

The Law is Spiritual, Paul is Tendentally Carnal, Romans 7:14**Romans 7:14**

Verse 14 begins with the conjunctive use of the particle: *gar* - “Consequently.”

This refers back to the entire discussion beginning in verse 1 which comprises the first two paragraphs of chapter 7. Paragraph 1 dealt with the two marriages of the person who becomes a believer in Jesus Christ followed by a paragraph discussing the Mosaic Law as counselor to the first marriage.

From all of this, what has been learned to this point? A verb for knowledge comes next, the present active indicative of: *oida* - “knowledge; cognizance.” Refers to information resident in long-term memory traces.

Paul has gone through 13 verses explaining to the members of the church of Rome their relationship with their sinful nature, the Mosaic Law, and Jesus Christ as their second Husband. This is now understood by them. They are cognizant of the concept. They have this knowledge in their streams of consciousness.

What they are to have discerned from Paul's teachings to this point is stated next and is introduced by the conjunction: *hoti* - Introduces the content of the memory trace. It is not translated but is the manner by which the Greek indicates the content of the knowledge mentioned in context.

Next comes the statement of what is known; first of all, the noun: *nomos* - “The Law” + the present active indicative of the verb: *eimi* - “is.”

CTL: “Consequently, we comprehend in long-term memory traces that the Law is ...”

present - Static; represents a condition which perpetually exists and must be taken for granted as a fact. What we are about to see stated regarding the Law is a biblical absolute.

active - Mosaic Law produces the action of the verb by possessing an intrinsic characteristic. indicative - declarative; a statement of biblical fact.

What the Law is said to perpetually be is stated next by the predicate adjective: *pneumatikos* - “spiritual.”

“Consequently, we comprehend in long-term memory traces that the Law is spiritual ...”

This statement of what is clearly understood regarding the Law is followed by a pivotal statement in Paul's presentation. It is introduced by the conjunctive particle *de* which sets up a contrast with the previous clause and is translated “but.” Paul uses himself as the subject of the final phrase, the pronoun *ego* - “I.”

The primary subject of the first half of Romans 7 has been the sinful nature, or the husband of the first marriage. Now the emphasis shifts in the second half of Romans 7 to the wife of the second marriage, the soul of the believer with emphasis on his volition. This principle will develop as we continue with our exegesis of this verse and will be further amplified as we proceed through the remainder of the chapter.

Next comes the verb. If ever you wonder why we go through detailed exegesis at times it is because not only are doctrines constructed from exegesis but statements in the English which are apparently contradictory are resolved in this manner. It therefore becomes very important to note the analysis of the present active indicative of the verb: *eimi* - The verb “to be” translated “am” followed by the predicate nominative adjective: *sarkinos* - “fleshly; belonging to the realm of the flesh”

CTL: “... but I am fleshly ...”

Paul places the responsibility of his stated condition on himself. He has placed himself in the realm of the flesh. How? Through volition! While in unbelief, he was in slavery to his sinful nature as first husband. This condition was revealed to him through the Tenth Commandment which is said to be spiritual.

“*Fleshly*” is a way to state the literal condition of the believer who is out of fellowship and under the authority and control of his first husband. Since he is under the control of the sinful nature, and since its base of operations is the genes of the DNA and activated in the brain's neural nuclei, then he classifies himself as being under the control of his own flesh.

Remember verse 5 of Romans 7:

Romans 7:5 - While we were in the flesh [under the authority of the sinful nature as first husband], the sinful trends, which through the Law were operative in our members [the brain's neural nuclei which contain DNA which itself is made up of over 100,000 genes, some 1,000 of which are encoded with the trends of the sinful nature], resulted in the production of fruit from the source of our spiritual death [sin, human good, and evil].

In Romans 7:14, the word “*fleshly*” refers to His being under the control of his “*members*” with emphasis on the brain. The Greek word for “*flesh*” is *sarx* and refers to the body, the word *sarkinos* is an adjective and refers to a condition, lifestyle, or behavior pattern which is influenced by the fleshly environment.

What Paul is saying is that he is carnal, out of fellowship, and under the control of his sinful nature.

Question: How can Paul be writing Scripture while out of fellowship and under the control of his sinful nature?

Answer: The tendential present tense of the verb *eimi*.

(Stay awake! This is very important!)

present - Tendential; The present tense may be used of action which is purposed or attempted though it is not actually taking place. The tendential present represents the idea of that which is inclined to occur—that which tends to realization.

active - Paul, the human author of Romans, thus presents himself as an example of how the believer's common experience after salvation is to fall under the influence of the first husband by submitting to the temptations of his lust pattern.

indicative - Potential; indicates contingency which introduces the concept of free will.

There are two English words used in the analysis of this verb which must be defined in order for you to receive its full impact:

1. Tendential: The adjectival form of the noun “tendency,” a proneness to a particular kind of thought or action. Implies an inclination* sometimes amounting to an impelling force. A tendential present tense therefore presents a condition which is not going on at present but one which is inclined to occur under certain circumstances.

* **Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “inclination, incline, predispose”:**

Inclination: Natural disposition: character. Propensity, especially liking. A tendency to a particular state, character, or action.

Incline: Implies a tendency to favor one of two or more actions.

Predispose: Implies the operation of an influence well in advance of the opportunity to express itself.

2. Contingency: Likely to occur but not logically necessary; dependent on or conditioned by something else; determined by free choice.

Therefore, the tendential present qualified by the element of contingency found in the potential indicative indicates that Paul is not carnal as he writes but states that he has the tendency to become so. This statement may best be translated into the English “... *but I am tendentially carnal.*”