KARL BARTH, PECCABILITY & SARX

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INTRODUCTION

Theological discussions concerning the peccability or impeccability of Christ almost seem moot to the dispassionate observer. Both sides agree that Jesus, during his earthly life, did not sin. This is the resounding testimony of the early Church: Paul (1 Cor. 5:21), Peter (1 Pet. 2:21-23), John (1 John 3:5-6; Rev. 3:7), the author of Hebrews (4:14-16), and the Gospel writers (Luke 1:35; Mark 1:24; John 6:68-69). But, the question of could he have sinned reveals a lot about the character of humanity, the redemption Christ has provided through his earthly humiliation, and about the character of God himself.

In the past, the doctrine of the sinlessness of Christ included two important features: the freedom from actual sin and the freedom from inherent sin.¹ Christ not only abstained from sin throughout his work here on earth but he also lacked the inner proclivity or bent that all of Adam’s posterity inherited from their progenitor. Theologians have often linked the sinlessness of Jesus with the wrath-bearing, substitutionary work of Jesus on the cross. Robert A. Peterson rightly noted that “…the incarnation and sinless life of the Son of God are essential prerequisites for the redemption of Adam’s fallen sons and daughters…Christ had to live a sinless life in order to accomplish redemption. A sinner is unable to rescue sinners. Only a sinless savior will do.”²

Impeccabilitists affirm that Christ could not have sinned whereas peccabilitists affirm that, if he could not have sinned, his temptations were not valid and Christ’s incarnation debilitates into nothing more than a docetic sleight of hand. In response, impeccabilitists point

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¹ Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ.* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 221.

out that, whatever it meant for Jesus to be tempted, it was in some sense different because he lacked a sinful nature. Until recently, Jesus’ freedom from inherent sin was assumed. Since the Enlightenment though, this aspect of the sinlessness of Jesus has been questioned and outrightly rejected. Karl Barth (1886-1968), arguably one of the most pivotal theologians of the 20th century, was not the first person within church history to teach that Christ had a sinful nature. But, he is certainly the most important to do so. The goal of this research paper is to examine the most popular proponent of Christ having a sinful nature and question the exegetical viability of that interpretation within the book of Romans. Some closing appendixes are included with general theological reflections that relate to the peccability/impeccability debate, some thoughts on the temptations of Christ, modern translations of Romans 8:3, and a chart concerning Romans 7.

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3 Macleod, 222.

4 Ibid., 223.
KARL BARTH & SARX

Barth’s theology is very much “Christ-centered.” Commenting on what it means to view theology through Christ, Kenneth Kantzer remarked that, “For Barth, at least, this does not mean that the topics of theology are limited to a study of the person and work of Christ but rather that all theology finds its focal center in Christ and that all knowledge of God is obtainable only through Christ.”

Yet, Barth’s Christ-centeredness did not prevent him from affirming oddities concerning the nature of Christ. In his groundbreaking commentary on Romans, Barth taught that Jesus stands among sinners as a sinner. While discussing Romans 8, the theologian destroyed any hint of interpretive vagueness by affirming that “God sent His Son in the likeness of sin-controlled flesh. The innocent and direct life of the garden of Eden is not reproduced in the mission of the Son.” Sin-controlled flesh carries with it connotations of something “human, worldly, historical, natural, scintillating with every variation of ambiguity, a playground where men exercise their ingenuity in propounding all manner of noble and absurd ideas and notions, but a playground so covered with stones that each man stumbles after his own fashion.”

For Barth, the incarnation was the direct fusion of the God-head with human frailty and enmity in Jesus. Christ came not as a pre-Fall Adam, but as one of us with what we currently possess. Going further in his book Church Dogmatics, the scholar said:

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7 Ibid., 278.

8 Ibid., 280.
There must be no weakening or obscuring of the saving truth that the nature which God assumed in Christ is identical with our nature as we see it in the light of the Fall. If it were otherwise, how could Christ be really like us? What concern would we have with Him? We stand before God characterized by the Fall. God’s Son not only assumed our nature but He entered the concrete form of our nature, under which we stand before God as damned and lost. He did not produce and establish this form differently from all of us; though innocent, He became guilty; though without sin, He was made to be sin. But these things must not cause us to detract from His complete solidarity with us and in that way to remove Him to a distance from us.⁹

For Barth, that which is unassumed is unredeemed. Christ, not only had to redeem his people because they have a sinful nature (flesh), but he had to possess a sinful nature himself to rid us of our malady. Barth largely bases this view on Paul’s statements concerning the flesh or σάρξ in the letter to the Romans.

As Barth, so go other interpreters. Since the publishing of Barth’s commentary and dogmatic works, a litany of scholars and theologians have followed his unique interpretation of the word σάρξ. In their commentaries on Romans, both Anders Nygren and C.E.B. Cranfield agree that Christ had a body tainted with sin. Nygren wrote “It is therefore important that with Christ it is actually a matter of ‘sinful flesh,’…Christ’s carnal nature was no unreality, but simple, tangible fact. He shared all our conditions. He was under that same power of destruction.”¹⁰ In his magisterial work on the letter, Cranfield said, “Paul’s thought to be that the Son of God assumed the selfsame fallen human nature that is ours, but that in His case that fallen human nature was never the whole of Him—He never ceased to be the eternal Son of God.”¹¹

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Those who deny Christ had a sin nature are missing a fundamental aspect of the incarnation itself. In his book, *The Mediation of Christ*, Thomas Torrance argued that:

> Perhaps the most fundamental truth which we have to learn in the Christian church, or rather relearn since we have suppressed it, is that the Incarnation was the coming of God to save us in the heart of our fallen and depraved humanity, where humanity is at its wickedest in its enmity and violence against the reconciling love of God. That is to say, the Incarnation is to be understood as the coming of God to take upon Himself our fallen human nature, our actual human existence laden with sin and guilt, our humanity diseased in mind and soul in its estrangement or alienation from the Creator.\(^\text{12}\)

Jesus followed us in having a human nature that did not make sin inevitable in such a way as to undermine responsibility, yet did, nevertheless, make sin “highly probable.”\(^\text{13}\) For these interpreters, Christ’s abstinence from sin is heightened by the fact of his ontological “fallenness.”

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SARX EXAMINED IN ROMANS

Because the preceding interpretation is tied intricately to the use and meaning of the term σάρξ in chapter 8, an examination of the word within the entire book of Romans behooves readers of Scripture. The word occurs twenty-six times within the letter alone and, though used throughout the NT body of literature, is chiefly a Pauline construct. Many scholars and lexicographers have sought to categorize the term into five categories: 1) σάρξ can be used to denote the material covering the human or animal body, 2) σάρξ can be used as a byword for the human body as a whole, 3) σάρξ can be used more narrowly to the human being in general, 4) σάρξ can be used to reference to the human state or condition distinct from God, and 5) σάρξ can be used to designate a human being in contrast to God. With the exception of the second category, all the uses of σάρξ are found within the letter. Categories 1-4 are viewed as neutral and category 5 usually carries within it an ethically negative undertone.

An example of the first use of σάρξ is found in 2:28 where the apostle says “For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical (ἐν ζαπκὶ ).” In the passage, σάρξ is no more than the bodily member on which circumcision takes place. An example of the third use of σάρξ is Rom. 3:20 (“For by works of the law no human being [σὰρξ] will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.”). In the context of the passage, nothing more is meant than a generic designation for human. The fourth and fifth


categories comprise the largest use of σὰρξ throughout the book. Forming a group under the fourth rubric are those passages referring to human relationships based on natural birth processes. Paul was set apart as an apostle for the gospel of God that was “… concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα) and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit (Rom. 1:3-4).” In fact, any time σὰρξ is used structurally as κατὰ σάρκα + noun, moral neutrality is assumed. Other examples can be found in the following chapters (4:1, 8:b, 8:c, 9:3, 5, 8). The most plentiful use of σὰρξ is those within the fifth class. The negative nuance attached to σὰρξ comes by way of explicit contrast in most contexts. “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you (Rom. 8:9).” The contrast is striking throughout chapter 7 and 8 of Romans (as well as 13:14).


18 Ibid., 305.

19 Moo, The Challenge of Bible Translation, 371.

20 Though interpretive ambivalence may exist between the fourth and fifth categories at times, σὰρξ is within the semantic field assignment as follows: first (2:28), second (0), third (3:20), fourth (1:3, 4:1, 8:3b, 8:3c, 9:3, 5, 8), and fifth (7:5, 14, 18, 25, 8:3a, 4-9, 12-13, 13:14).
SARX & HOMOIOMA IN ROMANS 8:3

After an introspective look into the believer’s relationship to the Law, Paul reflects on whether or not the Law has the ability to transform human beings in the opening lines of chapter 8. In the mind of Paul, Christ has done what the law lacked the ability to do, release sinners from the bondage of death and decay brought by sin. The transition from the old age to the new—from the weakness of the “flesh” to the power of the Spirit—is brought about by the earth-shattering, epoch-changing incarnation of the Son of God.21 Christ defeated that which held the Christian captive by entering into their situation from the inside of the system itself. For the purpose of this paper, the central question that must be examined is “what does it mean for Christ to come ‘in the likeness’ of sinful flesh?”

Paul uses the term for flesh three times within the verse itself: What the Law could not do in that it was weakened through the σάρξ, God did: by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful σάρξ and as a sin offering, he condemned sin in the σάρξ.22 The first instance of flesh falls within the fifth categorical use of the term. Paul recapitulates the argument of 7:5 by noting that the Law is impotent to free the sinners because their sinful animal appetites that are so ingrained within their mortal state. The weakness of the flesh was perverted by sin into a force binding the whole human race to death.23 Most commentators agree that “flesh” denotes the fourth


22 τὸ γὰρ ἄδούνατον τοῦ νόμου ἐν ω ἦσθενει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἐαυτοῦ νιὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοίωματι σαρκός ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατάκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί.

categorical use of the term within the book of Romans. Flesh would then be merely the human condition in all its weaknesses. Any negative nuance in the term is muted by the adjective “ἁμαρτίας” that modifies σαρκός. Christ participated in the old realm of things which included the assault on his body caused by disease, death, and the weakness of humanity. The term ὁμοίωμα (likeness) suggests that the identity between Jesus and sinful human beings. He fully participated in the human condition in his incarnation. Does that mean Jesus possessed a sin nature? The answer to this lies in Paul’s use of likeness.

Why does the apostle use the term “ὁμοιώματι” in 8:3b? Cranfield lists five possible options: 1) he uses the term to avoid saying ἐν σαρκί because he did not want to imply the reality of Christ’s human nature, 2) he introduced the term to avoid implying that the Son of God assumed fallen human nature, 3) he introduces the term to emphasize that Jesus never sinned, 4) he uses the term to mean “form” instead of “likeness” without any suggestion of mere resemblance, and 5) he uses the term to express intention i.e. the Son of God’s intention was to take on sinful, human nature without ceasing to be the second person of the Trinity. Cranfield opts for the fifth option but this is doubtful for various reasons. The term “likeness” likely indicates an implicit distinction that would bespeak that Christ’s incarnation brought him into the

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24 Moo, The Challenge of Bible Translation, 371.


26 Ibid., 314.

27 Cranfield, 379-381.
closest relation to sinful humanity that it was possible for him to come without becoming himself sinful.  

There is identity but yet distinction. Douglas Moo notes:

The use of the term implies some kind of reservation about identifying Christ with “sinful flesh.” Paul is walking a fine line here. On the one hand, he wants to insist that Christ fully entered into the human condition, became “in-fleshed” (in-carnis), and, as such exposed himself to the power of sin. On the other hand, he must avoid suggesting that Christ so participated in this realm that he became imprisoned “in the flesh” (the negative use of the phrase in 7:5 and 8:8-9) and became, thus, so subject to sin that he could be personally guilty of it. ὁμοιόματι rights the balances that the addition of “sinful” to “flesh” might have tipped a bit too far in one direction.  

The apostle desires to go as far as possible concerning Jesus’ humanity yet still affirms that he does not share our fallenness. The last use of σάρξ likely falls into the third categorical use of the term. Christ did what the law could not do by coming in the likeness of human fallenness and condemned that fallenness in his physical body. The sinful flesh could not be healed or redeemed, only destroyed. Christ invaded and destroyed that which invaded and destroyed humanity.

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28 John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 280


30 Dunn, 439.
CONCLUSION

Christ came in real flesh but he did not come in “sinful flesh” because sin gained no foothold in his life; he is said therefore to have come “in the likeness of sinful flesh”, so that, when he presented his life as a sin-offering, God thus “condemned sin in the flesh”—passed the death-sentence on it by virtue of the sinless humanity of Christ. Paul’s use of likeness protects the apostle from implying Jesus possessed a sinful flesh despite taking on the human condition in order to redeem and recapitulate the beloved fallen mess.

It would seem that Barth has failed to appreciate how wide the total semantic range of the word σάρξ actually is within the book of Romans. This is an example of a known exegetical fallacy. Words do not have meaning but have multiple usages in any given context. The context of each passage always determines the meaning. Barth and others have not sufficiently shown that Christ coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh” literally means Christ came “in sinful flesh” without any hint of ontological distinction. Therefore, the impeccabilist still possesses good reason to argue that Christ’s temptations are very real but also somewhat different as well. He was really tempted but his temptations are different because he is not merely or only human. He is the Son of God who became human and died in our place for our salvation and God’s glory.

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31 Bruce, 204-205.


APPENDIX 1

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS CONCERNING IMPECCABILITY

Some other theological and biblical reflections are included relating specifically to Jesus not having a sinful nature and also the impeccability/peccability debate as a whole. Certain implications flow from the following considerations: 1) Scripture's positive attestations to Jesus' holiness and righteousness, 2) what the OT required of a valid sacrifice, 3) the hypostatic union, and 4) the nature of prophecy and fulfillment.

1. Scripture is very clear concerning not only Christ’s abstinence from sin but also his inherent holiness and righteousness. He is called the following titles: God’s holy servant Jesus (Acts 4:29-30), the Righteous One (Acts 7:51-52), the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21), Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1), pure (1 John 3:3), the holy one (Rev. 3:7), and a litany of other morally virtuous titles and descriptors. This is the unanimous testimony of demons (Mark 1:24), angels (Luke 1:35), disciples (John 6:68-69; Acts 3:14, 4:27), and even Jesus’ own enemies (John 8:46). The Bible certainly speaks, not of a final victory over sinful, rebellious desire, but of a holiness which pervades his entire existence, inside and outside.³⁴ When Scripture calls our attention to the purity of Christ, it is to be understood of his human nature, for it would have been superfluous to say God is pure.³⁵

2. The OT’s teaching on the nature of the sacrifices are quite clear. They were to be unblemished (Lev. 1:3; Deut. 15:21; Mal. 1:7-8; Heb. 9:12-14). If Christ possessed a


sinful nature, he would have been morally blemished. If Christ would have possessed a sinful nature, he would have been subject to the penalties of original sin and thus disqualified from vicariously taking upon himself the penalty due our sin.36

3. The hypostatic union is one of the most important features evident within the debates. The orthodox doctrine holds that in the one person Jesus Christ there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, each in its completeness and integrity, and that these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby.37 A.W. Pink notes that “In Him were united (in a manner altogether incomprehensible to created intelligence) the Divine and the human natures. Now ‘God cannot be tempted with evil’ (James 1:13); ‘it is impossible for God to lie’ (Heb. 6:18). And Christ was ‘God manifest in flesh’ (1 Tim. 3:16); ‘Immanuel’—God with us (Matt. 1:23). Personality centered not in His humanity. Christ was a Divine person, who had been ‘made in the likeness of men’ (Phil. 2:7).”38 Pink also lists Christ’s omnipotence and immutability as further reasons why the ability to sin was an absolute impossibility. Concerning the James passage, God is incapable of tempting others to evil, because He is Himself absolutely insusceptible to evil.39 God literally lacks anything within his nature that merits desire for evil. He lacks any moral failing that would lend him to see sin as

36 Moo, Romans, 479.
37 Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), 673.
appealing. The incarnation was this holy being taking on human nature; He did not cease to be God but become the God-man.

4. Jonathan Edward’s connected the impeccability of Christ with God’s promises of redemption in the OT and Scripture’s fulfillment in the NT. In The Freedom of the Will, the theologian remarks that, “God’s absolute promise makes the things promised necessary, and their failing to take place absolutely impossible: and, in like manner, it makes those things necessary, on which the thing promised depends, and without which it cannot take effect. Therefore it appears, that it was utterly impossible that Christ’s holiness should fail, from such absolute promises as these …That it should have been possible that Christ should sin, and so fail in the work of our redemption, does not consist with the eternal purpose and decree of God.” 40 The decrees of God concerning salvation are so sure that they would dilute the possibility of Christ’s unfaithfulness.

APPENDIX 2

CHRIST’S TEMPTATIONS

Some would assert that if the impeccability of Jesus is true, then the temptations of Christ seem to be pointless or even an illusion. It is important to argue that if our speculation on the question of whether Christ could have sinned ever leads us to say that he was not truly tempted, then we have reached a wrong conclusion, one that contradicts the clear statements of Scripture (Heb. 4:15, Luke 4:2). It is posited that if Christ could not have sinned, his temptations were not valid. Temptations require susceptibility. This inference though does not seem to be an obvious fact. In the OT, at least twenty-seven incidents or references are recorded in which it is said that God has been or might be tested. Yet, the possibility for the Father sinning does not exist (Jas. 1:13; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). Surely those temptations are still actual realities within the Scriptures. Furthermore, it is no more correct to say temptations are not valid unless one can sin any more than it would be correct to say that because an army cannot be conquered, it cannot be attacked. The underlying presupposition is that whatever is true for sinful man must also be true for the sinless God-man. He is either like sinful humanity or he is not like humanity at all. This does not seem wise. Leon Morris remarks that “We must not make the mistake of taking our imperfect lives as the standard, and regarding Christ as human only as he conforms to our failures. He is the standard, and he shows us what a genuine humanity can be.” Furthermore,

41 Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 538.
42 Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology. (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), 75.
sin is not native to, is not intrinsic to, human nature; it is anti-nature.\textsuperscript{45} It is a poison or perversion of human nature.

What then is the nature of Christ’s temptations if he lacked the internal bent towards sin like fallen humanity? Did he experience temptations as all? Catholic theologians Fernando Braña and Lucas F. Seco postulate that, “Christ did experience temptation. It was not temptation \textit{ab intrinseco} (which stem’s from one’s inner disorder) but a temptation \textit{ab extrinseco}, from outside. But this does not mean that Christ did not experience genuine temptation. Christ felt the devil bearing down on him, and also pressure from people and pressure of events, all pushing him to be untrue to his mission, to debase his messiahship. There were real temptations, which do not imply interior stress in the person who experiences them, but they do call for fortitude if they are to be rejected.”\textsuperscript{46} He was very much like Adam and Eve in the garden who lacked sinful natures but were still tempted to not be faithful to God’s will for them.

The temptations of Jesus are very real and very important for the life of the believer. Gerald Bray rightly notes that, “although the sinlessness of Jesus makes him different from other human beings, it does not cut him off from us because it is the very thing that he came to give us, who are just as capable of receiving it as he was of living it out in his earthly life.”\textsuperscript{47} In Matthew 4, Jesus responds to each temptation by quoting from Deuteronomy, linking his experience to Israel’s in the desert. In Deut. 8.2, Moses reminds the Israelites of God’s testing through hunger and his miraculous provision of manna. They failed where they should have been victorious. The

\textsuperscript{44} Leon Morris, \textit{The Lord from Heaven}. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958), 75.


\textsuperscript{46}Fernando Braña and Lucas F. Seco, 193.

\textsuperscript{47} Gerald Bray, \textit{God is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology}. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 578.
point of the text is that Jesus is the truest Jew. He will succeed where Israel failed. He is also
Adam in the garden. He will stand firm and not give into temptation but rely on Yahweh’s Word
for sustenance. They both communicate something deeply profound. Jesus will succeed where
Adam, Israel, and, ultimately, where we fail. He is the truest man and fully qualified to represent
us as our majestic covenant head (Rom. 5:12-21).
APPLENIX 3

VARIOUS MODERN TRANSLATIONS OF ROMANS 8:3

NIV: For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh.

CEB: God has done what was impossible for the Law, since it was weak because of selfishness. God condemned sin in the body by sending his own Son to deal with sin in the same body as humans, who are controlled by sin.

ESV: For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

HCSB: What the law could not do since it was limited by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending His own Son in flesh like ours under sin’s domain, and as a sin offering,

KJV: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

NET: For God achieved what the law could not do because it was weakened through the flesh. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

NLT: The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

CEV: The Law of Moses cannot do this, because our selfish desires make the Law weak. But God set you free when he sent his own Son to be like us sinners and to be a sacrifice for our sin. God used Christ’s body to condemn sin.

TNIV: For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful humanity to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in human flesh,

NASB: For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,
APPENDIX 4

ROMANS 7: REGENERATE OR UNREGENERATE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The shift to the present tense in 7:14-25 is most naturally explained by the supposition that in the previous verses Paul’s pre-Christian experience was detailed, while in vv. 14-25 he recounts his present experience.</th>
<th>The structure of the text supports a pre-Christian experience in two ways: vs. 5’s contrasting relationship with vs. 6 and the relationship between vv. 13 and 14.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If vv. 14-25 related to pre-Christian experience, one would expect the text to conclude with the words “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”</td>
<td>Present tense verbs do not necessarily indicate “present” time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the text there is a duality between the two “I”s. This opens the door for a Christian experience.</td>
<td>No strict separation between the two “I”s can be maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a desire to keep the Law. Also, the very presence of a struggle suggests a regenerated life.</td>
<td>The contrast between Rom. 7:14-25 and 8:1-17 is so dramatic that it is difficult to believe that the experience delineated is Christian in both cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The objection that the depiction of the Christian life is too bleak and dark misunderstands the complexities of how Paul explains the believer’s life in this world.</td>
<td>Nowhere in vv. 14-25 is the Holy Spirit mentioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an already-but-not-yet conception found in chapter 7 that is evident in other portions of Romans.</td>
<td>The struggle with the desire to keep the Law is also typical of a pious Jew or a moral person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a possible parallel for this interpretation found in Galatians 5:16-18</td>
<td>It is hard to believe that Christians can be “under sin” as described in vs. 14.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The typical Christian has a similar experience as Paul describes in their own struggle for holiness.</td>
<td>The depth of defeat seems to contradict earlier statements Paul makes about the believer’s relationship to sin.</td>
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