (2 Tim 3:16).

The literature states that Romans⁴ has been called Paul's most important letter.⁵ Barclay states that Romans "is the nearest approach to a systematic exposition of Paul's own theological position, independent of any immediate set of circumstances."⁶ Godet states that "Romans is intimately bound up with the personal experiences of its author" and that "Romans contains the essence of Paul's teaching."⁷ Westerholm writes that Romans "is a more systematic statement of fundamental Pauline convictions than is any other extant letter."⁸ Hiebert claims that "Romans is one of the most profound books in existence."⁹ Moule, in describing the Epistle to the Romans, departs from the above authors when he writes, "The Epistle to the Romans was, when produced infinitely more than the resultant of Paul's mind and life, it was and is an oracle of God, a Scripture, a revelation of eternal facts and principles by which to live and die."¹⁰ Epp agrees with Moule's statement concerning Romans, when he says that Romans is "the gospel of God."¹¹ Brown confesses that the debates over the ideas in Romans have split Western

⁴ For a good summary of the different positions taken in the debate on Romans see J. Miller, "The Romans Debate: 1991-2001," *CurBS* 9 (2001): 306-349.

⁵ S. Westerholm, *Preface To The Study of Paul: A Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), intro.

⁶ W. Barclay, *The Letter to The Romans* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 1.

⁷ F. Godet, *Commentary on The Epistle To The Romans* (trans. A. Cusin; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956), 6.

⁸ S. Westerholm, *Preface*, intro.

⁹ D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction To The New Testament: The Pauline Epistles, Vol. II* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), 163; see also M. Gorman, *Apostle of The Crucified Lord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 338, who is also of the same opinion as Hiebert.

¹⁰ C.G. Moule, *The Epistle of St. Paul to The Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899), 7.

¹¹ T. Epp, *How God Makes Bad Men Good: Studies in Romans* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Back To The Bible, 1978), 10. See also F.F. Bruce who writes that "if Paul's claim to have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16) is well founded, then we may confidently turn to the letters of Paul to find the significance of the Jesus of history unfolded," *Paul and Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), 56. In addition, J. L.

Christianity.¹² Osborne is of the opinion that Romans is a “letter to a historical church and was addressing problems in that church,”¹³ and that Paul did not write it to be “a compendium of his systematic theology.”¹⁴ Although Osborne goes on to add that “most of the epistle does not address the Roman Christians as directly as Paul’s other epistles address their audiences. Therefore, while he was addressing the Roman church, he intended it to sum up the issues regarding the gospel truth for all churches.”¹⁵

A view that deviates from the above is Tobin’s view. He is of the opinion that Paul wrote Romans in response to the Romans’ misgivings about Paul himself and also to “correct” his, that is Paul’s, earlier “immoderate” position regarding the law as found in the epistle to the Galatians.¹⁶

The above statements concerning the Epistle to the Romans are clear evidence why scholars should study this epistle. The epistle to the Romans, being the Gospel of God, according to Epp, contains the “heart” of God for the human race. In studying the epistle to the Romans, one studies God's desire, purpose and work in and for the human race. When one “enters” the epistle to the Romans, one “enters” the “heart” of God. One must, therefore, “walk” carefully, humbly, reverently – all the while employing the full range of academic “tools” at one's disposal.

Moule’s description of Romans as an oracle of God, a Scripture, a revelation of eternal facts and principles by which to live and die, expresses the view that Romans is an

Eason calls Romans Paul’s “most important work,” and “the most important book in our Bible, next to the Four Gospels,” *The New Bible Survey* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 451.

¹² R. Brown, *An Introduction to The New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 559.

¹³ G. Osborne, *Romans* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶ G. Anderson, review of T. Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric in Context: The Argument of Romans*, *CBQ* 67 (2005): 726-727. The comparison of Paul’s use of the law in Romans and Galatians is beyond the scope of this study and will not be undertaken here.

important field of research. However, Romans, being a revelation by which to live and die, according to Moule, is more than scientific research. Revelation is that which God has revealed or given. Romans as a revelation of God, becomes an essential aspect of life. When one understands Romans as revelation, then, the study of Romans takes on an experiential and sacred reason for its study. The reason for stating this is that within Romans is an aspect, a dimension of life that God has given to the human race.¹⁷

Other reasons for discovering the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 exist. According to Brown, the debates over Romans have split Western Christianity. The support for Brown’s statement is found in the various opinions regarding the identity of the emphatic “I” that has resulted in the formation of various denominations. These denominations have little if any connection with those formed based on a differing opinion of the emphatic “I.” Such is the evidence of the fractured condition of Western Christianity. This fractured condition manifests itself in the various groupings of Christian believers who do not relate or at times recognize the existence of each other.¹⁸ These fractured groupings are an expression of the failure of Western Christianity to fulfill the prayer of Jesus. This prayer is that believers might be one (John 17:21). A brief survey of the various opinions on the identity of the emphatic “I” is listed later in this chapter.

Thus to summarize: *This study is an attempt, in the midst of the tempest of life, to help the Christian Church experience God, the only true Reality, a little deeper.*

¹⁷ This understanding will be seen through this study. To summarize it here is to say that the dimension of life God has given is what is described by Wesley and the Mystics as the “pinnacle” of life experienced in this life.

¹⁸ The point to be emphasized here is that the fractured Church is evidence of the disunity of the Body of Christ and the need for this study to aid the Church in the growth to holiness, unity and perfection.

2. Contribution

The contribution of this study is multi-dimensional. The first dimension of the contribution of this study is the clarifying of the identity of the emphatic “I.” This understanding will be done through the study of Rom 1-8, the context surrounding Rom 7. This will then be followed by an in-depth study of Rom 7. Out of this in-depth study of Rom 7 and the study of Rom 1-8, the experience¹⁹ of the emphatic “I” will be determined and described. This experience will then be compared to the experience described by the Mystics called the “spiritual marriage” and also compared to Wesley’s teaching on “perfection.” When this comparison is done, it will be seen that the emphatic “I” is a mature, spiritual believer.

The understanding of the identity of the emphatic “I” will help the Christian Church fulfill its purpose.²⁰ The purpose of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18-20). This purpose is echoed by Paul in Phlp 2:1-11 when he states that Christians are to become like Christ (Phlp 2:5). T. Dubay echoes this dimension of the contribution of this study.²¹ The point of Dubay’s comments is the reminder that the

¹⁹ For a definition of the terms used in this study, see the section of terms used in this chapter.

²⁰ This understanding of the identity of the emphatic “I” will contribute to the Church’s growth in sanctification. Growth in sanctification will occur when Christian believers understand, not only who the emphatic “I” is but also that the emphatic “I” is representative of all mature, spiritual believers. This understanding will aid believers in their growth in sanctification and will free them from fear of their own imperfection; see also D. Nicholl, *Holiness* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2005), 13.

²¹ T. Dubay writes: “Because men and women of heroic virtue are fully responsive to the Holy Spirit, they are the best exegetes of the divine word inspired by the same Spirit. One has only to compare the biblical commentaries of Augustine or Bernard to the often-jejune explanations of mere technicians. The latter may excel in philology or archeology, they may summarize a variety of opinions offered through the ages and in our own day as to what this or that text means, but they are no match for the personal

Bible points to and expounds a deep relational experience found within the words, facts, debates and discussions of the Bible itself.²² This experience is at times missed by some who concentrate on the “factual dimension” and do not delve into the relational meaning of the text. It is this relational element that this study hopes will contribute to the life of the Christian Church. See also, J.W. Dixon, Jr. who wrote on the dilemma facing many who teach in religion departments at universities.²³ Dixon’s article expresses very clearly that at times and places the relational dimension of the text of the Bible has been missed. In agreement with Dixon is C. Finney,²⁴ T. Langford²⁵ and a host of others.²⁶

depth and wisdom found in the patristic commentaries and in the concrete lives of the saints, whether these later were scholars or not. In fact, as I was writing these lines I referred to several contemporary exegetes for their insights into four texts we shall touch upon in the next few paragraphs. These passages deal with our deep interpersonal immersion in God, indeed, with our transformation into the Trinitarian life. I found no sufficient explanation of a single text. One exegete made no comment whatsoever on Eph 3:19, even though he was prolix about its preceding context—a remarkable omission. The impression this gives that while he and the others show some facility with factual details, they are at a loss and strangely silent in matters pertaining to deep communion with God”, (*Fire Within* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 11). See also M. Downey, “A Half Commitment? Toward a Reconfiguration of the Cistercian Charism,” *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 2 (2005): 191-203).

²² P. Ryan: “When reason and love work together, reason is absorbed into love and becomes a deeper knowledge, an understanding, an insight that is one with love,” (“Sensus Amoris: The Sense of Love in Two Texts of William Saint Therry,” *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 2 (2005): 163-172).

²³ J. Dixon posits: “Professors in religion departments are not required to be religious, but I suspect a majority are. Those who are are caught in the dilemma of faith and belief, and it is more acute for them, since their work requires verbal statements. At the same time, the price of admission that departments of religion must pay to the university is that they not serve the interests of the church (although, curiously, every other school and department is free to serve its constituent community outside the university). It is not only a price of admission (a political fact), but a requirement of their work as a mode of scholarship. However, often it may be violated, free inquiry, not the propagation of faith, is the defining characteristic of the university,” (“What Should Religion Departments Teach?” *ThTo*, 4 (1990): 364-372). In addition see H. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1981), 39-40; T. Oden, *Requiem* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 40.

²⁴ C. Finney, *Revival Lectures* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, no date given), 253.

²⁵ T. Langford has written: “J. Wesley was a practical theologian; his theology was ‘Practical Divinity.’ But what is practical theology as Wesley employed it? Practical divinity, for Wesley, treats theology as intrinsically related to life; conversely, theological themes cannot be separated out and interpreted independently as an intellectual enterprise. Practical divinity is intentionally transformative, it underwrites proclamation and the nurturing of Christian life; on the contrary, practical theology is neither a distanced reflection upon life nor an intellectual interpretation of life. Practical divinity is pragmatic in the sense that it operates on the conviction that knowledge is only gained through engagement; contrariwise, knowledge is not found through spectatorship as an abstract observer. Practical divinity holds text (biblical) and context (social and cultural) in tight tension; each requires the other for insight and interpretation. Conversely, practical theology never allows a historical text or an

The second dimension of the contribution of this study is to attempt to discover if Paul's Jewish experience played a "sub-conscious" role in his understanding of the struggle between good and evil as seen in the experience of the emphatic "I" and the cry of "O wretched man" in Rom 7. In understanding Paul's Jewish experience one will then be able to discover if Paul's Jewish experience led to the cry of "O Wretched Man" which would then state that the emphatic "I" of Rom 7 is an unregenerate person. If, however, Paul's Jewish experience did not directly lead to the cry of "O wretched man," then, there must be another reason for this cry. This "other reason" must then be Paul's Christian experience, i.e. life after justification.

The second dimension of this study, therefore, is not a completely different or unrelated dimension to the first dimension. The two dimensions of the contribution of this

independent social order to function as a matrix of interpretation", (T. Langford, ed., *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 10).

²⁶ See also F. Herzog who states: "So it is not just a matter of relating doctrine to life, but of doctrine itself being that life," ("United Methodism in Agony," in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church* (ed., T. Langford; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 26-38); S. Ogden, "Doctrinal Standards in The United Methodist Church," in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church* (ed., T. Langford; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 39-51); L. Howe, "United Methodism in Search of Theology," in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church* (ed., T. Langford; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 52-63. R. Heitzenrater, "In Search of Continuity and Consensus: The Road to the 1988 Doctrinal Statement," in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church* (ed., T. Langford; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 93-108; D. Metz, *Studies in Biblical Holiness* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1971), 106; St. John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St. John of The Cross* (trans. K. Kavanaugh and O. Rodriguez; Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1991), 667; E. Arnold, *The Early Christians: After The Death of The Apostles* (Rifton, New York: Plough Publishing, 1972), 40; H.J. Flanders, R.W. Crapps, D. Smith, *People of the Covenant: An Introduction to The Old Testament* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1973), 17; D. Bonhoeffer who writes in a letter to E. Bethge, dated July 18, 1944; *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Letters and Papers from Prison* (ed., E. Bethge; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1971), 362; G. Davenport, *Into The Darkness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 289; K. Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction* (trans., G. Foley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 199. M. Cavit, *The Three Ways* (Wilmore: Marshall Cavit, 1979), 100-102; E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of The Church, Faith and The Consummation, Vol. III* (trans., D. Cairns; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962); R. Mason, *The Church that Jesus Built* (Kansas City: The Brown-White Company, no date given), 163; D. Nicholl, *Holiness*, 25.

study come together to form a colorful and intricate mosaic while aiding the Christian Church to grow in holiness.

A third dimension is the comparing of the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 with the experience that John Wesley teaches in his doctrine of “perfection” and the Mystical experience called the “spiritual marriage”. This comparison will demonstrate that Paul, Wesley and the Mystics are all describing the same experience in Christ, drawing a vivid spiritual portrait of a believer.

3. Methodology

The focus of this study will be twofold. First, I will investigate Paul’s use of the emphatic “I” in Rom 7. The identity of the emphatic “I” refers either to the unregenerate person under the law or the regenerate person. The view that Paul is referring to the regenerate person has sub-views.²⁷ I will argue that not only is Paul referring to a regenerate person but further that he is describing the experience of a spiritually mature²⁸ Christian. Secondly, I will contend that the experience of Rom 7 is similar to the experience that Wesley portrays in his doctrine of “perfection” and to the experience pictured by Teresa of Avila, the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, and to Julian of

²⁷ See in this chapter, the section on views of the emphatic “I” in the section on the brief history of the problem.

²⁸ Mature is a word that is hard to define. My understanding is as follows: Maturity is living up to what we have attained in the Christian life (Phlp 3:15, 16). Maturity does not denote having reached the state of sinless perfection (Phlp 3:12-16). Maturity is being able to distinguish good from evil (Heb 5:14). A definition of mature which is helpful is as follows: mature is “having reached a state of full natural development” (*Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language, The New Lexicon and Encyclopedic Edition* (New York: Lexicon Publications, Inc., 1989), 617). In addition, R. McGee, *The Search For Significance* (Houston, Texas: Rapha Publishing, 1990), 29; See also L. Binstock, *The Power of Maturity* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1969).

Norwich in their conception of the “spiritual marriage”. By illuminating the parallels between Paul’s use of the emphatic “I”, Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection” and the Mystics’ concept of “spiritual marriage”, it will be seen that they all describe a similar experience.²⁹

I intend to use a wholistic approach which addresses (a) Scriptural text; Rom 7 and its context of Rom 1-8 are primary examples (b) tradition with John Wesley as the primary example and (c) experience with the Mystics as primary examples.³⁰

I will attempt to show that the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is the same experience that Paul called new life in Christ and the same experience called by Wesley as “perfection” and the Mystics as “spiritual marriage”.³¹ I will attempt to do this, first by examining the context of Rom 1-8 and discovering Rom 7’s “place” within the context and discussion found within Rom 1-8. Afterwards a concentrated examination on Rom 7 will be undertaken. The purpose of this examination will be to describe the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7. Then I will research the Pauline Corpus and examine other texts where Paul wrote of the same experience which he called new life in Christ. Afterwards an examination of the experience Wesley called “perfection” and the Mystical experience called the “spiritual marriage”, as described by Julian of Norwich,

²⁹ The use of the word “experience” is intentional. In this understanding, experience is the word that seeks to define and describe the dynamic, living encounter that occurs between the Divine and, in this study, the Christian believer. It is to be admitted that this definition is not entirely satisfactory. However, underlying this study is a recognition that not everything connected with the study of and relationship to God is reducible to terms and understanding.

³⁰ It is also possible to relate Rom 7 to Scripture, Wesley to experience and the Mystics to tradition.

³¹ The point to be held in mind is that the discussion here is on the commonality of *experience* rather than on the *canonicity* of the documents. The writings of Wesley and the Mystics are not on the same level as Paul. Paul’s writings are canonical. Wesley’s and the Mystics are not canonical. The question under discussion is not on canon. The question under discussion is: Are the experiences that Wesley and the Mystics had with God, and the *experience* that all Christian believers today can have with God, similar *experiences* with Paul’s *experience*?

Teresa of Avila and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* will be undertaken. After examining Wesley's "perfection" and the Mystical experience called the "spiritual marriage", a comparison will be made between the experience described by Paul, primarily in Rom 7, but, authenticated in his other writings as the new life in Christ, with Wesley's "perfection" and the Mystical experience called the "spiritual marriage". The purpose of this comparison will be to discover the identity of the emphatic "I" of Rom 7.

The stated parameters of this study being the comparison of the experience of the emphatic "I" of Rom 7 with Wesley's teaching on "perfection" and that of Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich and the *Cloud of Unknowing*, is based on theological reasons.³² The decision to discover the identity of the emphatic "I" by this approach, that is researching the context of Rom 1-8, then focusing the research on Rom 7 coupled with the comparison of the experience of the emphatic "I" with the experiences of Wesley's "perfection" and the Mystical "spiritual marriage", is based on the realization that a study of the text of Rom 7, within its context has *not* lead to a clear understanding and agreement of the identity of the emphatic "I". The various opinions in disagreement with each other, found within the literature regarding the identity of the emphatic "I" is proof enough to support this statement. To make up for this lack of clarity based on the textual study alone, the decision was made to add to the textual study the comparison of the

³² In addition, G. Osborne writes, in reference to Rom 1:2-4: "Paul now describes the gospel he has been sent to proclaim...he tells us it was promised beforehand in the Old Testament. Throughout Romans, Paul will be anchoring his theological points in Old Testament truth. This statement in verse 2 established the promise-fulfillment pattern that will dominate his use of the Old Testament". He says further that the "Bible as a whole and not just the New Testament, forms the gospel" (*Romans*, 29-30). One can say that the context of the epistle to Romans was Paul's theological understanding which was part of the theological understanding of the other disciples (see Gal 2:1,2) and the part of the theology of the Old Testament. Thus, the context of Rom 7 is Rom 1-8, the whole epistle to the Romans, the Pauline corpus and the common understanding of the gospel held by Paul and the disciples (see footnote #1 of this chapter).

emphatic “I” with the experiences of Wesley’s “perfection” and the Mystical “spiritual marriage” to aid in the discovery of the spiritual portrait of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7.

While the agreement and disagreement with Wesley’s “perfection” ebb and flows, the fact still remains that John Wesley has been a significant contributor to the Christian Church’s understanding of perfection. The choice of including Wesley as a stated parameter of this study, in no way lessens the contribution of others who have discussed the concept of perfection. The simple fact remains that, whether one agrees or disagrees with Wesley’s teaching on “perfection”, John Wesley is known for his emphasis upon this topic.

The choice of the other parameter of this study being the Mystics: Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* is based on the fact that these three constitute the core of the Western Christian Church’s mystical understanding.³³

In further support of these two parameters is the fact that both of these parameters discuss the same experience in Christian growth and holiness.³⁴ When it is seen that the mystical experience called the “spiritual marriage” is also an experience of love;³⁵ as is Wesley’s “perfection”, it will be clearly understood that these two experiences are the same. The comparison of the experience described by Wesley and the Mystics with the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is only natural when it is seen that all three of

³³ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (ed., H. Backhouse; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996), preface.

³⁴ A more detailed explanation to this statement is further developed in this chapter.

³⁵ A. Royo and J. Amann, *The Theology of Christian Perfection* (Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press, 1962), 558. K. McDowell, *Nothing But Christ* (St. Meinrad, Indiana: A Grail Publication, 1953), 113; Sister M. E. Mason, *Active Life and Contemplative Life* (Milwaukee: The Marquette University Press, 1961), 113; E.A. Stewart, *Jesus the Holy Fool* (Franklin, WI: Sheed and Ward, 1999), 195; G. Thils, *Christian Holiness* (trans., J.L. Farand; Tielt, Belgium: Lannoo Publishers, 1961), xi.

these sources are indeed describing a similar experience.³⁶

The parameters of this study, being Wesley, the Mystics and Rom 7, it will be seen that this study will not draw out a direct connection between Wesley and Paul or the Mystics and Paul. This means that there will be no research to discover Wesley's and the Mystics' use of and dependence on Paul and Romans. The reason for this is to research as independently as possible the *experience* described by Wesley in his doctrine of "perfection", the "spiritual marriage" of the Mystics and Paul's emphatic "I" of Rom 7. If, as will be shown by this study, these three "independent teachings"³⁷ are discussing the same experience, it will aid in the discovery of the emphatic "I" as described in Rom 7.

Now it is to be recognized that Wesley and the Mystics depended upon Paul and the epistle to the Romans, as well as the rest of the Scriptures, both Protestant and Catholic. This dependence is not doubted or questioned. The point is not to disavow any dependence on Paul or to state that Wesley and the Mystics are equal with Paul, in terms of canon,³⁸ but to examine the three experiences, as independently as possible, compare them and make a conclusion based on this examination and comparison. Wesley, Paul

³⁶ A. Royo and J. Amann write clearly that "complete Christian perfection is found only within the mystical life," (*The Theology of Christian Perfection*, 178).

³⁷ For a clear statement of Wesley's dependence on Paul see C. Meyers who puts forth the opinion that J. Wesley got his teaching on sanctification from Rom 6, 8, C. Meyers, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Bantam/Doubleday/Dell Publications; 1992), 817. For a discussion of the similarities of Paul and Wesley see M. Gorman, who calls Paul a "pastoral theologian," M. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 31ff. See also Wesley's statements concerning himself where he says that he writes "plain truth for plain folks," *The Works of John Wesley* (Franklin, Tenn.: Providence House Publishers, 1995, Vol. 5), 2. This discussion does not compare/contrast Paul and Wesley, it does, however, state that Paul wrote for people's understanding. This was also what Wesley did. This leads to the conclusion that Paul and Wesley were theologians of the same "stripe." They both were not theologians according to the common understanding of a theologian. M. Gorman says it this way: "For some people a theologian is someone who writes learned, theoretical tomes and is out of touch with the daily life of real people (and perhaps even with God). Paul was certainly not a theologian in that sense," *Apostle of The Crucified Lord*, 131.

³⁸ For a discussion on the meaning of "canon" see W. Abraham, *Canon And Criterion In Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

and the Mystics have all contributed to the Church's theology and practice, though not equally. If all are describing a similar experience, as this study holds, then, it seems that the best method is to examine them independently and then compare them, thus establishing their similarities.

The emphatic "I" is found within the context of the epistle to Romans. Thus, the beginning point of this study is the analyzing of the context of Rom 7, which is Rom 1-8.³⁹ Following this analysis will be an exegetical study of Rom 7. The study of the context of Rom 7 is important because context helps determine the meaning of specific texts and phrases. The context of Rom 7 illustrates the teaching concerning the work of God because of the human situation. When one understands the human situation, both before and after salvation, one is better able to understand the context surrounding the emphatic "I". To understand the human condition before and after salvation will help in determining the identity of the emphatic "I". Is the emphatic "I" a person who has experienced salvation or one who has not?

The context is important because it is a linguistic principle that the context helps determine the meaning of a text and/or phrase. Lexicons give a small understanding of the meaning of a word. A lexicon does not always give the everyday nuance of the word. One loses much of the everyday nuance of a word or only partially understands the meaning of

³⁹ The immediate context of Rom 7 is Rom 1-8; however, as has been discussed above, the wider context of Romans is the Gospel tradition. See G. Osborne who writes, in reference to Rom 1:2-4: "Paul now describes the gospel he has been sent to proclaim...he tells us it was promised beforehand in the Old Testament. Throughout Romans, Paul will be anchoring his theological points in Old Testament truth. This statement in verse 2 established the promise-fulfillment pattern that will dominate his use of the Old Testament," (*Romans*, 29). He also says that the "Bible as a whole and not just the New Testament, forms the gospel," (*Romans*, 30). One can say that the context of the epistle to Romans was Paul's theological understanding which was part of the theological understanding of the other disciples (see Gal 2:1,2) and the part of the theology of the OT.

that word by only looking at the lexicon. An understanding of the context in which a word and/or phrase is found helps explain the everyday nuance and usage.

The parameters of the study of the context of the Epistle of Romans will be limited to chapters 1-8, the doctrinal section of the Epistle. The reason for this is Rom 1-8 is the doctrinal section of the Epistle. Chapters 1-8 contain the “teaching” or the “seed” which is included and used for exhortations in the “practical” section of the Epistle. Another way to say this is that the “doctrinal” section of the Epistle contains all that is included in the “practical” section of the Epistle. The “practical” section of the Epistle is the practical living of the teaching contained within the “doctrinal” section. When a need arises, there will be a “cross-referencing” to the applicable sections of the “practical” section. This “cross-referencing” will consist of a further explanation of the teaching found within the “doctrinal” section, more specifically of Rom 7.

The progression of this study will be to examine Rom 1-8, then moving to Rom 7 and finally focusing on the verb tenses found within Rom 7 itself. The epistle to the Romans is a systematic explanation of the Gospel. Thus, the teaching of Rom 7 concerning the emphatic “I” and the relationship of the emphatic “I” to the rest of Romans is important. This relationship of the emphatic “I” and the rest of the epistle to the Romans is the reason the context of Rom 1-8 is studied. Chapter 2 of this study will focus on the analysis of the text of Romans. Beginning with the larger context of Rom 1-8, moving then to Rom 7 and finally, looking at the verbal usage found within Rom 7 itself.

The context will help determine if the emphatic “I” is a regenerate individual or unregenerate individual. If Paul is referring to an unregenerate person, then the

experience described in Rom 7 is not the experience of a regenerate person and could not be the experience of the “spiritual marriage” as found in the writing of Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich and *the Cloud of Unknowing*. Nor could it be Wesley's teaching of “perfection”. Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection” will be briefly discussed in this chapter and more fully in chapter 5 of this study.

If the emphatic “I” is a regenerate or unregenerate person, what then does it mean to be regenerate? Boice defines regeneration as rebirth.⁴⁰ Rebirth is a spiritual work of God in the human soul. Rebirth is not a physical second birth. A spiritual work means the regenerate person has not entered again into their mother’s womb and been born a second time. Regeneration, being a spiritual work of God in the human, is a spiritual birth.

Regeneration, as a spiritual birth, is the experience where God makes alive, spiritually, the human person. To be made alive spiritually means that the person’s fundamental desire is now to please God in Christ in all things.⁴¹

Thus it can be seen that regeneration is an act of God in which new life is experienced by the Christian believer. Because regeneration is an experience, it can be seen that an understanding of regeneration is important to this study, as this study is researching and the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 with the experience Wesley called “perfection” and the experience the Mystics called the “spiritual marriage”.

Following the contextual study of Rom 1-8, the study of the text of Rom 7 will be undertaken and will include, examining the verb tenses used throughout the chapter. This detailed look will include a discussion of the Greek verb tenses, grammatical forms and

⁴⁰ J.M. Boice, *Foundations of The Christian Faith* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 391.

⁴¹ For a fuller description of Paul’s understanding of regeneration as a new life with the fundamental desire to please God in all things, see 2 Cor 5:9.

studies of individual Greek words used within Rom 7. This detailed examination of Rom 7 will be in chapter 3 of this study.

What is important in this study of the verb tenses is the change of verb tenses of Rom 7. To state this more specifically, Rom 7:1-13 uses primarily the aorist tense. One view of the meaning of the different tenses used is that this section of Rom 7 discusses Paul's past. This opinion is not based only in the use of the aorist tense, but is also found within the context surrounding the verses.

Rom 7:14-25 begins another section of Rom 7. In this section, the primary verb tense used is the present tense. Stedman insists this section describes Paul's experience at the time of writing.⁴² Wesley, however, writes that in this section Paul is describing a man under the law.⁴³ Barth agrees with Stedman who records that Paul is not, in Rom 7:14-25, describing the situation before his conversion. What Paul is describing, according to Barth, is Paul's past, present and future existence, because Paul is describing a man broken by the law.⁴⁴ Because of the various and opposite opinions regarding the identity of the emphatic "I" of Rom 7, I include a brief survey of the various opinions later in this chapter. One question I will ask in this section is, of whom is Paul writing? One way this question will be answered is by evaluating the aorist and the present tenses of the verbs used. To help answer this question, one must ask, what are the meaning and importance of the change of the primary verb tense used in these two sections of Rom 7? The question concerning the tenses used in Rom 7 would not be of such importance if the "change" of verb tenses in these two sections was not so dramatic, or of such a wide

⁴² R. Stedman, *From Guilt to Glory* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1978), 230.

⁴³ J. Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament* (2 vols; Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1983), 33.

⁴⁴ K. Barth, *The Epistle to The Romans* (trans., E. Hoskyns; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 270.

usage. By wide usage is meant that in these two sections the primary verb tense used is the aorist in Rom 7:1-13, and the present in Rom 7:14-25. The discussion of the verb tenses in these two sections must remain a part of this study. The reason for this is the verb tense that is predominately used in both sections, coupled with the dramatic change of verb tenses, which separate this passage into two sections. In addition, if the use of the verb tense in the two sections were not so heavily weighted in one tense, then, perhaps the change in tenses would not be important.

Within this study, the question explored is, does the change in verb tense imply/reflect a change in Paul's life experience? In other words, is Paul expressing, by the change of verb tenses, a change in his life? To ask the question in another manner: Is Paul, by changing verb tenses, stating that, in his own life a dramatic change has occurred in his relationship to the Law and to Christ? Or is Paul simply using a writer's technique to teach his readers?

After the examination of the context of Rom 1-8 and the detailed study of Rom 7 has been undertaken, the next step will be to research Paul's teaching on the new life in Christ, which is found throughout the Pauline corpus. Understanding the Pauline teaching on the new life in Christ and experience of salvation in discovering the identity of the emphatic "I" of Rom 7 will aid in the discovery of the identity of the emphatic "I." An analysis of the text and the context of Rom 7 is only one part of the equation in discovering the identity of the emphatic "I." The other part of the equation is to examine and compare the experience of the emphatic "I." If, as is the opinion of this study, the emphatic "I" of Rom 7 is Paul, but not simply Paul, but Paul as a representative of mature, spiritual Christians, then the experience of the emphatic "I" will be looked at, not

only within the context of Romans, but also within the context of the wider teaching of Paul, found primarily within Colossians and Galatians, but also including the teaching of other Biblical passages that have relevance to the topic of the experience of Christians. It is the opinion of this study that Colossians⁴⁵ is part of the Pauline Corpus and will be used as such. This comparison/contrast will be made in chapter 4.

The epistle to the Romans is a description of life lived in relationship with God. If, as this study will attempt to show, Rom 7 is a description of a mature,⁴⁶ spiritual Christian, then Rom 7, within the context of Romans, describes life, but not just life, but life lived on the highest plain possible in this world.

The experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 will then be compared with John Wesley's doctrine of “perfection”. This comparison will be made in chapter 5 of this analysis. Many have misunderstood Wesley's understanding of “perfection”. However, John Wesley said that the doctrine of “perfection” was the grand *depositum*, which, God had given the Methodists and the propagating of this doctrine was the main reason that

⁴⁵ The debate over whether Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians is an ongoing debate. D. Guthrie states the position for Pauline authorship: “The strongest arguments for Pauline authorship are the indisputable nature of the external evidence and the inseparable connection of the Epistle with Philemon,” *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1970), 554. He adds “There is no shred of evidence that the Pauline authorship of the whole or any part of Colossians was ever disputed until the nineteenth century. It formed part of the Pauline Corpus as far back as can be traced, and evidence of such a character cannot lightly be swept aside” (554). See also P.J. Gräbe, “Salvation in Colossians And Ephesians,” in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. J.G. van der Watt; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 287-304. Thus, in this study the position taken is that Paul is the author of Colossians. See also W. Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 97.

⁴⁶ *Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, The New Encyclopedic Edition* (New York: Lexicon Publications, Inc.), 1989, defines mature in this manner: “having reached a state of full natural development, or relation to the time when development is complete,” (617). Paul defines mature as “living up to what we have attained” (Phlp 3:15, 16). Maturity is not sinless perfection (Phlp 3:12) but a pressing on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of us (Phlp 3:12). To use a Non-Pauline definition of mature, Heb 5:14 defines mature as being able to distinguish good from evil; G. Getz states that “the supreme mark of maturity is love”, *A Profile of Christian Maturity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 91.

God raised up the Methodists.⁴⁷ Wesley said that “perfection” is “purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. “Perfection” is the devoting not a part but all of our soul, body and substance to God.”⁴⁸ Wesley's doctrine of “perfection”, when understood as purity of intention, is the abundant life that Jesus Christ said was the reason He came to this world (John 10:10). When it is understood that Wesley's doctrine of “perfection” is the abundant life that Jesus came to bring, it can be seen that Wesley's doctrine of “perfection” can be considered Gospel.⁴⁹

The next direction that the teaching of Rom 7 and the emphatic “I” will be discussed is in relation to the Mystical experience called the “spiritual marriage”. The teaching of the “spiritual marriage” will be taken from the writings of Julian of Norwich,⁵⁰ St. Teresa of Avila,⁵¹ and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*.⁵²

The *Cloud of Unknowing*, Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle* and Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love* form the very heart of Western mysticism.⁵³ Thus, in studying these three Mystics, one is also studying that which forms the very core and center of the Mystical tradition in the Western Church. This means that the teachings of Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila and the *Cloud of Unknowing* form a very important and essential part of the teaching of the Western Church. The Mystics themselves and the

⁴⁷ J. Wesley, “Letter To Robert Carr, Dated Sept. 15, 1790,” *The Works of John Wesley*, 1995:9.

⁴⁸ J. Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Sermon, *The Works of John Wesley 11* (CD-ROM; Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995), 444.

⁴⁹ J. Wesley calls his teaching on “perfection” “the gospel”. He says, “The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness.” Faith working by love “is the length and breath and depth and height of Christian perfection,” *The Works of John Wesley*, 321.

⁵⁰ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, xx.

⁵¹ St. Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* (trans., E. Peers; New York: Image Books, 1989), 42.

⁵² Anonymous, *The Cloud of Unknowing* (ed. W. Johnston; New York: Image Books, 1973), 59.

⁵³ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, preface.

Catholic Church call the teaching of these Mystics, “Gospel”.⁵⁴ The reason for comparing the experience of the emphatic “I” with the writings of these mystics is that the “spiritual marriage” is considered as the highest spiritual plain where a human can live in this life. Another name for this highest plane is holiness.⁵⁵ The comparison of the experience of the emphatic “I” with the experience called the “spiritual marriage” will be found in chapter 6.

In chapter 7 will be found a summarization of chapters 1-6 and a comparing of Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection” with the Mystical experience called the “spiritual marriage”. To compare Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection” with the Mystics is a very natural comparison. Wesley stated that a contemplative, i.e. mystic, taught him that holiness or “perfection” was also “union” with God.⁵⁶ Thus, it can be seen that Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection” and the Mystical teaching on “union” with God⁵⁷ are not two widely divergent teachings, but that they are similar teachings. Therefore, it is only natural to compare them in this study. The comparison of Wesley’s “perfection” and the Mystical experience called the “spiritual marriage” will reveal that the “spiritual marriage” is very similar to Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection”, understood as purity of intention. It is true that Wesley says Rom 7 describes a person under the Law and not a

⁵⁴ T. Dubay, *Fire Within*, 10.

⁵⁵ T. Dubay states, “A book on advanced prayer is a book on advanced joy. It is a love story, a book about being loved and loving totally. It is a book on holiness, the heights of holiness to which the Gospel invites everyone,” *Fire Within*, 5.

⁵⁶ J. Wesley said “Soon after, a contemplative man convinced me still more than I was convinced before, that outward works are nothing, being alone; and in several conversations instructed me, how to pursue inward holiness, or a union of the soul with God,” *Journal*, May 24, 1738, *The Works of John Wesley I* (CD-ROM; Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995), 100; See also D. Nicholl, who writes that “holiness is a call to absolute union with the Holy One,” *Holiness*, 60.

⁵⁷ The “spiritual marriage” is called “union” by Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, 13, 14.

regenerate individual.⁵⁸ However, Wesley's teaching and *experience* of "perfection" does seem to echo the experience called the "spiritual marriage". The reason for this comparison is that Wesley's doctrine of "perfection" and the "spiritual marriage" appear to be discussing the same experience of life.⁵⁹ This experience is a life of spiritual closeness and authenticity.

Chapter 7 will also bring together the various strands of this study, the textual analysis, the comparison of the *experience* of new life in Christ, the comparison of the experiences of Wesley's "perfection" and the Mystical "spiritual marriage". These sources, Wesley's doctrine of "perfection", the mystical teaching on the "spiritual marriage" and Rom 7 are discussing life lived on the highest plain possible in this life.⁶⁰

Life lived on the highest plain possible, in this world, is the very message and experience of the "spiritual marriage" of the Mystics and of John Wesley's doctrine of

⁵⁸ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on The New Testament*, 33-34.

⁵⁹ T. Dubay writes: "contemplation, i.e. advanced prayer, is the gradual growth toward the heights of transforming union that produces an accompanying heroic holiness. Teresa holds strongly that sanctity blossoms along with the development of infused contemplation" (3). John Wesley writes, "Christian perfection, therefore, does not imply (as some men seem to have imagined) an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations. Indeed, it is only another term for holiness. They are two names for the same thing. Thus, every one that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect. Yet we may, lastly, observe that neither in this respect is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase," *The Works of John Wesley*, 5; Wesley's Sermon, *Christian Perfection*, 5; Vol.6, *The Works of John Wesley 11* (CD-ROM; Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995). Here it can be clearly seen that the teaching of the Mystics concerning the "spiritual marriage", i.e. advanced prayer, and Wesley's teaching on "perfection" are similar teachings. The Mystics call the "spiritual marriage" transforming union or holiness and Wesley calls "perfection" holiness as well. Thus it can be seen that the Mystics and Wesley are attempting to describe the same experience.

⁶⁰ The connection between the Mystical experience called the "spiritual marriage" or transforming union and Wesley's teaching on "perfection" with Paul can be seen in Rom 7, the purpose of this study, but also in Tit 2:12 where we read that we are to give up everything that does not lead to God. The Mystics "ask not a whit more or less," Dubay, *Fire Within*, 6. Wesley calls "perfection" as holiness and says this: "remember, the essence of Christian holiness is simplicity and purity; one design, one desire; entire devotion to God." J. Wesley, "Letters to a Member of the Society," *The Works of John Wesley 12* (CD-ROM; Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995), 289. It can be seen that the Mystics and Wesley are describing the same experience, in today's terminology called entire devotion. This is the very call of Paul as seen in Tit 2:12 and as it will be seen through this study, in Rom 7. Dubay confirms this connection when he writes that the teaching of Teresa is nothing but the Gospel, *Fire Within*, 10.

“perfection”. Thus, a comparison study of Rom 7, within the context of Romans, with the study of the “spiritual marriage” and John Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection” will then lead to the conclusion, that these three are describing a similar experience of life.⁶¹

4. Parameters

To discover the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7, certain parameters are to be set. These will provide the framework for the “spiritual portrait” of a believer as pictured by Paul in Rom 7. The parameters relate to Scripture, tradition and experience. The **Scriptural** parameters of the study: The text of the Bible is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine and study.⁶² In addition, the text of Rom 1-8 will be the focus area of study, with the emphasis on Rom 7. There will be, further, a discussion that will involve parts of the wider Pauline Corpus.

Along with the text, the **tradition** of the church guides one to a fuller understanding. This means that one cannot ignore what the church has affirmed in the past. The study of the text today must be carefully done, keeping in mind the study of the text done “yesterday” – which can be called tradition. The tradition of the church is an integral aspect of biblical studies. To quote the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church: “Christianity does not leap from the New Testament times to the present as though nothing were to be learned from that great cloud of witnesses in

⁶¹ For a good study on Paul as a mystic, see E. Underhill, *The Mystic Way* (Atlanta, Ariel Press, 1992), 132-162. In addition, A. Segal states that “mystical experience started or aided Paul’s conversion,” *Paul the Convert* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 117.

⁶² N. Alexander, ed., *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992), 77.

between. For centuries, Christians have sought to interpret the truth of the gospel for their time. In these attempts, tradition, understood both in terms of process and form, has played an important role.”⁶³ Tradition is an important dimension of both the life of the church and of the scientific study of the text. The elements of this study, which I classify as tradition, are Wesley's doctrine of “perfection”, the teaching of the “spiritual marriage” found within the writings of Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich, the author of *the Cloud of Unknowing*, and the various opinions of commentators of Romans.

Another aspect of the parameters of this study will be **experience**. Experience does not determine the meaning of the text. However, the text understood as revelation, does teach experience. Interpreting experience in the light of scriptural norms is fundamental.⁶⁴ Experience used as a parameter within this study means that the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 will be evaluated and compared with the experience that Wesley writes about in his doctrine of “perfection” and with the experience of the “spiritual marriage” found within the writings of Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich and the author of *the Cloud of Unknowing*. I have chosen the experience of “perfection”, according to Wesley and the experience of the “spiritual marriage” found within the writings of the Mystics because these experiences, according to Wesley and the Mystics themselves, are the highest spiritual state a human being can attain in this life. This experience will then be compared with the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 to see if the two experiences are the same experience. If they are the same experience, then the conclusion must be that the emphatic “I” is a mature, spiritual believer.

⁶³ N. Alexander, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 79. See also A. Outler, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral—In John Wesley,” in *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church* (ed., T. Langford; Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991), 75-90.

⁶⁴ N. Alexander, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 81.

The stated parameters of this study, which are scripture, tradition and experience, lead to the question: are these three of equal value? The answer to that question, according to the Protestant thought is no. However, tradition and experience are aspects of the meaning that are found within the text,⁶⁵ which is not dead but living. This expresses the understanding that meaning is inherent within the text itself and one can verify this meaning by tradition and experience. Tradition and experience do not determine the meaning of the text, nor are they equals to the text. However, tradition and experience are part of the meaning found within the text itself and contribute to the discovery of the meaning found within the text.

5. Justification for the chosen methodology

It is to be admitted that this study does not fall within the traditional boundaries of an exclusive New Testament research project. However, as it relates to both the areas of *New Testament theology and hermeneutics* it is not out of place to investigate the relation between Romans 7 in comparison with Wesley and the Mystics. This study is simultaneously *an interdisciplinary study*. It attempts to be a *wholistic approach* to the thesis in the relation to various disciplines. Because of this wholistic approach, this study will relate to Systematic Theology, (or Dogmatics), Church History and Spirituality. There are certain drawbacks to this study. One drawback is that the wholistic approach will make it difficult to “locate” this study traditionally and exclusively only in a specific

⁶⁵ For a fuller discussion see R.A. Muller and J.L. Thompson, eds., *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 335ff. See also T.Campbell, “Scripture as an Authority in Relation to Other Authorities: A Wesleyan Evangelical Perspective,” *QR* 3 (1991): 33-40.

academic discipline. Another drawback is that this study, being a wholistic study, will incorporate various approaches, thoughts and methodologies from Systematic Theology and Church History. The drawback to this type of study is that there will be times and aspects of this study that these inter-disciplinary connections will create a sense of broadness and of generality, that is a sense of being general. This approach has not always been openly embraced. It is to be openly admitted that this approach is an experiment, but, an experiment that I am convinced will accomplish the stated goals. In addition, underlying this interdisciplinary approach is an understanding that, not only the broader Pauline corpus, but also the broader theology of the NT ought to be taken into account during our investigation of the spiritual portrait of the believer that Paul wrote about in Rom 7. This understanding is spoken of by Paul in Gal 1:11-2:2 where he states that the Gospel he received is from God and not from humankind and that when he, Paul, went up to Jerusalem and spoke with the apostles, they did not contribute anything to Paul's understanding of the Gospel.⁶⁶ Finally, the approach of this study being interdisciplinary⁶⁷ and concerned with the sanctification of the Christian Church is an attempt to offer the Church a small taste of that experience offered by God of the pinnacle of life's purpose. Dubay writes: "Disregard for life's ultimate realities, life's most enriching experiences as epitomized by the saints, is runaway escapism."⁶⁸ Similarly, Cushman writes that John

⁶⁶ A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), 34.

⁶⁷ N. Brox writes that "the center of Pauline theology is the center of all Christian preaching and faith. There is nothing central in Paul's preaching that is not also central for the other NT writers," *Understanding the Message of Paul* (trans., J. Blenkinsopp; Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 43; J. Dunn, *The Theology Of Paul's Letter To The Galatians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 34.

⁶⁸ T. Dubay, *Fire Within*, 4.

Wesley was an example of the inter-twining of doctrine and Christian experience.⁶⁹

6. Terminology

6.1 Spiritual Marriage

Those who support the viewpoint of a “spiritual marriage”,⁷⁰ have a particular understanding of what the concept means. Here follows a brief summary of the experience of “spiritual marriage”. The “spiritual marriage” is an experience of union between the believer and God. This union with God “is effected by likeness: We must be made like unto God if we are to be united to Him.”⁷¹ This likeness to God is a likeness where God takes complete possession of the soul.⁷² When a person is completely possessed by God, this “being possessed” is seen both in the words which a person speaks, in the deeds which they do and is seen in the resolution of the will to be God's person completely.⁷³ Another way to say this is that when a person is completely possessed by God, their words and deeds, that is their outer lives, reflect being possessed by God. Their words and deeds become words and deeds of love for the neighbor. Being

⁶⁹ R. Cushman has written: “In his little essay *The Character of a Methodist*, first published in 1742, Wesley provided an example of his understanding of the relationship between doctrine and the life of Christian experience. In the essay, doctrine and life are viewed inseparable; the one demands the other. Wesley is saying that the character of a Methodist is (or should be) exhibitivite of the individual's Christian doctrine; and, conversely, that essential doctrine is (or should be) constitutive of the Christian life”, *John Wesley's Experimental Divinity* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1989), 62, 63.

⁷⁰ I list only a few. T. Merton, T. Dubay, Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich, John of the Cross, the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*; Mother Teresa; H.W. Smith.

⁷¹ T. Dubay, *Fire Within*, 53.

⁷² St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, 59. See also St. Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (trans. A. Mottola; New York: Doubleday, 1989), 103 who writes: “Love consists in a mutual interchange by the two parties, that is to say, that the lover gives to and shares with the beloved all that he has or can attain, and that the beloved act toward the lover in like manner.”

⁷³ St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, 61.

possessed by God is also reflected in the will of the person to be God's person. To be God's person means that the person has set their heart, which is the will, on living for God and attempting to please God in all things.

6.2 Perfection

In Wesley's understanding, holiness and "perfection" were names for the same experience.⁷⁴ He defines "perfection" as purity of intention,⁷⁵ which he meant as the dedicating of all the life to God.⁷⁶ He further defines "perfection" as:

In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting not a part but all of our soul, body and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the

⁷⁴ J. Wesley's sermon, *Christian Perfection*, Vol. 6, 5; See also R.E. Cushman, *Wesley's Experimental Divinity*, 48.

⁷⁵ "Intention is an act of the will, for to tend to something belongs to the motive power of the human act, which is the will. It is defined as the efficacious desire to attain the end through the means. Intention is concerned not only with the ultimate end but also with intermediate ends," F. Cunningham, *The Christian Life* (Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press, 1959), 52.

⁷⁶ J. Wesley's writing, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Vol. 11, p. 444. See also R. Cushman who defines holiness as: "On its negative side, holiness is a sensibility of and aversion to the unholy. On its positive side it is a cleaving to the Holy. Hence it activates the first Great Commandment. It is in fact, the acknowledgement and embodiment of this commandment as a *way of life*. This is 'experimental divinity' in practice," *Wesley's Experimental Divinity*, 36. See also D.S. Metz, *Studies in Biblical Holiness*, 94, who writes: "The essence of this state of holiness or perfection is love to God and man, purity of motivation, and cleansing from inherent sin. But because of finite qualities which still bear the scars of sin; this same believer will *not perfectly* fulfill God's law. Thus perfection in one respect, and imperfection in another, may consistently meet in the same person," 228. In fact, Metz titles his chapter on perfection, *Imperfect Perfection*, 221.

full likeness of him who created it. In yet another, it is loving God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves. Take it in which of these views you please (for there is no material difference) and this is the whole and sole perfection...which I have believed and taught for these forty years, from the year 1725 to the year 1765.⁷⁷

Wesley also taught that “perfection” was the humble, patient love of God and neighbor ruling in the heart and life of the believer and thus controlling the believer’s actions, words and thoughts.⁷⁸ For Wesley, “perfection” was an experience of the soul. This means that “perfection” was always seen and experienced in the life of the believing sinner. Wesley also taught that when one arrived at “perfection”, one knew experientially that they had arrived.

6.3 Experience

The use of the word “experience” is intentional. In this understanding, experience is the word that seeks to define and describe the dynamic, living encounter that occurs between the Divine and, in this study, the Christian believer. It is to be admitted that this definition is not entirely satisfactory. However, underlying this study is a recognition that not everything connected with the study of and relationship to God is reducible to terms and understanding. Dubay says concerning experience: “We cannot, of course, offer a logical definition of experience via genus and specific difference. Like existence and being,

⁷⁷ J. Wesley’s sermon, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Vol. 11, 444.

⁷⁸ J. Wesley’s writing, *Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, Vol. 11, no page number given; see also M. Cavit, *The Three Ways*, 100-102; H. Stimmel *The Goals of Jesus* (Nashville: Tidings, 1961), 46-55.

experience is so basic that it falls into no ready category.”⁷⁹ He goes on to summarize his understanding of experience when he says, “experience is an awareness caused by contact with an objective other, and in this contact affectivity predominates.”⁸⁰ By affectivity Dubay means the affections, the feelings that are aroused by this contact.⁸¹ One last comment by Dubay on experience is needed at this point and will be expanded on in chapters 2-6 of this study. He says, “Experiences change us for better or for worse.”⁸² This concept/comment is important to this study because underlying this study is the understanding that human beings, and in the case of this study, Christian believers, are changed in their encounter with the Living God. It is this change that the Mystics call the “spiritual marriage”, Wesley calls “perfection” and Paul in Rom 7 is describing by use of the emphatic “I”.

6.4 Mature

Mature is a word that is hard to define. My understanding of mature is as follows. Maturity is living up to what we have attained in the Christian life (Phlp 3:15, 16). Maturity does not denote having reached the state of sinless perfection (Phlp 3:12-16). Maturity is being able to distinguish good from evil (Heb 5:14). A definition of mature which is helpful is as follows: mature is “having reached a state of full natural development.”⁸³

⁷⁹ T. Dubay, *Fire Within*, 39.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 39, 40.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸³ *Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, The New Lexicon and Encyclopedic Edition* (New York: Lexicon Publications, Inc., 1989), 617; See also footnote # 46 of chapter 1 of this study.

6.5 Tradition

Along with the text, the tradition of the church guides one to a fuller understanding; one cannot ignore what the church has affirmed in the past. The study of the text and the results of that study that has been done yesterday can be called tradition. The tradition of the Christian Church, found in the study done and the results of that study which has been done “yesterday” is an integral aspect of not only biblical studies and theological studies, but also the life of the Christian Church.⁸⁴

6.6 Scripture

The text of the Protestant Bible is the primary understanding of Scripture. The Protestant understanding of Scripture contains the traditionally held 39 “books” of the Old Testament and the 27 “books” of the New Testament. In addition, Scripture is also a theological concept that has influenced cultures and societies.

6.7 Regeneration

Regeneration, as a spiritual birth, is the experience where God makes alive, spiritually, the human person. To be made alive spiritually means that the person’s fundamental desire is now to please God in Christ in all things.

⁸⁴ N. Alexander, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 79. See also A. Outler, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral—In John Wesley,” *Doctrine and Theology in The United Methodist Church*, 75-90.

7. Brief Survey of the Problem

Since the identity of the emphatic “I” is of such utmost importance to the church and thus to the world, there have been many views given by theologians for the emphatic “I” of Rom 7. These views are grouped into two main categories, namely: A regenerate person, or an unregenerate person.

Each of the two categories for the identity of the emphatic “I” contains many views that are similar, but also have aspects that are different. Within the category of “regenerate person” of the identity of the emphatic “I,” there are views that agree that the emphatic “I” is a regenerate person, though differing in various aspects. This is also true for the category of “unregenerate person.” There are views that state that the emphatic “I” is an unregenerate person, however, these views do not agree with other views as to whom this unregenerate person is.

Following will be a survey of the views of the emphatic “I” according to the two main categories. This survey will also look at many of the views that are contained within each main category. The survey begins with looking at the view that states that the emphatic “I” is an unregenerate person.

7.1 Unregenerate Person

7.1.1. Person under the Law

The survey of opinions regarding the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 begins with the view held by John Wesley. Wesley's view of the emphatic “I” is that this person is a person under the

law.⁸⁵ Wesley said that the emphatic “I” is a man under the law; one who is trying to serve God, but is failing to do so. By a man under the law, Wesley meant the person who is in the process of repentance.⁸⁶ The man/woman under the law comes to a realization that he or she is a sinner and that God is not only merciful, but also, in Wesley's words, “a consuming fire”. This person is beginning to understand the inner, spiritual meaning of the law of God and sees how far short of God's glory s/he has fallen. S/he understands that s/he deserves God's punishment for his/her sins and s/he desires to escape God's wrath. The person under the law has not yet repented and thus is not born-again.

Clarke, following Wesley, holds to the opinion that if Paul is describing himself in his regenerate state, this view has most pitifully and most shamefully not only lowered the standard of Christianity, but has also destroyed its influence.⁸⁷ Clarke writes that the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 refers to all who are under the law.⁸⁸ Also Austin Busch who writes that Rom 7:5-25 is a meditation on the primeval transgression.⁸⁹ Busch's opinion is that in Rom 7:5-25 Paul assumes the identity of Eve in the scene of the transgression recorded in Gen 3.

A slight variation of this view is one that is held by Thomas Schreiner. He holds the view that the emphatic “I” does not refer to all Christian unbelievers, but only to those

⁸⁵ J. Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, 33-34; See also, M. Black, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 94; M. Gorman, *Apostle of The Crucified Lord*, 371-374; J. Lambrecht, *The Wretched “I” and its Liberation: Paul in Romans 7 and 8* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 90.

⁸⁶ J. Wesley, “Spirit of Bondage and Adoption”, Sermon, *The Works of John Wesley 5* (CD-ROM; Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995), 101.

⁸⁷ A. Clarke, *Commentary: Romans through Colossians* (Albany, Oregon: Sage Software, 1996), 205-6). See also H. Lockyer, *All The Apostles Of The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 213.

⁸⁸ A. Clarke, *Commentary: Romans through Colossians*, 198. J.C. Beker also is of this opinion, *Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1980), 106.

⁸⁹ A. Busch, “The Figure of Eve in Romans 7:5-25,” *BibInt* 12 (2004): 1-36.

who delight in the law, but are unable to keep it.⁹⁰ The objection to this view is that no one is able to keep the law (Rom 3:10-18; Gal 3:10-14; 19-29).

Another variation of this view is put forth by Byrne who claims that the emphatic “I” is a “reflection, from a Christian perspective upon the experience of life under the law apart from the grace of Christ.”⁹¹ He puts forth three reasons for his position: “1. There is the clarity of Paul’s earlier insistence that believers have been freed from the law, 2. There is the notorious ‘absence’ from Rom 7:14-25 of all references to the Spirit, 3. Only the ‘pre-Christian’ reference of Rom 7:14-25 preserves the contrast Paul has set up in Rom 7:5b between life in the ‘flesh’ and life in the ‘spirit’.”⁹² In an attempt to answer Byrne’s objections, a few thoughts will be given here. This whole study, however, is an attempt to answer Byrne’s objections regarding the emphatic “I” being a regenerate Christian believer. 1. Byrne writes that Paul has set forth that believers are free from the law and thus, the emphatic “I” must be unregenerate. I would like to know which law the believer has been set freed from in Rom 7? Paul writes of a number of laws in Rom 7. He writes of the law of God, the law in the mind, which serves God in Christ or the law in the flesh (Rom 7:25). Is the believer freed from all of them? If not, which one/ones? Byrne is not clear in his statements. 2. In Rom 1-4 there is also no reference to the “Spirit.” In response to Byrne: Does this mean that the Spirit is absent from these pages and from what these pages are describing? It seems that the lack of the word “spirit” is a weak peg to hang your hat on. According to Wesley, prevenient grace, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, is present in all people, from the very beginning and before they are

⁹⁰ T. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 1998), 388.

⁹¹ B. Byrne, *Romans* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 226.

⁹² *Ibid.*

aware of it.⁹³ 3. Byrne claims only the pre-Christian reference preserves the picture that Paul has set forth.⁹⁴ However, this study will show that it is only the picture of a mature, regenerate Christian believer that preserves the picture that Paul is putting forth.

Sanders objects to this view forth. He is of the opinion that “Jewish altar ritual did not stand out as being excessive, burdensome or anxiety producing.”⁹⁵ This appears to agree with Paul’s own assessment as found in Phlp 3:4-6 and Gal 1:13-14. Sanders goes a step further when he makes the claim that Judaism’s most distinctive point was the extending of the law to every part of a person’s life and as such it was more concerned with what people did than with what people thought.⁹⁶

7.1.2. Unregenerate Humanity faced with the Mosaic Law

Fitzmyer holds the view that Paul is writing of unregenerate humanity faced with the Mosaic Law, but seen by a Christian.⁹⁷ Stifler also falls into this category, however with a slight variation. He says that Rom 7 “shows in detail the operation of the law on the Romans.”⁹⁸ These views assume that unregenerate humanity knows the Mosaic Law and desires to keep it.⁹⁹ Rom 7:15 states that what “I” do, “I” do not understand, nor do “I”

⁹³ J. Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” Sermon, *The Works of John Wesley* 6 (CD-ROM; Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1995), 44.

⁹⁴ See also E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 192 who holds the same position as Byrne.

⁹⁵ E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE-66 CE* (London: SCM Press, 1992), 191.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 420.

⁹⁷ J. Fitzmyer, *Romans: The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 465. See also K. Kuula whose opinion is that the “I” is a pre-Christian person, M. Reasoner, review of K. Kuula, *The Law, The Covenant and God’s Plan, Volume 2, Paul’s Treatment of the Law and Israel in Romans*, *CBQ* 68 (2006): 151-152.

⁹⁸ J. Stifler, *The Epistle to The Romans* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 102.

⁹⁹ A question regarding Fitzmyer’s position and all those who say that the emphatic “I” is unregenerate is: Does unregenerate humanity truly exert this much effort and care in seeking God’s law, something that unregenerate humanity hates or has so little concern for? See J.D. Pentecost, (Pentecost, *Designed To Be Like Him*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), for an opposing position to Fitzmyer. Pentecost writes: “From

desire (θέλω) to do it. However, what “I” hate, this “I” do. Θέλω denotes the active resolution, the will urging onto action.¹⁰⁰ If Fitzmyer is correct, then what Rom 7:15 means is that unregenerate humanity hates sin and truly desires to do what God wants them to do. However, the Scriptures, which are to be understood as the Scriptures of many within the Protestant wing of the church, are very clear when it states that there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God (Rom 3:11). In Rom 3:11 the word translated “seeks” is ἐκζητέω, which means “to seek out, search for, desire, seek to get”.¹⁰¹ Louw and Nida define ἐκζητέω as “to exert considerable effort and care in learning something—to make a careful search, to seek diligently to learn, to make an examination.”¹⁰² In this study, the experience of the emphatic “I” will be compared with the experience of Wesley’s perfect believer and the experience of those who have experienced the “spiritual marriage”. This experience will then be compared with the desire of the regenerate and the unregenerate. Then, the desire of the emphatic “I” will be compared with the desire of those who have experienced the “spiritual marriage” and the desire of the perfect, found within Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection.”

What does the emphatic “I” desire? This question is important in determining the identity of the emphatic “I.” The reason for this is that the desire of the emphatic “I” is expressive of the experience of the emphatic “I.” The text of Romans and other passages

these passages (the passages in his book on pages 72-74), it is very clear that because of Adam’s sin the will of the creature was deadened toward God. The natural man cannot obey God. The natural man has no desire to obey God. He is by nature a rebel. He is lawless, and he manifests his lawlessness and rebellion against God by living under the dominion of sin, serving as a vassal of sin.” Now, the fulcrum of the discussion seems to be whether the unregenerate desire God. The answer to that according to the Bible is no. See also Rom 3:10-18.

¹⁰⁰ G.R. Berry, *A Dictionary of New Testament Greek Synonyms* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 25.

¹⁰¹ W. Arndt and W. Gingrich, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 240.

¹⁰² J. Louw and E. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 331.

found within the Protestant Scriptures describe very clearly the desire of the regenerate and unregenerate. This desire will then be compared with the desire of the emphatic “I” in helping to determine the identity of the emphatic “I.”

7.1.3. History of the Jews under the Law

Moo is of the opinion that the emphatic “I” of Rom 7:14-25 is “the history and experience of the Jews under the Law”.¹⁰³ Moo goes on to say that the main topic of Rom 7:14-25 is “not human nature or anthropology, but the Mosaic Law”.¹⁰⁴ This, according to Moo, means that whoever the emphatic “I” of Romans is really, is of secondary importance. What is important in this section, according to Moo, is the Mosaic Law. Moo would have us believe that what Paul is teaching in this section is that people must be released from bondage to the Mosaic Law to be joined to Christ. Now, it is reasonable to assume, that no Christian would disagree with Moo's statement. However, one could question where Moo is placing the emphasis in this chapter. Should the emphasis be placed on the Mosaic Law, when throughout this chapter, Paul is writing in an emphatic style, concerning “I”? To place the emphasis on the Mosaic Law seems to miss the emphasis written in the text itself. The text, by repeating so often, places the emphasis on the “I”, not on the Mosaic Law. One can also question whether every mention of “law” in Rom 7 is a reference to the Mosaic Law or is a reference to “another law”.

Another objection to Moo's position is that Paul in Rom 2:17-29 describes a totally different picture of Jewish self-complacency. In this description, the Jews boasted in God (Rom 2:17), they not only know God's will, they also approve those things which

¹⁰³ D. Moo, *The New International Commentary: Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 423.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 423.

are essential (Rom 2:18), they have been taught from the Law (Rom 2:18), they were confident that they were a guide to the blind, a light to those who were in darkness (Rom 2:19), and they considered themselves correctors of the foolish, teachers of the immature (Rom 2:20). This description of the Jew, by Paul himself, gives a totally different picture of the experience and cry of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7. Paul’s description of the Jews in Rom 2 is not enough to lay aside the view that the emphatic “I” is the history of the Jews under the law.

A variation of Moo’s position is the position of Conybeare, who is of the opinion that Rom 7 is “the description of the struggle of Paul as a Pharisee, growing in awareness of the law.”¹⁰⁵ The same objections to Moo’s position will also be seen to fit for Conybeare’s position.

7.1.4. An Unregenerate Person under Conviction

A slight variation of a man under the law is Buswell’s view. He claims that the wretched man of Rom 7 is Paul under conviction of the Holy Spirit prior to his conversion on the road to Damascus.¹⁰⁶ Buswell’s view, again, does not take into serious consideration the change of verb tenses in Rom 7. Nor does his view address the same struggle with sin that Paul describes in Rom 8.

Other objections to this view: the consistent use of the present tense throughout Rom 7:14-25 in contrast to the use of the past tense in Rom 7:7-13. This will be explained further in chapter 2 of this study, however, let it be stated here that if Paul wanted to continue to describe his past in Rom 7:14-25, he could have used the past tense

¹⁰⁵ W.J. Conybeare, and J.S. Howson, *The Life and Letters of St. Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 52.

¹⁰⁶ J.O. Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 115.

like he did in Rom 7:7-13. A better explanation is needed to explain the dominant use of the past tense in Rom 7:7-13 and present tense in Rom 7:14-25 than vividness.¹⁰⁷ A further objection to this view is the order found in Rom 7:25, where the emphatic “I” praises God for Jesus Christ, then summarizes his struggle with indwelling sin. The point is: what unregenerate person praises and thanks God for Jesus Christ and sees Christ as the answer to his/her struggle with sin?¹⁰⁸

7.2 Regenerate Person

The survey of the opinions regarding the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 now will cover the views that the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is a regenerate person.¹⁰⁹

7.2.1. Paul the Believer

The Reformation changed the way many people understood various doctrines held by the existing church. One view that the Reformation has changed is the way certain people understood the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7. Many of those who trace their theological heritage to the Reformation hold the view that the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is Paul, the believer. This is the view supported by Guthrie,¹¹⁰ Dunn,¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ See C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), 157, for a further discussion of this position.

¹⁰⁸ An objection to the view that the emphatic “I” is unregenerate is C.E.B. Cranfield’s position. He claims that the reason many would hold the position that the emphatic “I” is unregenerate because of “the failure to grasp the full seriousness of the Christian’s obligation to express his gratefulness to God by the obedience of life” *The Epistle to the Romans*, 169.

¹⁰⁹ One of the main objections to the view that the emphatic “I” is a regenerate person is Paul’s description of being a slave under the power of sin, C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 158.

¹¹⁰ D. Guthrie, ed., *The New Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 1028.

¹¹¹ J. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans 1-8* (Dallas: Word Books, 1998), 406.

Murray,¹¹² Cranfield,¹¹³ Bartlett,¹¹⁴ Bruce,¹¹⁵ and Smart.¹¹⁶ These are just a few who are of this opinion.

7.2.2. Paul as a Representative of all Believers

The view that the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is Paul the believer speaking from his own experience, but, as a representative of believers in general.¹¹⁷ Dunn agrees with this view when he writes that throughout this section (Rom 7:7-25), Paul uses the first person singular, I/me. Dunn is of the opinion that it was clear enough in Rom 7:7-13 that the emphatic “I” was Adam, not Paul himself as such or indeed any individual in particular, but man (Adam), every human being, fallen humanity.¹¹⁸ Dunn would have the reader believe that the transition to the first person “I” in Romans 7:7 from the more general “we” of Rom 7:1-6 signals to the readers that what seems as a generalization from Paul's personal experience is intended also as a statement of typical experience.¹¹⁹ Dunn holds the opinion that the emphatic “I” is not just Paul or even Paul in particular, but every human being, which includes Paul. Thus, as Paul describes his own experience as a believer in Christ, what he is really doing is sharing the common experience of all believers.

¹¹² J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 258.

¹¹³ C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1985), 155.

¹¹⁴ C.N. Bartlett, *Romans: Power for Modern Man* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), 76.

¹¹⁵ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 151.

¹¹⁶ J. Smart, *A Doorway To A New Age*, 75.

¹¹⁷ D. Guthrie, *The New Bible Commentary*, 1028. See also D.B. Garlington who is of the opinion that the emphatic “I” is both Paul's personal experience and Paul the representative of all. He further claims that the discussion which states that the “I” is Paul the representative of everyone but is not Paul's personal experience is “convoluted,” *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1994), 113. See also P. Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. F. Kramer; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 162, who is of the opinion that the emphatic “I” is “converted.”

¹¹⁸ J. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans*, 404.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 399.

7.2.3. Paul acting out of character as a Christian

Moule argues that Rom 7:14-25 is Paul's "confession, not of a long past, not of an imagined experience, but of his normal experience always, when he acts out of character as a regenerate man".¹²⁰ One then needs to ask, what is the normal experience of a regenerate person? Moule affirms that Rom 8 is "how to walk to please God".¹²¹ This seems to be Moule's answer as to the normal experience of a regenerate person.

7.2.4. Paul the Believer when he "seeks" holiness by the Law

McClain offers the opinion that the identity of the emphatic "I" of Rom 7:14-25 is "of a regenerate man who is trying to be holy by keeping the law".¹²² McClain's view, also, does not take into consideration the change of verb tenses used in this chapter. One can also question whether, in Rom 7, every mention of the word "law" is a reference to the Mosaic Law? In Rom 7, law is a term that describes a power that resides in the members of the body (Rom 7:23). These two facts make us question McClain's view.

7.2.5. Paul the Believer viewing himself from the holiness of God's Law

Another view is of Ferguson, who asserts that "the apostle is viewing himself from one particular aspect, namely in the light of the holy and spiritual law of God. In that light, even as a believer, indwelling sin is revealed in all its ugly rebellion against God."¹²³

Herschel Hobbs would also belong to this category of scholars. He states that the

¹²⁰ C.G. Moule, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, 194-5.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹²² A. McClain, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), 150.

¹²³ S. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 160.

experience Paul is describing is “post-conversion.”¹²⁴ He also goes on to claim that Paul, through the experience of the emphatic “I” is describing Christians who are still living in a fleshly body.¹²⁵

7.3 Barth’s View

The discussion concerning the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 would be much easier if the only views held were the above: that is, that Paul is either talking about an unregenerate person or a regenerate person. This however, is not so. Barth is of the opinion that, “Paul is describing his past, present and future existence. He portrays a situation as real after the episode on the road to Damascus as before it. He is writing about a man broken in two by the law”.¹²⁶ In many ways, Barth's position is a combination of the views that Paul is describing an unregenerate person and a regenerate person. Although it is questionable whether Wesley and others who hold the view that the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is an unregenerate person would embrace Barth's view. Barth's view does not explain the drastic change of verb tenses beginning at Rom 7:14. In Rom 7:6-13 the aorist tense is predominately used. Beginning with Rom 7:14, the present tense is predominately used.

A variation of this view is the view espoused by Griffith-Jones who claims that Paul is describing all humanity by his use of the “I.”¹²⁷ The “I,” according to Griffith-Jones, is a person that exists only in the letter of Romans.¹²⁸ Griffith-Jones is of the

¹²⁴ H. Hobbs, *New Men in Christ* (Waco: Word Books, 1974), 96.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹²⁶ K. Barth, *The Epistle to The Romans*, 270.

¹²⁷ R. Griffith-Jones, *The Gospel According to Paul* (New York: Harper/San Francisco, 2004), 420.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 419.

opinion that Paul, by his use of the “I” is attempting to draw people into a right mind which will converge in baptismal rebirth.¹²⁹

8. Concluding statement

The discovery of the identity of the emphatic “I” is a topic that needs to be researched and discovered. This research will be made from within the text of Romans and then compared with the experience of the regenerate found within Pauline and non-Pauline texts within the Protestant Bible. Finally, the experience of the emphatic “I” will then be compared with Wesley’s doctrine of “perfection” and the experience of the “spiritual marriage”, found within the writings of Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich and *the Cloud of Unknowing*. When this study and comparison has been done, the conclusion will be one of two positions. The first position is that the experience of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is the experience of a mature, spiritual Christian believer or secondly that this comparison will show that the experience of the emphatic “I” is of a non-regenerate person.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 419.

Chapter 2: The Context of Rom 7

1. Outline of Rom 1-8

The most immediate context of Rom 7 is Rom 1-8. To begin to gain an understanding of Rom 1-8 as the context of Rom 7, a bird's eye view is offered. This bird's eye view is in the form of an outline. The following outline is this author's but is only one of many. The purpose of this outline is to demonstrate, in a preliminary way, the order and "flow" of Romans. This outline only covers Rom 1-8, which is the portion of Romans that is under investigation.

1.1-7: Introduction

1.8-15 Prayer of Thanksgiving

1.16-17: Power of the Gospel

1.18-2.28: Need for righteousness

1.19-32: Failure of Gentiles

2.1-28: Failure of Jews

3.1-3.31: True circumcision

3.1-8: Advantage of Jews

3.9-20: Condemnation of Jews and Gentiles

3.21-31: Provision for righteousness

3.21-4.25: Means of justification

4.1-25: Righteousness of God is portrayed

4.1-8: Justification of Abraham

4.9-12: Futility of circumcision

4.13-15: Futility of law

4.16-25: "Example" of justification

5.1-8.39: God's grace in salvation

5.1-11: Grace's nature and the need of grace

5.12-14: Sin and death through Adam

5.15-17: Grace and life through Christ

5.18-21: Summary of this section on grace

6.1-2: Question of sin and grace

6.3-5: Meaning of baptism

6.6-11: Dying and living with Christ

6.12-14: Call to Christian commitment

6.15-23: Question of loyalty

- 7.1-25: Conflict of desires
- 7.1-6: Analogy of marriage and death
- 7.7-13: Purpose of law
- 7.14-23: Inner warfare
- 7.24-25: Hope of victory
- 8.1-8: Though struggle with sin, there is freedom in the spirit
- 8.9-13: The indwelling spirit
- 8.14-18: Adoption through the spirit
- 8.19-25: Redemption in the spirit
- 8.26-27: Intercession of spirit
- 8.28-30: Purpose of God's love
- 8.31-39: Power of god's love

2. Rom 1-4

One area of research to discover the identity and to construct the spiritual portrait of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is within the text of Romans itself. The journey to the discovery of the identity of the emphatic “I” will begin with an analysis of the text of Rom 1-8.¹ A brief look at the context of Rom 1-8 will now be undertaken. The purpose of this is to find Rom 7's “place” within the “flow” of the epistle to the Romans.

¹ M. Gorman claims that Rom 5-8 “spells out the meaning and character of justification,” M. Gorman, *Apostle of The Crucified Lord*, 363. Gorman, also, in his discussions states that Rom 5-8 is a whole, thus, one must see Rom 7 within the discussion of justification. See also D.B. Garlington, who also claims that Rom 5-8 is a whole, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance*, 114, 115. He further states that “the substructure of Romans 5-8 can be viewed as the passing of the old creation and the advent of the new. This program particularly comes to light in the series of antitheses constructed by Paul. (1) 5:1-21: the justification of life in Christ vs. the condemnation of death in Adam. (2) 6:1-7:6: resurrection life and deliverance from sin in Christ vs. death and bondage to sin and the law. (3) 7:7-8:39: life and liberty in union with Christ and the indwelling Spirit vs. captivity to the flesh, even in spite of indwelling sin and the believer’s groaning for the redemption of the body (7:14-25: 8:18-25). In each division of chaps 5-8, the motif of the believer’s definitive break with the past and his entrance into a new state of affairs stands out in prominent relief: an old pattern of existence is broken in order that a new mode of life may begin. Or, as stated in the previous chapter, from a slightly adjusted vantage point chaps. 5-8 are to be regarded as a unified block bound together by a common theme: the hope of eternal life on the basis of justification, despite the present reality of suffering and the prospect of physical death,” D.B. Garlington, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance*, 115.

In Rom 1-4, Paul presents² the teaching of justification/righteousness by faith. Rom 1-4 presents the human situation in sin, the purpose of the Law, the truth that there is no righteousness in obeying the Law, but righteousness comes only by faith. Rom 1-4 also presents God's answer to the human situation, Jesus Christ.

It is in Rom 1:16, 17 that the central thesis of Romans is presented.³ The central thesis of Romans is the Gospel.⁴ The Gospel is the power of God for salvation. The term, salvation in Romans, is a comprehensive term that describes the total work of God in restoring humanity to right relationships. These restored relationships include right relationships between God and the individual; between the individual and others; between the individual and self; and between the individual and the cosmic order, which includes

² L. Keck is of the opinion that Paul, in Romans, writes about “Jesus exactly what Paul needs to advance his argument and no more,” L. Keck, “Jesus in Romans,” *JBL* 3 (1989): 443-460. It is for these reasons, according to Keck, that Paul, in Romans does not discuss topics such as the Eucharist and others. For a view that is not altogether in opposition, yet, not fully supportive of Keck, see E. Wong, who is of the opinion that Paul just alludes to Jesus’ tradition in Romans. He is also of the opinion that Paul “de-radicalized” Jesus’ ethical sayings, E. Wong, “The De-Radicalization of Jesus’ Ethical Sayings in Romans,” *NovT* 3 (2001): 245-263.

³ K. Stendahl disagrees with this statement. He claims that the “climax of Romans is Rom 9-11” and “the focus of Romans is the relation between the Jews and the Gentiles, not the notion of justification.” K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976), 4. Stendahl’s position is in opposition to Paul’s claim of Rom 1:1-17 in which Paul writes that the gospel of Jesus Christ is his very purpose in life (Rom 1:1) and that the preaching of the gospel was his service to God (Rom 1:9). Paul also states that the true relation between Jews and Gentiles is only through Jesus Christ (Rom 3:9; 4:9, 10-12, 16; 5:1; see especially Rom 9:1-3).

⁴ R. Gundry states that “the great theme of Romans is justification by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ” *A Survey of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Academie Books, 1981), 276. This statement is one that can be agreed with in part and one that, in part, can be disagreed with. The whole issue is: What is meant by justification? R. Brown is in agreement with this. He writes: “Another major scholarly debate is centered on whether for Paul God simply declares people upright by a type of judicial sentence (forensic or declarative justification) or actually changes people and makes them upright (causative justification)” *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 577. See a further discussion of imparted versus imputed righteousness later on in this chapter and in chapter 3 of this study. For a different view see H.C. Kee who would have the reader understand that the dominant theme in Paul’s thought was the creation of Adam and Eve, *Understanding the New Testament* (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1993), 249, 250. Now, it is to be agreed that Paul, especially in Rom 5 wrote on the creation of Adam and Eve. However, to call this a dominant theme of Paul is to miss Paul’s own expressed theme, that is the Gospel (Rom 1:16, 17; Gal 1:1-12; for a few examples). G. Osborne is of the opinion that: “if we consider that Paul includes all the various themes together under the rubric of “gospel,” that may well tie the letter together,” G. Osborne, *Romans*, 21, 22.

the individual's place and right functioning in creation.⁵ It is within this central thesis of Romans that righteousness is presented. Righteousness describes, firstly, the right relationship between creation and God.⁶ It is also within Rom 1:16, 17 that Paul states the fundamental relationship between righteousness and faith.

Rom 1:18 - 3:20⁷ is a description of the human situation. This section can be broken down into subsections. The first is Rom 1:18-32, dealing with the guilt of humanity. The second subsection is Rom 2:1-16,⁸ which describes the judgment of God. The third subsection is Rom 2:17-3:8. This subsection describes the Jews and their relationship with the law. This section is an expansion of the statement in the central thesis of Romans that righteousness is by faith and, though not stated in Rom 1:16, 17, not through the law. The relationship between faith/righteousness and the law will be treated fully by Paul, beginning in Rom 4. The fourth subsection is Rom 3:9-20 where Paul returns to the universal condition of humanity. This is summed up in the words, "there is none righteous" (Rom 3:10). God's answer to the human situation is found in Rom 3:21-4:25. This subsection begins to treat fully Paul's statement in the central thesis of Romans that righteousness is by faith. Rom 4 gives the foundation for righteousness by

⁵ A complete development of all these relationships is beyond the scope of this study. However, this study will look at the primary restored relationship included in salvation. The primary relationship is between the individual and God. Because this study will focus on this primary relationship, there will be a "choosing" of terms and phrases to examine. There is no thought of being comprehensive, as that is beyond the scope of this study. It is to be admitted that the choosing of terms and phrases to examine is somewhat arbitrary.

⁶ A deeper look at righteousness will be presented later on in this chapter.

⁷ W. Walker is of the opinion that Rom 1:18-2:29 is "a non-Pauline interpolation". He bases his opinion on language, context and ideational content, W. Walker, "Romans 1:18-2:29: A Non-Pauline Interpolation?" *NTS* 45 (1999): 533-552. The very basis of Walker's position, that is, that language, context and ideational content which he says argues for a non-Pauline interpolation are the very factors that argue for Pauline authorship. See this study for support of this position.

⁸ S.J. Gathercole states that Rom 2:14-15 does not refer to the Gentiles but is a further shaming of the Jews. S.J. Gathercole, "A Law unto Themselves: The Gentiles in Romans 2:14-15 Revisited," *JSNT* 3 (2002), 27-49.

faith. This foundation is what God has established in ages past. This foundation is the relationship between righteousness and faith. Again, it must be understood that the statement that righteousness is by faith means that righteousness is not found in the law. Paul quotes Abraham as an example that God is not doing a new thing or is not rejecting what He has already done, that is to establish righteousness in the law.⁹ In the example of the righteousness of Abraham, by faith and not by the law, Paul demonstrates that what God is doing through Jesus Christ, which is to make righteous those who believe, is the very principle that God has established from of old. Thus, Paul is stating that God has not established righteousness by the law, only to discard this righteousness with the coming of Christ. The example of Abraham demonstrates that God has, from ages before, established the principle that righteousness is by faith.¹⁰

3. Rom 5

Rom 5 lists the fruit or results of righteousness by faith.¹¹ These fruits are peace and assurance. The second half of Rom 5 details how sin entered the human race by the race's

⁹ E. Adams makes the claim that Rom 4:20 is “a backward glance to Rom 1:21.” This backward glance, according to Adams reflects a structural contrast between Abraham’s faith and Gentile disobedience; a contrast “likely to have been intended by Paul,” E. Adams, “Abraham’s Faith and Gentile Disobedience,” *JSNT* 65 (1997): 47-66.

¹⁰ The discussion between righteousness in the old or first covenant that is by the law and between righteousness in the new or second covenant, which is by faith, is an on-going discussion. However, the example of Abraham and the many Old Testament examples of righteousness by faith should put to rest this discussion. Thus, a joining of this discussion seems unnecessary.

¹¹ G. Osborne writes: “There seems to be a significant shift of focus between chapters 1-4 and chapters 5-8, with the former centering on the necessity of faith for salvation and the latter on the effects of that salvation on the lives and experiences of believers,” G. Osborne, *Romans*, 124.

involvement in Adam.¹² In Rom 5, Paul is also beginning to describe Christian living.¹³ He has presented the “theological” foundation of justification by faith. He is now moving into the doctrinal section of the “living” of the faith. Black agrees with this statement when he writes that Rom 5 “marks a transition from the thesis of justification to that of the spiritual life of Christian believers.”¹⁴ Thus, it is to be seen that there is a definite transition beginning in Rom 5. This transition is to a fuller explanation and description of righteousness by faith. This means that the transition seen in Rom 5 connects Rom 6-16 with Rom 1-4. The transition found in Rom 5 is not from one thesis to another. Black claims, the transition is from theory to experience.¹⁵ Paul writes in Rom 5:1 that the justified, the righteous have peace with God.¹⁶ The peace of God is the present experience of the justified/righteous, leads to rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God¹⁷ (Rom 5:1-2). The hope of the glory of God is the “regaining” for the justified/righteous of that which was lost. Rom 3:23 states that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Sin has caused the human race to lose the glory of God. Justification in Christ returns to the believer the glory of God.

¹² G. Osborne describes Rom 5:12-21 as Paul describing the “primary barrier between people and God—the sin and guilt inherited from Adam,” Osborne, *Romans*, 136; See also S. Porter who claims that Rom 5 is a diatribe, “The Argument of Romans 5: Can A Rhetorical Question Make A Difference,” *JBL* 4 (1991): 655-677.

¹³ G. Osborne, *Romans*, 125.

¹⁴ M. Black, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Romans*, 74.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ J.R.W. Stott, *Men Made New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 9, 10; B.H. Carroll, *Studies in Romans* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1935), 48; K. Barth, *The Epistle to The Romans*, 150; C.E.B. Cranfield, *The International Critical Commentary: The Epistle to the Romans*, 253; C. Breytenbach, “Salvation of the Reconciled (With A Note On The Background of Paul’s Metaphor of Reconciliation),” in *Salvation in The New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. J.G. van der Watt; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 271-286.

¹⁷ A full explanation of the glory of God is beyond the scope of this study. However, in my understanding the glory of God is what God intended the human race to be. The glory of God must be part of the salvation experience. Salvation, then, is a regaining of that which God intends for each and everyone (1 Cor 3:18).

The hope of the glory of God is the justified/righteous' present experience. The hope of the glory of God is not only a future transaction.¹⁸ The full experience of the glory of God is still future. However, the justified/righteous have the present experience of the hope of the glory of God.¹⁹ This can be seen in the words “we have” in Rom 5:1. It is to be recognized that there are within the Greek manuscripts a disagreement in Rom 5:1 with the tense of “we have.”²⁰ Some Greek manuscripts have the present tense for “we have”²¹ and others use the subjunctive.²²

The difference can be understood as the present tense stating a fact, “we have peace with God,” and the subjunctive, “let us have peace with God.”²³ The difference may be understood in experiential terms. The present tense states the fact that the justified has now peace with God. The subjunctive exhorts the justified to experience the peace of God that is given in Christ. The subjunctive reminds the justified to remember in the midst of life's trials and difficulties, the peace of God that is theirs in Christ.

The justified, knowing and experiencing peace with God are then able to rejoice in sufferings (Rom 5:3). The reason for this is the knowledge that Christ has reconciled the justified and God (Rom 5:10) and that, sufferings are not to be seen as God's punishment (Rom 5:9). Sufferings are to be seen as part of the journey to fully

¹⁸ C. Breytenbach calls “the crucifixion an eschatological event, a prolepsis of judgment.” Breytenbach, “The ‘For Us’ Phrases In Pauline Soteriology: Considering Their Background and Use,” in *Salvation in The New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. J.G. van der Watt; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 163-185.

¹⁹ For a fuller discussion on realized eschatology, see the section on *conformity to Christ* in chapter 4 of this study.

²⁰ A comparing of which manuscripts are earlier and which are later, which manuscripts carry more authority and which less, is not the point of this study. As is seen in the discussion of above, both tenses are of value to the discussion.

²¹ \aleph^a , B³, G^{gr}, P, Ψ , 0220^{vid}, 88, 104, 326, 330, 451, 629, 1241, 1739, 1877, 1881, 1984, 2127, 2492, 2495, *Byz Lect*, syr^h, cop^{sa}. UBS³.

²² \aleph^* , A, B*, C, D, K, 33, 81, 181, 436, 630, 1962, 1985. UBS³.

²³ The subjunctive can be understood as a hortatory subjunctive. A hortatory subjunctive is a mood that exhorts someone to do, have, experience something.

experiencing the glory of God. This is seen in Rom 5:3-5 where Paul writes that the reason the justified can rejoice in sufferings is because sufferings produce perseverance, perseverance produces character, this character is the transformed holy image of God, part of the glory of God (2 Cor 3:18). The experience of being transformed into the image of God produces hope in the justified. Hope is produced in the justified through the process of being transformed because the reality of being transformed is evidence of God's presence (Rom 8:9-11). The justified/righteous are also reconciled with God and saved from God's wrath (Rom 5:9-11). Thus, it can be understood that the term "justified" is very important to the understanding of the experience of the Christian and very important in the discussion of this study on the identity of the emphatic "I".

The context of Rom 5:1-10²⁴ clearly states that justification is experiential and that it is not simply a declaration. Rom 5:1 states that the righteous, are "justified by faith." The Greek word to be examined in this phrase, is δικαιοθέντες, an aorist passive participle. Dana and Mantey state that, "Antecedent action relative to the main verb is ordinarily expressed by the aorist or perfect participles."²⁵ This is to say that, ordinarily, but not always, the action of the aorist participle occurs before the action of the main verb. In Rom 5:1, the main verb is "we have."²⁶ The time of the action of the aorist participle will occur before the action of the main verb. Thus, the basic idea of the relation of the aorist participle and the main verb is to be understood as: "being justified," the aorist participle, occurs before the "having," the main verb, of peace with God.

²⁴ J. Murphy-O'Conner states that Rom 6-8 expands Rom 5:1-11; J. Murphy-O'Conner, *Paul His Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 201.

²⁵ H.E. Dana and J. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of The Greek New Testament* (New York: MacMillian Pub., 1955), 230.

²⁶ See discussion above concerning the subjunctive and present tenses in Rom 5:1 in footnote # 23 of chapter 2 of this study.

The aorist participle, δικαιοθέντες, comes from the verb, δικαίω. Arndt and Gingrich list an understanding for δικαίω: “To show justice, do justice, vindicate, treat as just, be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as righteous, make free or pure, be set free from.”²⁷ This definition sets the parameters for the discussion for the word “justification”. The question that is to be examined is: does justification mean to make righteous or to pronounce righteous? To state this question in the more historic terminology: Is righteousness imputed or imparted?

Girdlestone writes that δικαίω is to make righteous or to acquit.²⁸ He goes on to say that “the verb קָדַשׁ is rendered δικαίω almost everywhere in the Septuagint.”²⁹ קָדַשׁ has as its root meaning “conformity to an ethical or moral standard”.³⁰ According to Gesenius קָדַשׁ is “to be straight, hence to be true, sincere, to be just, righteous, to declare any one just or righteous.”³¹ Holladay agrees with Gesenius when he claims that קָדַשׁ is to “be just, righteous, vindicated, make someone appear righteous, innocent, declare someone to be in the right.”³² Δικαίω,³³ according to J. Lust, is “to pronounce and treat as righteous, to justify, to vindicate, to acquit, to be shown to be righteous.”³⁴ Fitzmyer says that in the Septuagint, δικαίω normally has a declarative, forensic meaning.³⁵ For Louw and Nida δικαίω is: “to cause someone to be in a proper or right relation with

²⁷ W. Arndt & W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament*, 197.

²⁸ R. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of The Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 162.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁰ R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of The Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 752.

³¹ H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon of The Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 702.

³² W. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of The Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 303.

³³ The answer to the question of whether righteousness is imputed or imparted will be drawn from the context of Romans itself.

³⁴ J. Lust ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint, Part I* (Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1992), 115.

³⁵ J. Fitzmyer, *Romans: The Anchor Bible*, 117.

someone else, to put right with, to cause to be in a right relationship with.”³⁶ They go on to say that, “Some scholars interpret δικαίω, δικαίωσις, δικαιοσύνη as meaning ‘forensic righteousness’, that is to say, the act of being declared righteous on the basis of Christ’s atoning ministry, but it would seem more probable, according to Louw and Nida, that Paul uses these expressions in the context of the covenant relation rather than in the context of legal procedures.”³⁷ Louw and Nida emphasize that δικαίω is *primarily* covenantal and relational and is not *primarily* legal in its meaning. This is important to the discussion. When a sinner is made righteous, that sinner is not simply *declared* “legally” righteous, but enters a covenantal relationship. It is in this covenantal relationship that the sinner is righteous; it is within this covenantal relationship that the sinner is both righteous and is declared righteous. According to Kittel δικαίω is “to make righteous.”³⁸

Within the discussion concerning δικαίω that is found within the lexicons, it can be seen that the meaning of δικαίω has both a legal and a causative element to it. This must mean that to be righteous means both a declaration and an experience. Thus, it is to be seen that δικαίω is both declarative and causative. Is the discussion concerning justification, whether it is imputed or imparted missing the “boat”? Are there truly grounds for a separation and a dividing between the imputation and impartation of righteousness? When it is written that δικαίω means to be just, righteous and to be declared righteous, it is seen in the above definitions that justification or righteousness is both imparted and imputed. This will also be seen further in the context of Romans.

³⁶ J. Louw and E. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Based on Semantic Domains*, 452.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 452.

³⁸ G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament 4* (trans. G. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1964), 211.

Justification is righteousness, Girdlestone claims. He writes that, “The ideas of righteousness, justification and acquittal all cluster around one verbal root, and are seen to be parts of one whole.”³⁹ He expands upon this idea when he puts forth the opinion that “to be justified, to be accounted righteous, and to have the gift of righteousness of God, are three aspects of one and the same thing.”⁴⁰ Runyan agrees in principle with this understanding. He says that the Wesleyan understanding of justification is that justification is primarily “the healing power of love rather than simply being let off from the penalty one should rightly bear.”⁴¹ Stedman agrees that justification is more than a declarative act. He claims that to be justified is to have been given the gift of righteousness, which is “the gift of God’s loving acceptance.”⁴² Although Stedman is not saying the exact same thing as Runyan, Stedman does affirm that to be justified is more than a declarative act.⁴³ To be justified is to be given a gift. This gift is righteousness. The point to be brought out here is that Stedman states that justification is the same as righteousness, which is a gift that is given and received. A gift is something that the receiver is in possession of. Thus, according to Stedman, Christian believers are in possession of righteousness. To be in possession of righteousness is more than simply being declared righteous. Osborne is in agreement with the position that righteousness is

³⁹ R. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of The Old Testament*, 159.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁴¹ T. Runyan, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 29; R. Maddox also agrees with Runyan in this understanding of justification, R. Maddox, *Responsible Grace* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 29.

⁴² R. Stedman, *From Guilt to Glory*, 8.

⁴³ R. Stedman seems to contradict himself later on in his own book. On page 129 he writes, “Justified is to be declared the righteous friend of God,” *From Guilt to Glory*, 129. How to reconcile Stedman’s two statements? He writes: “to be justified means to be given the gift of righteousness” (8), he states even clearer that to be justified is to be “made” righteous (166), and “to be justified means to be declared the righteous friend of God” (129). Does Stedman contradict himself? Perhaps the apparent contradiction of Stedman’s two statements is not a true contradiction. Perhaps Stedman truly holds to the position that justification is both declared and actual or to state in other terms, imputed and imparted.

not “an either-or-situation.”⁴⁴ By that he means that “the primary force of righteousness in Paul centers on the legal act of God whereby the repentant sinner is declared right by God and brought into a right relationship with him, resulting in right living.”⁴⁵

The prominent idea that has come out of the above discussion is that justification or righteousness, which is one and the same thing, is both a declarative act and a creative act. The declarative act states that the sinner is declared to be righteous. The creative act actually makes the sinner righteous, i.e. brings the repentant sinner into a right relationship with God, resulting in right living.

However, not all agree with that. McClain asks, “What does it mean to be justified?” He answers his own question when he writes, “the word justify means to pronounce a man righteous. He is not made righteous, but pronounced righteous and treated as if he were righteous.”⁴⁶ Moule agrees with McClain. Moule says: “He who justifies you does not educate you or inspire you up to acceptability. He pronounces you acceptable.”⁴⁷ Smart claims that justification means God's acceptance of the sinner as righteous in spite of the fact that in some degree he continues to be a sinner.⁴⁸ Barth

⁴⁴ G. Osborne, *Romans*, 42.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁶ A. McClain, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace*, 107; M. Gorman states that righteousness is both “judicial” and “relational,” *Apostle of The Crucified Lord*, 2004, 138, 201.

⁴⁷ C.G. Moule, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, 1899, 96. See also J.D. Douglas who says that “justification means men are not actually righteous, but that they are declared righteous,” J.D. Douglas, ed., *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 1104. J. Murray also states that “justification is forensic, that is God declares the Christian believer as righteous,” J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 170. The objection to this view is that there seems to be no taking into account 1 Cor 1:30 where Paul states that Christ has become sanctification, righteousness and redemption to the Corinthian Christians. The indwelling Christ has become righteousness to the Corinthian Christians. It does not say that Christ is only accounted righteousness to the Corinthian Christians. It says that Christ *has become* righteousness to the Corinthian Christians.

⁴⁸ J. Smart, *Doorway To A New Age: A Study of Paul's Letter to The Romans*, 58.

agrees with the idea that justification means to be declared righteous.⁴⁹ He affirms “by faith we attain the status of those who have been declared righteous before God. By faith we are what we are not.”⁵⁰

Righteousness, however, is not only imputed, but righteousness is also imparted. Beet affirms that justification denotes “to make righteous, but always in a forensic or subjective sense.”⁵¹ He clarifies what he means when he writes “to be justified denotes never impartation of inward righteousness, but always a declaring or treating as righteous.”⁵² However, a forensic righteousness without actual conformity to the moral law is worthless.⁵³ Beet states further that justification is followed by adoption and by the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit, according to Beet is the animating principle of a new life.⁵⁴ What Beet means is that justification is accompanied by adoption into God's family and the reception of the Spirit into the human heart. The reception of the Holy Spirit into the human heart is the new birth, or regeneration. The new birth imparts to the believer a new life. This new life is the life of Christ. The life of Christ certainly must be seen as righteous.

If righteousness is always accompanied by the reception of the Holy Spirit, as Beet states, how then can righteousness be simply a declaration? To make this statement is to divorce the reception of the Holy Spirit from righteousness. This cannot be done. Paul writes that Christ has become for us righteousness (1 Cor 1:30). Paul writes the

⁴⁹ E. Bancroft agrees with the view that justification is a declarative act, E. Bancroft, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids,: Zondervan, 1925), 234; See also C.L. Feinberg, *The Fundamentals for Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publication, 1958), 187.

⁵⁰ K. Barth, *The Epistle to The Romans*, 149.

⁵¹ J.A. Beet, *Exposition on Romans* (CD-Rom; Albany, OR: Sage Software, 1996), 115.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

same in 1 Cor 5:16-21 where he states that Christ was made sin that in him we might become the righteousness of God. These two verses do not say that we might be declared righteous. They are very clear in that they say Christ has become righteousness and that Christian believers might become righteous in Christ. The operative word in this discussion is “become.” Become means more than to be declared. Become is an experiential term which describes something that which has happened to someone.

The reception of the Holy Spirit into the heart of the Christian believer means that Christ is in the believer; this is to be understood as Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit. Rom 8:9 states that if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, that person does not belong to Christ. Rom 8:10 then states that if Christ is in you, the body is dead, but the spirit is alive because of righteousness. In these two verses a comparison/contrast is being made. The comparison/contrast is between those who have and those who do not have the Spirit (Rom 8:9) and Christ (Rom 8:10).

Christ has become for the believer, righteousness. Christ is actual righteousness. Christ is not simply declared righteousness. When Christ indwells the believer, Christ, as actual righteousness, through the Holy Spirit, is actually, experientially, indwelling the believer. This means that the actual righteousness of Christ is in the believer. The believer is righteous with the righteousness of Christ. This must be an actual experience. Christ actually indwells the believer. Christ is also actually righteous. Thus, when Christ, who is actual righteousness, indwells the believer, that believer is actually righteous.

Thus, it can be seen that righteousness is both imputed and imparted to the justified. To further develop this: A legitimate question to be asked is: Can people be justified to God without being transformed? Is justification simply a declarative decision

by God that leaves the sinner as he or she is? Brown is of the opinion that this is not possible. He claims that the declarative decision of justification has an element of power that accompanies it. He goes on further to state that this element of power is causative.⁵⁵ Brown's view is close to Beet's view in that both of them do not make a sharp division between the declarative act of justification and the causative act of justification. Haldane claims that many Christians are afraid to give the Scriptural language its full meaning. This full meaning is that when the Scriptures say that believers are made righteous, they are made righteous, they are not simply reckoned as righteous.⁵⁶ Haldane disagrees with those commentators who say that the believer, in justification, is simply declared to be righteous. He goes so far as to say that God “never accounts anyone to be what he is not in reality”.⁵⁷ Haldane would say that justification is both a declarative and a causative act. In this Bloesch would agree. He asserts that although justification is primarily forensic or legal, it also contains a mystical element in which righteousness is implanted in the believer as life. Bloesch says that Christians are not only declared righteous, they are also made righteous.⁵⁸ In his combining of the declarative and the causative elements in justification, Bloesch understands that the declarative righteousness is completed, while the making or becoming righteous is incomplete. Packer agrees with those who hold that righteousness is both declarative and experienced. Packer claims that justification is not simply God declaring the sinner to be something that s/he is not. What God does, according to Packer, is to “constitute” the sinner righteous by imputing the righteousness

⁵⁵ R. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 577.

⁵⁶ R. Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to The Romans* (Evansville: Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1958), 145.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁵⁸ D. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 177.

of Christ to the sinner. In this “imputing” God does not “see” the sinner by him or herself. God sees⁵⁹ the sinner, who is now a believer, in Christ. God is then “able” to declare⁶⁰ what is actually true of the believer, that is, the believer is actually righteous.⁶¹

There are several questions that arise from Packer's position. The first question is: What does he mean by “constitute?” Constitute means to “compose or make up, appoint, elect, enact, establish”.⁶² Since to constitute means to “make,” how can God “constitute” sinners righteous without imparting to them actual righteousness? To impute means to charge, attribute or ascribe something to someone. Packer states righteousness is by imputation, not by impartation.⁶³ He also states that justification is a forensic, declarative action of God.⁶⁴ Therefore, according to Packer's view, God “makes” believers righteous by declaring that they are righteous.

The second question, which arises from Packer's view, is: is imputation more than simply a declaration? If in the declaration of God, believing sinners are “made” or constituted, righteous, then, indeed, there is a “causative” element to imputation and imputation is not simply or only a declaration.

⁵⁹ R. McGee is of the opinion that when God “sees” us in Christ, He sees us as we truly are, and that is truly righteous. He writes: “When God considers (i.e. reckons) you, does He deceive Himself in some way or does He know who you truly are? If He knows who we truly are, then why do we preface His understanding of us with phrases such as ‘in God’s eyes we are righteous’ or ‘forgiven’ or ‘loved’ or ‘pleasing’ and so on. Are we trying to say that God is not living in reality? That He is somehow involved in self-deception? Is He just some old grandparent type who wants to overlook the faults of His grandchildren? Either He really knows who you are or He doesn’t,” R. McGee, *The Search For Significance*, 41.

⁶⁰ R. McGee holds the opinion that to “declare” is to make. He writes: “God works by *fiat*, meaning that He can create something from nothing simply by declaring it into existence. God spoke, and the world was formed. He said, ‘Let there be light,’ and light appeared. The earth is no longer void because God sovereignly created its abundance. In the same way, we *were* condemned, but *now* we are declared righteous,” R. McGee, *The Search For Significance*, 43.

⁶¹ J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with The Spirit* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1984), 958.

⁶² *Webster's New School and Office Dictionary*, 176

⁶³ J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with The Spirit*, 958.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 957.

Ladd writes that justification is a both declarative act and an actual righteousness. This righteousness is not an ethical perfection, but it is sinless-ness in the sense that God no longer counts his or her sin against them. Ladd posits that the righteous person is not simply “regarded” as righteous. This person is actually righteous. His definition of justification is that justification is both an ethical quality and a relationship. Here it can be understood that the relationship that the believer has with God in Christ makes that believer actually righteous. The righteousness of the relationship between God and the believer is an actual righteousness and is “no more a fiction than ethical righteousness.”⁶⁵

This idea by Ladd, that a believer is righteous in terms of his or her relationship with and in Christ, adds an element to the discussion of justification that perhaps, may answer the question: Is justification imparted or imputed? In Ladd's understanding, justification is both imparted and imputed. This is, in essence, similar to the conclusion that was reached concerning Packer's view. In the debate over imputation and impartation, it is possible that the gap between the two is not as wide as the literature seems to indicate. A preliminary conclusion can be reached concerning justification: Justification has both a declarative and a causative element.

Bancroft holds the view that God does not simply “declare” sinners as righteous. His position is that: “God does not justify ungodly men in their ungodliness. He pronounces them just only as they are united to Christ, who is absolutely just, and who by His Spirit, can make them just, not only in the eye of the Law but in moral character.”⁶⁶ Bancroft's view states that God declares sinners righteous because they are, on the basis of their union with Christ, righteous. Stewart asserts that union with Christ affects the

⁶⁵ G.E. Ladd, *A Theology of The New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974), 446.

⁶⁶ E. Bancroft, *Christian Theology*, 238.

total moral aspect of the person.⁶⁷ Packer states that because of our union with Christ, we are as righteous as is God's own Son.⁶⁸ It is now to be seen that God does not declare the sinner to be something that s/he is not. Justification is possible, because justification is always accompanied by union with Christ.

Calvin holds the view that believers are actually righteous in Christ and not simply declared righteous. Calvin states the grace of justification is not separated from regeneration.⁶⁹ Regeneration is the theological term for the new birth. The new birth or regeneration is the work of God whereby God “implants” within the believer new life. Anderson says that the new birth or regeneration transforms a person into someone who didn't exist before.⁷⁰ This new person that is “created” by the implantation of new life⁷¹ is a righteous person. The reason for this is that the new life that is implanted, or one can say imparted in regeneration, is the life of God. God's life, which is another way of saying God, is righteous. Owen who says that the Holy Spirit, whom is given at the new birth, is the Spirit of sanctification and of purity agrees with this.⁷² This is further confirmed by Bancroft who writes that, “No member could be joined to Christ without partaking of that which Christ is, the righteousness of God.”⁷³

Regeneration, or the new birth, is intimately connected to justification.⁷⁴ A sinner cannot be justified without being born-again. A sinner who is born-again is justified.

⁶⁷ J. Stewart, *A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 2002), 164.

⁶⁸ J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with The Spirit*, 953.

⁶⁹ J. Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion* (The Library of Christian Classics in 2 Volumes; ed. J. McNeil; trans. F.L. Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1993), 739.

⁷⁰ N. Anderson, *Victory Over The Darkness* (Crowborough: Monarch, 1990), 45.

⁷¹ R. McGee, *The Search For Significance*, 106; also Eph 2:5.

⁷² J. Owen, *Of Communion with God* (CD-Rom; Albany, OR: Sage Library, 1996), 256.

⁷³ E. Bancroft, *Christian Theology*, 74.

⁷⁴ N. Anderson states that “salvation is not a future condition, it is a present transformation,” N. Anderson, *Victory Over Darkness*, 44.

There can be no simple declaration of righteousness without the accompanying presence of the Holy Spirit, the righteous life of God, imparted and indwelling within the soul of the believer. Thus it is to be understood that righteousness is both declarative and creative. It is declarative because God “reckons” the believing sinner as righteous (Rom 5:23-25). Righteousness is also creative because in the new birth God creates a new person with a new life. This new life is from above (Rom 8:11).

The new birth or regeneration creates within the believer a new person.⁷⁵ Within Rom 7, Paul uses the phrase, “the inner man” and “in my mind.” Haldane puts forth the proposition that the “inner man” and “my mind” are the renewed self.⁷⁶ Anderson claims that the inner man is “my new self, where my spirit and God's spirit are in union.”⁷⁷ The word used in Rom 7:23, 25 which is translated “mind” is νοῦς, which means: “mind, attitude, and way of thinking as the sum total of the whole mental and moral state of being.”⁷⁸ This definition states that the νοῦς is not simply the thought processes. The νοῦς is also the moral center of the person. Berry agrees with this understanding of the νοῦς. He says that the νοῦς is “distinctly the reflective consciousness, it is the organ of moral thinking and knowing, the intellect of moral sentiment.”⁷⁹

When Paul is writing in Rom 7 about the struggle that is going on in “his mind” and in the “inner man,” what he is writing about then, is the renewed self, the moral center of the believer. This is seen in Rom 7:22 where Paul writes that he agrees with the law in the “inner man/person.” However, he sees another law in the members his body, a

⁷⁵ L. Brown, *The Doctrine of Salvation* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1978), 84.

⁷⁶ R. Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to The Romans*, 299.

⁷⁷ N. Anderson, *Victory Over The Darkness*, 85.

⁷⁸ W. Arndt & W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament*, 544.

⁷⁹ G. R. Berry, *A Dictionary of New Testament Greek Synonyms*, 25.

law which wages war with the law of his mind, νοῦς (Rom 7:23). In these two verses, Paul compares the inner man/person with the νοῦς. It is in the νοῦς where the desire to obey God is located (Rom 7:25). The desire to obey God is the evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit within the justified (Phlp 2:13). The presence of the Holy Spirit within a person is evidence that that person belongs to Christ, that is, is justified (Rom 8:9, 10). The Holy Spirit makes alive or renews (Rom 8:10). The renewed self is the renewed νοῦς where the Holy Spirit dwells. Thus, it can be seen that when Paul is writing about the inner person, he is referring to the νοῦς. In addition, Louw and Nida state that ἐλογίσθη means: “to put into one’s account, to charge to one’s account.”⁸⁰ This meaning of λογίζομαι is found in Rom 4:4 where the difference between gift and obligation are discussed. There is in this verse the idea of that which is actual versus that which is simply considered as belonging to someone. The one who works, their wages actually are theirs. The wages are not simply to be reckoned but considered as⁸¹ actual righteousness imparted to the believer. Thus, righteousness is declared, that is imputed by God. Righteousness is also given, that is imparted by God by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Righteousness - is it imparted, imputed or both? After reviewing some of the opinions regarding this question, it is important to return to the text of the Bible. Paul writes that, Abraham was reckoned as righteous by God. The word translated reckoned is ἐλογίσθη which means: “to hold a view, to have an opinion, to consider, to regard.” From this definition, it can be seen clearly that the lexical meaning of ἐλογίσθη is that righteousness is indeed imputed to Abraham. This is stated in Rom 4:22. Abraham believed God and God reckoned Abraham as righteous. Further, Paul writes in Rom 4:9

⁸⁰ J. Louw & E. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Based on Semantic Domains*, 583.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 366.

that righteousness was reckoned,⁸² ἐλογίσθη, to Abraham. In this verse the imputation of righteousness is held. Abraham's righteousness was imputed to him by God. The imputation of righteousness to the Christian believer is also taught by Paul (Rom 4:23, 24). Thus, it can be understood that righteousness is imputed to the Christian believer. Paul goes on to write that Christ "has become the righteousness of God" for the believer, (1 Cor 1:30). The indwelling of the Spirit, i.e. Christ, is an actual experience for the Christian believer. It can be said that in the indwelling of Christ, Christ's righteousness is imparted to the believer. The Holy Spirit does not leave his "holiness" behind when he indwells the believing sinner. When the Holy Spirit indwells the repentant sinner, the Holy Spirit brings with him, his holiness. This holiness, along with the Holy Spirit, indwells the Christian believer. Thus, it can be seen that Paul teaches that righteousness is both imputed and imparted. In addition is Du Toit who is of the opinion that there is a "strong correlation between Rom 5:1 and Rom 8:31-39 and that the aorist participle in Rom 5:1 should be read together with the present participle in Rom 8:34. He concludes from this correlation that justification is both a finished experience and an on-going experience.⁸³ This perspective is important in understanding the experience of the emphatic "I" of Rom 7. This statement will be developed further in chapter 7 of this study.

⁸² P. McReynolds translates ἐλογίσθη as "was reasoned," P. McReynolds, *Word Study Greek English New Testament* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1983), 558. See also page 73ff of this chapter of this study for a more detailed definition of ἐλογίσθη.

⁸³ A. Du Toit, "Forensic Metaphors in Romans," in *Salvation in the New Testament; Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. J.G. van der Watt; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 213-246.

4. Rom 6

Paul begins Rom 6⁸⁴ with a question. This question is: Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? Paul's answer is, "of course not!" How can those who have died to sin still live in sin? Rom 6:2-4 states that all those who have been baptized⁸⁵ into Christ, have been baptized into Christ's death.⁸⁶ Therefore, those who have been baptized into Christ's death have been buried with Christ in order that as Christ was raised from the dead, the justified might walk in newness of life.

This new person, Paul writes, has died to sin (Rom 6:2, 10, 11). In Rom 6:2, the tense of the verb is the aorist. This means that the believer has died to sin.⁸⁷ The believer is not dying to sin. If the believer has died to sin, in what manner has the believer died to sin? Haldane says that the believer has died to sin in terms of their state before God. He claims that the phrase "died to sin" does not refer to their moral character or to their conduct.⁸⁸ His understanding of the phrase "died to sin" means that believers are freed from the guilt of sin. He also writes that believers are not dead to sin in terms of sin's

⁸⁴ F.F. Bruce entitles Rom 6-8 as the "Way of Holiness" *The Letter of Paul to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 45. The importance of this title is that Rom 7 is included within this section and is thus considered by Bruce as part of the discussion of the "way of holiness." See also M. Gorman who claims that Rom 5-8 "spells out the meaning and character of justification," M. Gorman, *Apostle of The Crucified Lord*, 363. M. Gorman, also, in his discussions states that Rom 5-8 is a whole, thus, Rom 7 is to be seen within the discussion of justification.

⁸⁵ The relationship between baptism and death is beyond the scope of this study. In addition, the mode of baptism is also beyond the scope of this study. This study accepts the reality of a relationship between baptism and Christ's death. However, a fuller investigation of this relationship waits another study. M. Gorman's opinion is that the major focus in Rom 6 is not baptism but is on the contrast between the pre- and post baptismal life," *Apostle of The Crucified Lord*, 368.

⁸⁶ C. Clifton Black writes that there is "no such thing as a Pauline doctrine of death." Paul, according to Black inherited numerous "perspectives" on death from the culture in which he lived, C. Clifton Black, "Pauline Perspectives on Death in Rom 5-8," *JBL* 3 (1984): 413-433.

⁸⁷ C.N. Bartlett asks, "Does Paul mean that Christian believers are sinless?" He answers his own question in the negative. He goes on to say that what Paul had in mind is that those who have died to sin, that is those who have been saved from sin do not continue as a deliberate choice to live in sin. Bartlett summarizes his position when he says that for those who have died to sin, "to sin is no longer the purpose of their lives." C. N. Bartlett, *Romans: Power For Modern Man*, 67.

⁸⁸ R. Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to The Romans*, 241.

power or the believer's love of sin.⁸⁹ Haldane's understanding of the phrase "died to sin" then is an understanding of the believer's legal or forensic relationship to God. He does not think that the phrase "died to sin" has any reference at all to the believer's moral life or conduct. Osborne, on the other hand states that Rom 6 shows that justification and sanctification are not two separate experiences but, that "justification is the first moment of sanctification: it launches a process."⁹⁰

Rom 6:2 states that you died to sin. Therefore, consider, λογίζομαι, yourselves dead to sin. Rom 6:2 states a fact. Rom 6:11 urges the justified to understand⁹¹ themselves in light of the fact of Rom 6:2, which uses the indicative mood; while Rom 6:11 uses the imperative mood. The indicative is the mood of certainty.⁹² The imperative is the mood of command or entreaty.⁹³

When Rom 6:11 exhorts the believer to consider yourselves dead to sin, what does it mean? The answer to that question begins in Rom 6:12, which states that the justified are not to let sin reign in their mortal bodies that its lusts are obeyed. Reign means to control, to lead, to be the dominant force. To reign also means that something is present. If the justified were dead to sin in that they were not responsive to sin, then this exhortation makes no sense. What can be seen is that sin is present and that it can be obeyed by the justified. Paul exhorts the ones who have died to sin to count themselves dead to sin, that is to not let sin reign.⁹⁴ In this aspect, then, Haldane is correct. The

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁹⁰ G. Osborne, *Romans*, 147.

⁹¹ J.D. Pentecost, writes that the word reckoned in Rom 6:11 is "a word which literally means to count a thing to be true," *Designed To Be Like Him*, 125.

⁹² J. Louw & E. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Based on Semantic Domains*, 583.

⁹³ H.E. Dana and J. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of The Greek New Testament*, 168.

⁹⁴ G. Osborne states it this way: "We have died to sin (v.2) but now must "consider" ourselves on a daily basis to be dead to sin," Osborne, *Romans*, 156.

phrase died to sin in Rom 6:2 does not mean that sin is not present in the justified and that the justified are not responsive to sin.⁹⁵ Osborne is of the opinion that “died to sin” means that the Christian believer is no longer under the power of sin.⁹⁶

To count yourselves dead to sin means also to not offer your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but to offer your body an instrument of righteousness (Rom 6:13). One idea present here is that there is still a choice within the ones who have died to sin that is the justified. The justified can either present their bodies as instruments of wickedness or of righteousness. There still exists within the ones who have died to sin the possibility of choosing to present their bodies as instruments of wickedness, or to state it simply, to sin. This is also evident in Rom 6:1. Paul writes, shall we continue in sin? No, the answer is, because we have died to sin (Rom 6:2). Here again is seen the possibility of the ones who have died to sin to continue in it. The very existence of the question found in Rom 6:1 is clear evidence that the possibility still exists for those who have died to sin, to still sin.

Thus, the meaning of the phrase died to sin must be close to Haldane’s statement. He states that the phrase died to sin is a legal, forensic meaning. However, when Haldane states that the phrase died to sin has nothing to do with the moral conduct of the believer. This must be looked at very carefully.

The phrase died to sin does have a legal, forensic meaning. It also refers to the believer’s moral conduct. Paul writes that the deeds of the flesh are evident (Gal 5:19). He also lists what the fruit of the Spirit is (Gal 5:22). It is very clear, when reading these

⁹⁵ R. Stedman states it this way: “the phrase “we died to sin” does not mean that sin is dead in me,” R. Stedman, *From Guilt to Glory*, 173.

⁹⁶ G. Osborne, *Romans*, 149.

two lists that they are actions, behaviors connected to the moral conduct of the believer. The believer, the justified is exhorted to not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. This exhortation is certainly an exhortation to holy living. Thus, it must be seen that Haldane is correct in his statement that the phrase died to sin has a legal, forensic meaning. It must also be seen that he is incorrect when he states that the phrase died to sin does not have reference to a believer's moral life.

The statement that the meaning of the phrase died to sin is both legal, (forensic) and has a moral aspect, is supported by Stott. According to him, the meaning of the phrase "died to sin" must be understood from all three uses of the phrase in Rom 6. He is of the opinion that the meaning of the phrase must be common to all three uses in Rom 6. In other words, the phrase "died to sin" cannot mean one thing in one verse in Rom 6 and have another meaning in a different verse in Rom 6. He calls this a fundamental principle of Biblical interpretation, that the same phrase, which occurs more than one time in the same context, must have the same meaning.⁹⁷ It is probable that a word used more than once within the same context has the same meaning. However, to fully agree with Stott that a word used more than once within the same context "must" have the same meaning is still a matter of discussion.

Stott's view is that the phrase "died to sin" is a description of what has happened to the believer in union with Christ.⁹⁸ In Christ the believer has died to sin. Because of our union with Christ, when Christ died to sin, we died to sin. Stott writes that the phrase "died to sin" does not mean however, that the believer has become unresponsive to the

⁹⁷ J.R.W. Stott, *Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5-8*, 39.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

influence of sin.⁹⁹ Because of his view, that is, that the same phrase which occurs more than once in the same context must have the same meaning, to understand the meaning of the phrase, one must look at all three uses. The meaning of the phrase “died to sin” when in reference to the believer, Rom 6:2,11 must have the same meaning in Rom 6:10, which is a reference to Christ. In Rom 6:10 the reference is to Christ's death to sin. In other words, if, the meaning of the phrase “died to sin” must have the same meaning in Rom 6:2, 10 and 11, then the meaning of the phrase in reference to the believer must have the same meaning in reference to Christ.

If the meaning of the phrase “died to sin” when used in reference to believers means that the believer is unresponsive to sin, then the meaning of the phrase “died to sin” when used in reference to Christ must also mean the same thing, that is Christ is now unresponsive to sin. Stott states that this cannot be. The reason that he says this is that he doesn't think that Christ was ever so responsive to sin that He needed to die to it. Thus, if the phrase “died to sin” when used in reference to Christ doesn't mean that Christ has died to sin so that He is now unresponsive to it, the same phrase when used in reference to believers can not mean that they are now unresponsive to sin.

Gifford disagrees with this position. Gifford would have it believed that the phrase “died to sin” means to be released from all power and influence of sin.¹⁰⁰ He claims that what Paul means is that for the believer, to live in sin is inconsistent with the fact that s/he has died to it. However, for Gifford, the phrase “to live in sin” means more than to commit sin. To live in sin means, for Gifford, “to have sin as the element in which

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁰⁰ E.H. Gifford, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: John Murray, 1881), 125.

we live, the moral atmosphere which our souls breath.”¹⁰¹

Gifford’s overall position may not be that far from the position of Stott and Haldane. Gifford’s position is based on his understanding that to live in sin means more than to commit sin. To live in sin is to have one’s fundamental orientation to sin. This means that one has chosen to let sin reign in their mortal body. To commit sin, on the other hand, can be done by those who have set their fundamental orientation to obey Christ (Phlp 2:13). Thus, one can agree with Gifford when he states that to live in sin means more than to commit sin. However, it has already been shown that Gifford’s statement, that to die to sin means to be freed from all power and influence of sin is incorrect.

Bartlett is in agreement with Gifford on the meaning of the phrase “died to sin.” Bartlett’s understanding of the meaning of this phrase is that the principle of sin has been slain.¹⁰² The death of the principle of sin means that the believer no longer, by deliberate choice, continues to live in sin. The death, to sin, means that the purpose of the believer has changed. The believer no longer has sin as his or her purpose. The purpose of the believer is now to live in righteousness. This statement Godet agrees with. Godet has written that the phrase “died to sin” means that “just as a dead man does not revive and resume his former occupations, neither does the believer return to his old life of sin”.¹⁰³ He does not mean sinless perfection, however. Godet understands the phrase “died to sin” to mean that the believer’s will has made an absolute break with sin.¹⁰⁴ To understand

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² C.N. Bartlett, *Romans: Power For Modern Man*, 68.

¹⁰³ F. Godet, *Commentary on The Epistle To The Romans*, 236.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 238.

Godet's view, one must understand that Godet states that sin exists only in the will.¹⁰⁵ He also claims that sin is the “principal of revolt whereby the human will is used against the Divine.”¹⁰⁶

According to Godet, the meaning of the phrase “died to sin” is that the will of the believer has made a radical break with sin.¹⁰⁷ At one time, the will of the person served and lived for sin. The human will was set on sin. Sin was its purpose and its master. This will was in revolt against God. When conversion occurred, the will of the person made a break with rebellion and became a “patriot”. In this context, the “patriot” is understood as a person who wants to serve, to obey God. If sin is rebellion, then repentance and obedience can be seen as patriotism. Now, it must be understood, that the use of the word “patriot” and “patriotism” is not used in terms of human relationship to their countries and to flag waving. The meaning of this word is used only in this context to mean one's relationship to God.¹⁰⁸ At one time a believer was a rebel. Conversion is the time when the rebel no longer rebels but has now changed one's heart in terms of one's God and now desires to obey God.

The various opinions regarding the phrase “died to sin” maybe closer to each other than the literature leads a reader to believe. These groups of commentators are not writing about absolute sinless perfection. They are describing what Finney would call the ultimate intention of life.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 236. N. Anderson agrees with Godet when Anderson says that “the moment you said “yes” to Christ your old self was gone,” N. Anderson, *Victory Over Darkness*, 44.

¹⁰⁸ For an explanation describing “patriot” and “rebel” see E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 220; see also R. McGee, *The Search For Significance*, 14-15; J. Bunyan, *Grace Abounding* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 1993), 10.

The phrase death to sin sets the context for the phrase “old self” (Rom 6:6). The old self was crucified, that is has died. The old self is the self of the unbeliever. This refers to the person, who the believer was, before conversion. This is seen in comparing Rom 6:6 with Eph 4:22 and Col 3:9, where the same phrase, the old self is used.

In Eph 4:22, the old self is called the former way of life, which is being corrupted by deceitful desires. The believer is exhorted in Eph 4:24 to put on the new self, the one being created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. The phrase, to put on the new self means that the believer must be made new in the attitude of their minds, νοῦς (Eph 4:23). The fundamental orientation of the person is now Christ and to please Him (2 Cor 5:9).

The old self’s characteristics are expressed in Eph 4:25-32. These characteristics are desires, attitudes, viewpoints and perceptions as well as behaviors. Thus, in comparison, the new self that is being created in the image of God can also be understood as desires and attitudes. The whole person expresses a person’s attitudes, desires, perceptions and viewpoints. Thus, the old person in Rom 6:6 must be referring to the person before conversion.

This statement is further supported by Col 3:1-10. According to this passage, the believer is to set their hearts and minds on the Lord above (Col 3:1,2). The reason that they are to do this is that they have died (Col 3:3). This death cannot be understood as physical death. This death is to be understood as the death to sin as discussed above in reference to Rom 6:2.

Because the believer has died to sin, they are then to put to death the things of the earthly life (Col 3:5). Here it can be seen again that the death to sin does not mean an

inability to sin. The death to sin means choosing a different ultimate end. This ultimate end is to obey God. If death to sin means the inability to sin, then the exhortation to put to death the things of the earthly life has no meaning or relevance. If the believer is unable to sin, then the earthly nature no longer exists and there is no reason to put it to death.

The believer is also exhorted to not lie (Col 3:9) because they have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the image of its creator (Col 3:10). Here again, it is seen that the old self and the new self are found within desires, practices, attitudes and a fundamental relationship to God. The new self is the self that has as its fundamental desire to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col 3:17). To do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus must mean in part, to be obedient to God and to try and please Christ in all things. The old self, in contrast, must be the person whose fundamental desire is to do things, not in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The phrase “died to sin” needs to be seen in relation to the phrase the “old person”. Rom 6:6 states that the “old person” was crucified with Christ. These two phrases must be understood together. The reason for this is that the “old person” is the one who has died to sin.¹⁰⁹

The “old person” according to Gifford is the former self in the old corrupt and sinful condition.¹¹⁰ Bruce wants the reader to understand that the “old person” is the person we once were.¹¹¹ Moo writes that the “old person” is the whole person, what we were in Adam.¹¹² Cranfield claims that the “old man” or “old self” is the “whole of our

¹⁰⁹ J.D. Pentecost, *Designed To Be Like Him*, 114,115.

¹¹⁰ E.H. Gifford, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 128.

¹¹¹ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 137.

¹¹² D. Moo, *The New International Commentary: The Epistle to The Romans*, 373.

fallen human nature, the whole self in its fallen-ness.”¹¹³ Thus, it can be seen from the literature that the “old person” is the person the believer once was in Adam. To be in Adam is to be a rebel. The “old person” is the believer before the believer was a believer. To be in Adam is to be a sinner. This is seen in Col 3:9, 10.

The old self was crucified that the body of sin might be done away with. Rom 6:6 states: “For we know that our old self, ὁ παλαιός ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος, was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin”. In this verse the NIV calls the “old man” the old self. The NASB calls the “old man” the old self. The NRSV calls the “old man” the old self. In addition, the CEV calls the “old man” “the persons we used to be.” The old man/self was crucified with Christ in order that the body of sin might be done away with. There is a question as to the NIV's translation at this point. The translators of the NIV recognize that there can be another meaning to the Greek word translated “done away with.” This they recognize by placing a note at Rom 6:6 stating that the Greek word may mean something else other than “done away with”.

The Greek word translated “done away with” is καταργέω, which means: “make ineffective, powerless, idle, abolish, wipe out, and be released from an association with someone or something.”¹¹⁴ Within this definition by Arndt and Gingrich, the two definitions that the NIV uses can be seen. The task is now to determine the meaning that fits the context of Rom 6:6. To accomplish this task the context of Rom 6:6 will be looked at.

The context of Rom 6:6 is the description of the believer's union with Christ in

¹¹³ C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 134.

¹¹⁴ W. Arndt & W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament*, 417.

Christ's death, burial and resurrection. In this context, it is stated that the old man/person was crucified with Christ in order that something might be done to the body of sin. If the body of sin is the human body that is controlled by sin, then, how can the human body be abolished when Christ was crucified? It is an obvious fact that believers still have their physical bodies. Thus, if the body of sin is the human body, then how can it have been done away with when it is still very much in existence? Paul writes that the ones who have died to sin, the ones in whom the body of sin has been dealt with, are to not let sin reign in their mortal bodies (Rom 6:12) nor to continue to present their bodies as instruments of wickedness but to present their bodies as instruments of righteousness (Rom 6:13). Here, the reality that those who have died to sin, those in whom the body of sin has been dealt with, still have their mortal bodies. Paul writes and says do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies. This must mean that those who have died to sin still have their mortal bodies. Thus, it is clear that the phrase that our body of sin might be done away with does not mean that our mortal bodies no longer exist. Thus the body of sin does not mean the mortal body.

The understanding that the body of sin does not mean the mortal body is seen in the literature that discusses the meaning of the body of sin. This phrase is found in Rom 6:6. Murray claims that the “body of sin” is the body as conditioned and controlled by sin, the sinful body.¹¹⁵ Cranfield would agree in part with this definition. He adds that the “body of sin” is the whole person controlled by sin. He goes on to posit that the “body of sin” and the “old man” are identical.¹¹⁶ McClain writes that the “body of sin” is the body

¹¹⁵ J. Murray, *The Epistle to The Romans*, 220.

¹¹⁶ C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary*, 134.

we have, in which sin finds an instrument.¹¹⁷ Moo disagrees with McClain. Moo asserts that the “body of sin” is not the physical body but the person as the instrument of contact with the world. He claims further that the “body of sin” is that aspect of the person which acts in the world and which is controlled by something else, either by the person's “new nature” or sin.¹¹⁸

On the surface, it would be easy to say that Moo's definition, in essence, is the same as McClain's. However, that may not be an accurate conclusion. Moo writes that the body of sin is the point of contact that the person has with the world. It is true, that the body is a person's point of contact with the world. It is also true to say that a person's mind is the point of contact with the world. It may also be true to say that a person's heart, soul and total being is the point of contact with the world. People do not “contact” the world with only “an aspect” of their total being, which is what Moo seems to imply that people do. Moo would have the reader believe that the body of sin is the aspect of the person which contacts and acts in the world. The total person has contact with and acts in the world. Thus, Moo's definition of the body of sin must be that the total person is the body of sin.

Gifford states that the “body of sin” is the body of the old man that was crucified. It is the natural body in its old condition, as the servant of sin.¹¹⁹ Bruce states that the “body of sin” is the sinful self. He further says that the body of sin is equivalent to the “flesh”, which he means is the unregenerate nature.¹²⁰ For Bruce the body of sin is not an aspect of the person, it is the total person. He then, would appear, to agree with Moo on

¹¹⁷ A. McClain, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace*, 144.

¹¹⁸ D. Moo, *The New International Commentary: The Epistle to The Romans*, 376.

¹¹⁹ E.H. Gifford, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 128.

¹²⁰ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 138.

the definition of the body of sin.

Beet holds the view that the “body of sin” is the sinner's own body in which sin has set up its royal throne.¹²¹ Sanday and Headlam agree with Beet in this definition of the body of sin. They write that the body of sin is the body of which sin has taken possession.¹²²

Thus, from the literature it can be seen that the phrase “body of sin” has reference to the relationship that the believer’s body has with sin. The literature is very clear, for the most part, to not simply call the physical body, the body of sin. There is no stating that the physical body is sinful because it is material. The conclusion to be reached is that the relationship that exists between the believer’s physical body and sin is called the body of sin.

On the other hand, if the meaning of καταργέω, in this context, is rendered ineffective, then, this would fit the context of Rom 6:6. The verse would then say: The old man/person was crucified with Christ in order that the body controlled by sin might be rendered ineffective, so that we no longer serve sin.

Paul writes that our old self was crucified with Christ, that our body of sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Rom 6:6). To understand the meaning of the phrase that states that our body of sin might be done away with, it is important to understand the phrase that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

In Rom 6:2 it is stated in answer to the question of continuing in sin (Rom 6:1), how shall we continue in sin since we have died to sin? Paul writes that “we” have died

¹²¹ J.A. Beet, *Exposition on Romans*, 179.

¹²² W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam, *The Epistle to The Romans* (New York: Charles Scribner and Son's, 1879), 158.

to sin. He then states the old self was crucified with Christ,¹²³ that means has died, in order that the body of sin might be done away with (Rom 6:6). The body of sin was done away with in order that “we” will no longer serve sin. When the body of sin is done away with, this results in freedom from sin. The body of sin, thus, has a relationship with serving sin. In other words, it was the body of sin that was serving sin. Paul writes that those in whom the body of sin has been done away with are no longer serving sin and are now enslaved to God, that is, serving God (Rom 6:22). The, “we” who have died to sin are the ones who have been crucified with Christ. The “we” who have died to sin are also the ones who are no longer serving sin. Thus, the ones who have died to sin are the ones who are no longer serving sin. Thus, it can be seen that the body of sin is the person under sin’s control or mastery.

Paul writes that the justified are to consider themselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:11).¹²⁴ Therefore, Paul writes, do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies that you should obey its lusts (Rom 6:12),¹²⁵ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin, but present yourselves to God (Rom 6:13). The reason is so that sin should no longer be the masters of the justified, those who have died to sin (Rom 6:14). Here, it is clear that those who have died to sin are those in whom the body of sin has been dealt with. It is also clear that those in whom the body of sin has been

¹²³ J.I. Packer says that when a person is “crucified with Christ” this means that the negative reaction to the law has been dethroned in them and the creating in them of a heart after God. This heart’s passion is holiness, J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 94 and a deep desire to know God and to please God, J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, 107.

¹²⁴ N. Anderson agrees with Paul. He says, “When your old self died with Christ on the Cross, your relationship with sin ended forever. You are no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit (Rom 8:1). Your old self, the sinner, and your old nature, are gone forever,” N. Anderson, *Victory Over Darkness*, 78.

¹²⁵ D. Francois Tolmie states that Paul in Rom 6:12-23 teaches that sin is attempting to “rule” the believer, D. Francois Tolmie, “Salvation as Redemption: The Use of ‘Redemption’ Metaphors in Pauline Literature,” in *Salvation in The New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* (ed. J.G. van der Watt; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 247-269.

dealt with still have their mortal bodies. Again, it is to be stated that when it is written so that the mortal body might be done away with, this does not mean the annihilation of the human body.

The body of sin is the human being under the mastery of sin. This is evident when Paul writes that those who have died to sin are alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:11). Being dead to sin and alive to God means that the justified are not presenting the members of their still existing bodies to sin but to God (Rom 6:13). Presenting oneself to God means that the person is not under the mastery of sin but is now serving God. Paul writes that a person freed from sin is one who is enslaved to righteousness that is to God (Rom 6:20, 22).¹²⁶

To have died to sin means that one is freed from sin (Rom 6:18). To be freed from sin is not through physical death, but through obedience to God and His teaching (Rom 6:17). Thus, it can be seen that to die to sin, in which the body of sin is dealt with, means that the person is no longer under sin's control but is now obedient to God (Rom 6:22).¹²⁷

¹²⁶ See D. Francois Tolmie, "Salvation As Redemption," 265-266 for a further discussion of "freedom" from sin being "slavery to God."

¹²⁷ R. Stedman's summary of Rom 6 is in agreement with this view. He summarizes: "What Paul makes clear in Rom 6 is that sin remains as an alien power trying to dominate and control our bodies and souls," R. Stedman, *From Guilt to Glory*, 190. In addition see E. Käsemann who writes concerning Rom 6:12-23 that "The apostle's concern is not with sinless-ness as freedom from guilt, but with freedom from the power of sin," *Commentary on Romans*, 174.

5. Rom 7

One view concerning Rom 7¹²⁸ is that Rom 7 is about the Law¹²⁹ and thus not applicable to Christians. However, this may not be an accurate statement. Rom 7 is written to Paul's brethren (Rom 7:1, 4). These two verses raise serious questions concerning the views that state that the emphatic "I" is anyone but a believer. Within Rom 7, Paul writes and says that the emphatic "I" has been released from the Law (Rom 7:6).¹³⁰ This statement alone raises serious questions concerning the view that the emphatic "I" is a person under the Law or is unregenerate. How can a person under the Law or an unregenerate person be a person who has been released from the Law? It can be stated at this point that the view that Rom 7 is not describing Christians because it is describing the Law must be seriously brought into question. The emphatic "I" also serves in newness of Spirit (Rom 7:6). To serve in newness of Spirit is to be understood as walking in newness of life (Rom 6:4).

¹²⁸ A. Segal is of the opinion that Rom 7 is in "the center of the darkest, thorniest and most disputed territory", A. Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 224. He also is of the opinion that Paul in Rom 7 is attempting to "meld two communities together," A. Segal, *Paul the Convert*, 253. The context of Rom 7 will show that Paul was writing about his relationship to law, the inner law and to the sin which remains within. The context does not support Segal's claim.

¹²⁹ G. Osborne writes: "There are two sections here. First, Rom 7:1-6 elaborates the 'not under law' of 6:14 and explains in more detail what this means, namely, that the bondage of the law has been broken. This is also the theme of chapter 6 as a whole, but 7:1-6 explains that the bondage has been broken by death, illustrating it with the metaphor of marriage (vv. 2-3), also a lifelong commitment broken only by death. The second section (vv. 7-25) takes up the dichotomy introduced in verse 6: the old way of the law (vv. 7-13) and the new way of the Spirit (vv. 14-25, paving the way for chap. 8), explaining how the law functions both positively and negatively. The view of some that this is an 'apology' for the law is partly true in the sense that Paul is clarifying his negative portrait in verses 1-6. But the negative effects of the law still continue. The law is not sin (v.7); it is holy, righteous, good (v.12) and spiritual (v.14); but it also produces coveting (v.8) as well as sin and death (vv. 9-11). So Paul seeks to show that while the law was a positive force, it had very negative effects," G. Osborne, *Romans*, 167. K. Haacker states that: "Rom 7 is fundamentally about the weakness of the law when confronted with human nature," I. H. Marshall, review of K. Haacker, *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Romans*, *EvQ* 77 (2005): 272-274. A question in response to Haacker is: Is the law weak or is human nature weak? The law is spiritual (Rom 7:14), thus from God. Human nature is weak, due to corruption by sin. G. Osborne adds that the "actual purpose of the law was not to save but to identify sin," G. Osborne, *Romans*, 166.

¹³⁰ See L.S. Rehmann, "The Doorway Into Freedom: The Case of The Suspected Wife in Romans 7:1-6," *JSNT* 79 (2000), 91-104 for an interpretation of the "suspected wife" as *sotah*, a woman whose jealous husband suspects of adultery. For a different view see Osborne who claims that Paul in Rom 7:1-6 is using a metaphor to explain a lifelong commitment broken only by death, Osborne, *Romans*, 167.

Those who walk in newness of life are those who have been buried with Christ in baptism (Rom 6:4). How can a person who is still under the law, that is a non-Christian, walk in newness of life, serve in newness of spirit and have been buried with Christ? The reality is a non-Christian cannot fit this description. It is only a Christian who fits this description. Thus, it can be seen from the context of Romans, that Rom 7 is describing a Christian. This understanding will be further explained and strengthened by the discussion that follows.

Rom 6 and 7 both state that justification by faith, the imputation and impartation of Christ's righteousness, to believers, does not lead to licentiousness. Paul states that justification by faith is the foundation of holiness. The teaching of these two chapters is that the one who is justified by faith will also begin the journey of sanctification, the becoming holy in daily experience. At justification, a believer enters into union with Christ. This union with Christ is the basis for sanctification. A believer, who is in a living, dynamic union with Christ, will also be in the process of becoming holy, that is sanctification. Stewart echoes this when he affirms: "There is no such thing as a union with Christ which does not have the most far reaching effects in the moral sphere. The man who comes to be in Christ has found the Supreme ethical dynamic."¹³¹ This understanding is very important, not only to the thesis of this study, but in Christianity itself.¹³² In addition, Osborne writes that "justification and sanctification are not two separate experiences but interconnected aspects of salvation. Justification is the first

¹³¹ J. Stewart, *A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion*, 157.

¹³² To attempt a detailed defense of this statement is beyond the scope of this study. It is to be stated, however, that faith without the accompanying works, is dead, see Jam 2:14-26. The further question of James' place in the Canon is also beyond the scope of this study.

moment of sanctification.”¹³³

The Christian is to consider him or herself dead to sin (Rom 6:7-11). However, being dead to sin cannot mean that the body is unresponsive. It is to be seen that the phrase dead to sin means freed from sin (Rom 6:7). Being freed from sin means: (1). Freed from sin’s penalty and condemnation (Rom 8:1). The one who is freed from sin expresses this freedom in not letting sin reign in their mortal bodies that the lusts of sin would be obeyed (Rom 6:12). It is written, “Don’t obey sin’s lusts.” This must mean that in the mortal bodies of those who have died to sin are sin’s lusts, (2). Freedom from sin also means not presenting the members of their bodies to sin as instruments of sin. This on the other hand means that the members of the body are presented to God as instruments of righteousness (Rom 6:13), (3). Being freed from sin also means that one is a slave to righteousness (Rom 6:18). (4) Freedom from sin is thus seen in a heart commitment to Christ and His teaching (Rom 6:17). (5). Being freed from sin is expressed and seen in sanctification (Rom 6:22). As it has been stated, justification, the dying to sin and being enslaved to God results in sanctification. If the identity of the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is found out to be a regenerate person, then this will lead to the need for further exploration as to the nature of sanctification. This further exploration of the nature of sanctification and of the more detailed examination of Rom 7 will be found in chapter 3 of this study.

¹³³ G. Osborne, *Romans*, 91.

6. Rom 8

Rom 8¹³⁴ continues the discussion of the sanctification of the believer.¹³⁵ Rom 7 begins the discussion of the struggle within the Christian. Rom 8 continues this discussion and explains further that Christians “groan” waiting for the redemption of the body (Rom 8:23). The groaning of Christians waiting for their bodies’ redemption are those who in whom the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled, those who do not walk according to the flesh, but who walk according to the spirit (Rom 8:4). This is referring to mature, spiritual Christians (Rom 8:12-15), those who are described as living in bodies that are dead to sin (Rom 8:10, 11). Mature Christians groan, waiting, for the redemption of their bodies. According to Rom 6, these bodies are dead to sin. The teaching that these bodies are dead to sin and that these groan must mean that there is a struggle going on within mature, spiritual Christians with sin. As will be seen later on, this teaching, that there is a struggle going on in the mature, spiritual Christian, is confirmed in other passages of Scripture. Osborne is of the opinion that Rom 7 describes life in the flesh and Rom 8 life in the Spirit.¹³⁶

Rom 8 is a chapter that describes how a Christian is to please God. However, within Rom 8, itself, is a description of not only how to please God, there is also within Rom 8 a description of the struggle within the believer with sin, the Christian who is

¹³⁴ G. Montague puts forth the opinion that Rom 8 describes the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian believer’s life, *The Living Thought of St. Paul* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1966), 181. E. Käsemann states that Rom 7 and Rom 8 form a unity, E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 191.

¹³⁵ M. Gorman calls Rom 8 “the climax of the section of Romans that begins at Rom 5:1,” M. Gorman, *Apostle of The Crucified Lord*, 374.

¹³⁶ G. Osborne, *Romans*, 167.

walking to please God.¹³⁷

Rom 8:7 describes a mindset set on the flesh. The mindset set on the flesh is the mindset of unbelievers (Rom 8:5, 6, compare with Rom 8:9, 10). The description of the mindset set on the flesh, which is not the mindset of Christians, is that this mindset does not, nor is it able to, subject itself to the Law of God. Rom 8, certainly a chapter that discusses the sanctification of Christians, clearly states that the mindset of Christians is subject to the Law of God. Christians are not free from obeying the spirit of the Law of God. In fact, the essence of salvation is the desire to obey God and to please Christ (2 Cor. 5:9).

The context of Rom 8:9-17 is that of a Christian believer living in a dead body. This dead body still is able to do misdeeds, though the mindset of the Christian is on obeying the law of God. Yet, this person, who has the Spirit of God dwelling within, is called an heir of God.

Rom 8:9-27 is a description of a Christian, who, still groans because he or she is still living in an unredeemed body (Rom 8:23),¹³⁸ who still struggles with weakness (Rom 8:26), who, lives in a body which is dead because of sin, yet their spirit is alive because of righteousness (Rom 8:10). In Rom 8:10 is a clear description of a Christian believer whose spirit desires holiness and righteousness while their body desires sin. This is the very same description of the emphatic “I” in Rom 7:22-25 where it says that there

¹³⁷ P. Melancthon says that Rom 8:1 “does not claim that there is no sin in the pious, but no condemnation,” *Commentary on Romans*, 163.

¹³⁸ S. Eastman claims that the reference to the “body” in Rom 8:23 can be understood in both an individual manner as referring “to those who are the Sons of God, that is, those who are led by the Spirit in the warfare against the flesh” and in a corporate sense as the full adoption of the Jewish people in the redemption through Christ.” S. Eastman, “Whose Apocalypse? The Identity of the Sons of God in Romans 8:19,” *JBL* 2 (2002): 263-277.

are two “laws” within the emphatic “I”. One “law” desires to obey God and the other “desires” sin (see especially Rom 7:23, 25). Thus, Rom 8:10 confirms the conclusion that the emphatic “I” of Rom 7 is a Christian believer.

Christian believers also live in bodies where they still suffer (Rom 8:18).¹³⁹ Christian believers are exhorted to put to death the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13). This can only be understood in the sense that the body still has deeds that must be put to death. If that is not the case, why then, would Christians be exhorted to put to death non-existent deeds? The body that is dead because of sin, which the believer has, cannot be dead in the sense that it does not function nor is it dead in the sense of not being physically alive. Dead because of sin means that the body is not alive in the sense that it has no relation to God. This is another way to say that the body is unredeemed (Rom 8:23). The word unredeemed means that the body is still in bondage to sin. The word used in Rom 8:23 to describe the “redemption” of the body is ἀπολύτρωσις, which means “recall of captives from captivity through the payment of a ransom for them”.¹⁴⁰ Louw and Nida define ἀπολύτρωσις as: “to release or set free, with the implied analogy to the process of freeing a slave.”¹⁴¹ Stott enlarges on this definition of redemption when he says, “To redeem is to buy or to buy back, whether as a purchase or a ransom. Inevitably, then, the emphasis of the redemption image is on our sorry state, indeed our captivity, in sin.”¹⁴² Rom 8:20-23 explains that creation itself is waiting to be set free into the freedom of the children of God. The freedom of the children of God is understood as freedom from sin

¹³⁹ The suffering of Rom 8:18 is certainly suffering from persecution, but it is also suffering from living and groaning in a body dead because of sin; see Rom 8:23.

¹⁴⁰ R. Trench, *Synonyms of The New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 290.

¹⁴¹ J. Louw & E. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Based on Semantic Domains*, 488.

¹⁴² J.R.W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 175.

and corruption. God's children experience this freedom now in the experience that is called the first fruits (Rom 8:23). This means that Christians have the Holy Spirit now and the presence of the Holy Spirit is the first fruits of the fullness that is to come. The experience of the first fruits is a freedom from sin (Rom 6:7). The Christian is then freed from sin. However, within this experience of freedom there is the groaning waiting for the full redemption of the body (Rom 8:23). The body in which Christians are still living is a dead body (Rom 8:10). Now of course, this does not mean that the body is dead in the sense that it cannot nor does not respond to the various stimuli. Free Christians are living in dead bodies. These are bodies that cause Christians to groan and to respond in ways that the believer does not want or desire.¹⁴³

How does the description of Christians who suffer because they live in unredeemed bodies, as recorded in Rom 8, differ from Rom 7:14-25? A tentative answer would be that the description of the struggle within the Christian who is walking to please God, as described in Rom 8 is not different than the description of the emphatic "I" found in Rom 7. It can also be said that Rom 7:14-25 is an enlargement of the struggle found in Rom 8.¹⁴⁴

7. Concluding Statement

The identity of the emphatic "I" and his/her spiritual portrait, in part, come out of the

¹⁴³ M. Gorman, *Apostle of The Crucified Lord*, 374-378, contains his discussion on the "struggle" of Christians which is found in Rom 8.

¹⁴⁴ This statement will be seen in more detail in chapter 3 of this study.

study of the context of Rom 1-8. The order and context of Rom 1-8 leads to the tentative conclusion that the “emphatic I” of Rom 7 is a Christian believer. Rom 1-4 describe the sinfulness of the human race and the provision that God has provided for salvation, which is faith in Christ. Rom 5 discusses the fact of justification. Rom 6, following Rom 5’s discussion of justification, describe in detail the Christian believer’s freedom from sin, positionally in Christ. Rom 7, following Rom 6’s description of the freedom of Christian believers in Christ, describe the present experience of Christian believers. Although they have been freed from sin in Christ, they still are in unredeemed bodies. The fact that Christian believers, in this world, are still living in unredeemed bodies is further stated in Rom 8:23. Rom 8 then describes the ever more and more victorious life that can be lived by the power of the Holy Spirit.