



Paul's Behavior Problem: The Neurological Explanation of Paul's Dilemma in Rom 7:15-25; The Greek Present Tense: Importance; Regular & Special Uses

1. With this sovereign authority the sinful nature is able to develop wheel-tracks of wickedness which fulfill the desires of its lust pattern.
2. These behavior patterns, developed between the moment of physical birth up to the moment of salvation, are facilitated into paths of least resistance.
3. The suggestion that a person can override these wheel-tracks by merely resolving in his mind to make Christ Lord of his life is ludicrous and denies the necessity of the Word of God in the renovation of the believer's thought process.
4. If the believer fails to commit his life to Christ it is because he has fallen back under the tyranny of the first husband and has willfully submitted to its authority.
5. Thus, the culprit in the second marriage is not the sinful nature—the first husband—but the wife of the new marriage—the believer—who makes personal volitional decisions that result in a willing involvement in a spiritual *ménage à trios*.
6. This sets the stage for the remainder of the chapter which deals with Paul's behavior problem: Romans 7:15-25.

3. Paul's Behavior Problem: The Neurological Explanation of Paul's Dilemma in Romans 7:15-25

In our examination of this passage we will not give it the full treatment. The formal study occurred from May 12 through August 18, 1996 and covered 46 lessons. If you are interested, taped lessons are available on request and class notes can be downloaded from the Doctrines on Diskette page of the Web site. Select the Christian Way of Life Series and reference lessons 284-329: <http://www.gdcmedia.org/MediaMins/dod.asp>

This review is designed to remind you of the application of *The Theology of Neurology* to Romans 7 and once done will serve as an inventory for recall as we examine two chapters from Dr. Jeffrey Satinover's book, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*.

In this review we will only exegete verbs and our commentary will be restricted to their analysis. The translations will be those which were developed in the original study and will reflect the result of the entire exegesis.

Before we begin this portion of our study it is important to remind you of the various uses of the Greek present tense.

A. The Greek Present Tense:

1. The importance of tense in the Greek language is discussed by Drs. H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey in their textbook, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. It is from their scholarship that we will define the several uses of the Greek present tense.

Dana, H. E. & Julius R. Mantey. *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. (Toronto: The Macmillian Co., 1955), 176-78:

No element of the Greek language is of more importance to the student of the New Testament than the matter of tense. A variation in meaning exhibited by the use of a particular tense will often dissolve what appears to be an embarrassing difficulty, or reveal a gleam of truth which will thrill the heart with delight and inspiration. (p. 176)



The Greeks themselves always observed with conscious accuracy their tense distinctions. It is certainly unsafe to proceed upon any supposition other than that the New Testament writer used the tense which would convey just the idea he wished to express. This is the rule, and all seeming exceptions are to be regarded with doubt.

There are three fundamental tenses in Greek: the present, representing *continuous action*; the perfect, representing *completed action*; and the aorist (ἀόριστος, *aoristos*: no boundaries), representing *indefinite action*.

2. In our study we will emphasize the present tense whose fundamental idea is that of progress. It has three regular uses and five special uses. We will define each from Dana and Mantey, pp. 182-86:

Regular Uses of the Present:

- (1) **The Progressive Present.** It signifies action in progress, or a state of persistence. In the indicative mood it is related to present time and ... may denote three points of view.
 - a. The present tense may be used in a sense of **description**, to indicate that which is now going on. This use might almost be called the "**pictorial present**," since its distinctive force is to present to the mind a picture of the events as in process of occurrence.
 - b. The present tense is used to denote the continuation of **existing results** [sometimes called the **perfective present**]. Here it refers to a fact which has come to be in the past, but is emphasized as a present reality.
 - c. Sometimes the progressive present is **retroactive** in its application, denoting that which has begun in the past and continues into the present. We may call it the present of **duration** or **durative**.
- (2) **The Customary Present.** Used to denote that which habitually occurs, or may be reasonably expected to occur.
- (3) **The Iterative Present.** Used to describe that which recurs at successive intervals. It is sometimes called the present of "**repeated action**."

Special Uses of the Present:

- (1) **The Aoristic Present.** Expresses the idea of punctiliar action in present time. It is used for those instances in which an action of present time is conceived of without reference to its progress.
 - (2) **The Futuristic Present.** Denotes an event which has not yet occurred, but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.
 - (3) **The Historical Present.** Employed when a past event is viewed with the vividness of a present occurrence.
 - (4) **The Tendential Present.** Used of an action that is purposed or attempted, though it is not actually taking place. It represents the idea of that which is intended or inclined to occur—that which tends toward realization.
 - (5) **The Static Present.** Used to represent a condition which is assumed as perpetually existing, or to be taken for granted as a fact.
3. Romans 7:15-25 is replete with the present tense in its various uses. In fact, within these eleven verses Paul uses 38 verbs, 36 of which are in the present tense.
 4. We are going to exegete each of the 36 present tenses and note the neurological application to each of them.



5. Assisting you in this study are two visuals: (1) **“Present Tenses in Romans 7:15-25”** (2 pages); and (2) **“Uses of the Greek Present Tense.”**