

How things fit together in the Kingdom

Is it Really “The Law of the Spirit”?



WARNING: The vast majority of those who translate the Bible are in the Christian religion and are in some level of legalism. They translate out of their Christian worldview, so it actually influences how they interpret the original manuscripts.

We read in Romans¹ about “the law of the Spirit”, but is that what the writer was wanting us to comprehend? The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) and the Orthodox Jewish Bible (OJB) go as far as using the term “Torah” in it’s translation, giving it the air of a dictum from ‘God’¹.

The 61 translations available on BibleGateway² do not all agree on the translation of the verse, indicating that the original Koine Greek wasn’t specifically clear in what Paul was wanting to convey. Here are some examples of the variety they present to the reader:

- “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.”³
- “because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.”⁴
- “For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”⁵
- “For the Law of the Spirit of life *which is* in Christ Jesus, hath freed me from the Law of sin and of death.”⁶
- “because the Spirit’s law of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”⁷
- “Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit that brings life made you free from the law that brings sin and death.”⁸
- “For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.”⁹
- “For the Law of the Spirit of life, Who is in Christ Jesus, has freed me from the Law of sin and of death.”¹⁰

The question now is: Which one of these did Paul have in his mind when he wrote the text, way back in the 1st Century?

See the problem?

NOTE: I haven’t included modern translations such as The Voice, The Living Bible and the Message, etc., which are paraphrases designed to convey the meaning rather than what was written.

1 – ‘God’: I use this term in inverted commas because ‘God’ is the generic term people use, while I don’t any more. I have an intimate relationship with the members of the Trinity, so I refer to them by name out of relationship.

2 – www.biblegateway.com

3 – ASV

4 – CSB

5 – EHV

6 – GNV

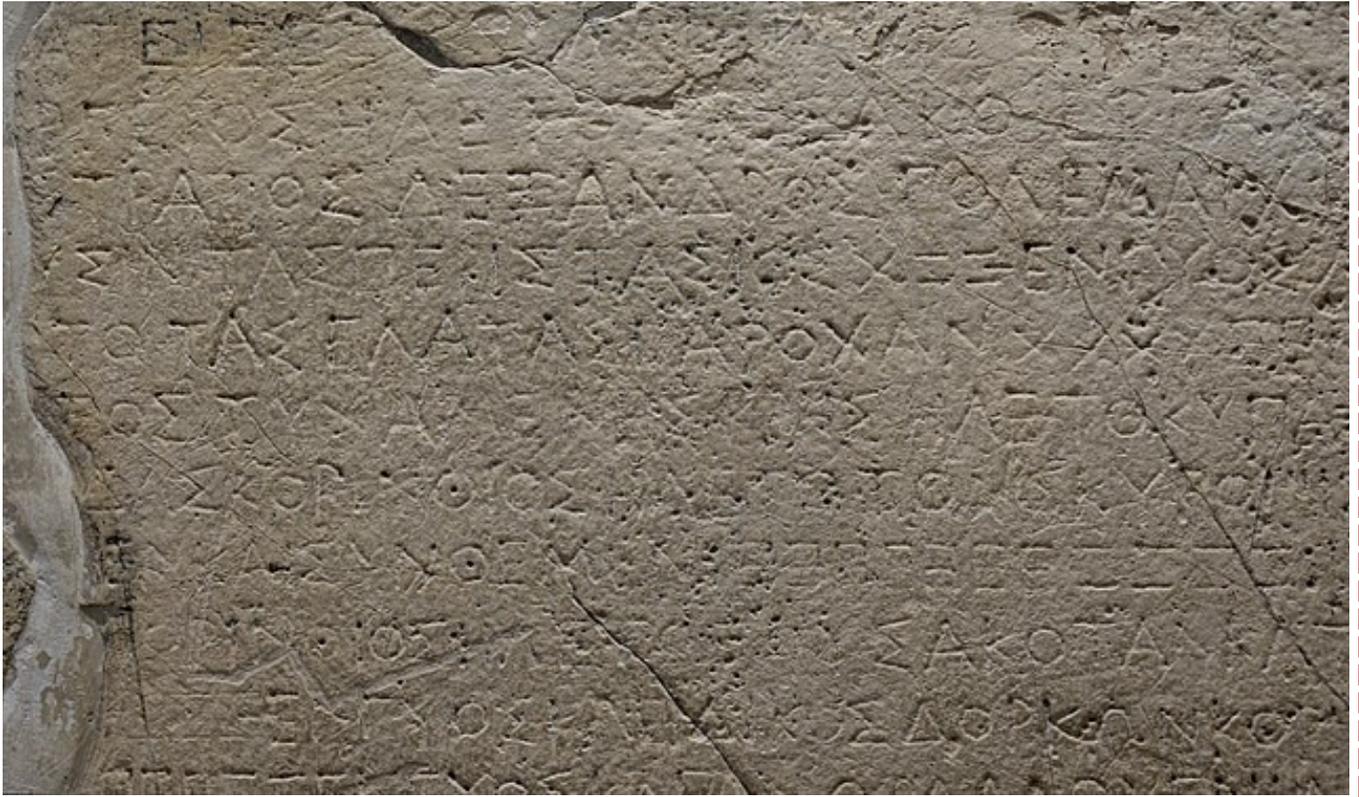
7 – HCSB

8 – NCV

9 – NET

10 – RGT

It's important to note, as I've mentioned before,¹¹ that there was no uppercase 'Spirit' (Holy Spirit) in the original Greek text to distinguish it from lowercase 'spirit' (our spirit). That's because the original Greek was written entirely in uppercase, without any punctuation and without the separation of words.¹² That's one reason why the NT Greek can be translated in various ways.



Here are a couple of other translations which vary in important ways:

- “For the law of the Spirit of life [which is] in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” (AMP)¹³
- “For the “law” of the Spirit of life flowing through the anointing of Jesus has liberated us from the “law” of sin and death.” (TPT)¹⁴
- “The standards of the Spirit, who gives life through Christ Jesus, have set you free from the standards of sin and death.” (GW)¹⁵

The Amplified translation qualifies “law of the Spirit of life” as “the law of our new beginning”, not a law of ‘God’ and therefore having nothing to do with legalism.

The Passion Translation was created by Brian Simmons from the Greek and the Aramaic, as he was instructed to do by our King. He was commissioned to do the translation with the aim of getting across what the writers on the NT documents were wanting us to know. This translation of Romans 8:2 has law in speech marks. That’s significant because it takes what it’s referring to outside of ‘God’s’ OT law which Christians are fond of bringing over into the New Covenant. The translation also shows that the life-spirit we now possess, flows through the spiritual anointing we have in our regenerated spirit.

God’s Word translation substitutes ‘standards’ for ‘law’ taking it right outside of any connection with legalism. That’s very significant, as I’ll address later. Secondly, it separates Spirit as a law and identifies it

11 – “There’s Spirit and there’s spirit” canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/There-is-spirit-and-there-is-spirit.pdf

12 – GRAPHIC: Zde, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inscription_accouting_texts_temple_of_Asklepios_AM_of_Epidauros_202595.jpg

13 – The Amplified Bible

14 – The Passion Translation

15 – God’s Word Translation

as a life-giving spirit. That's also significant, but it's also extremely accurate – the Spirit gives life.ⁱⁱ

So, there are a number of things to take away from these 3 translations:

1. The Greek word translated as 'law' is not necessarily referring to a legal system.
2. 'Law' is not necessarily what Paul was referring to.
3. The Spirit gives life, rather than being the spirit of life.

Now, let's look at the Expanded Bible translation:

- “[For] Through [*or In*] Christ Jesus the law [principle; *or power*] of the Spirit that brings life set you free from the law [principle; *or power*] that brings sin and death.”

What we note in this exegetical ('to discover the original intent of a word'¹⁶) version of the NT is that 'principle' or 'power' are two other meanings of the word that Paul may have been wanting to convey. Christians think 'law' because they're taught to be legalistic by studying the OT. 'Principle' agrees with 'standards' in God's Word translation (above) but also with J.B. Phillip's translation as well:

- “For the new spiritual principle of life “in” Christ lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death.” (PHILLIPS)

What about 'power'?

The Expanded Bible has this footnote for verse 1, which precedes the verse we are looking at:

- After 'guilty' some Greek copies continue, “those who do not live in the power of their sinful selves, but in the power of the Spirit.”¹⁷

Note the use of 'power' in these other Bible manuscripts.

'Power' fits well in context with the rest of the verses around it.ⁱⁱⁱ Although there are references to the Law of Moses^{iv}, the operative theme within the 4 verses is the powerlessness of the Law to control sin in people's lives. For example:

- “For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh,”^v

The spirit therefore empowers us to deal with sin so we agree with the law. That's provided “we are living no longer by the dictates of our sinful nature, but in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit.”^{vi}

It appears just as credible, then, that Paul wasn't talking about the 'Law of the Spirit', but the powerful life we have through Holy Spirit to live a life free from sin.

Checking Romans 8:2 in two of my cross-reference Bibles I discovered that the references used to support “law of the Spirit” are completely irrelevant. The commentary comments on the verse in one of the Bibles is ‘clutching at straws’ while trying to explain what “law of the Spirit” means. I found exactly the same for “law of sin and death”. That means that **both laws are not mentioned anywhere else in scripture** – nowhere. That means there's no justification for translating the verse that way.

The “law of sin and death” may be relating to what The Lord said to Adam and Ezer¹⁸ in the garden: “Don't eat the fruit of the tree against my direction (i.e. sin) or you'll die”. That does seem like a law because death always comes from sin.^{vii}

Opposing that, Jesus demonstrated that he had power over sin and death^{viii} and we have that same power because his life-giving Spirit lives inside of us.

16 – www.biblestudy.org/beginner/definition-of-christian-terms/exegesis.html

17 – www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208:1-3&version=EXB#en-EXB-28006

18 – “5-Revealing Ezer” canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/05-Revealing-Ezer.pdf

Conclusion

Which interpretation of Romans 8:2 makes logical sense?

Let's answer that from a **KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE**.

From a Kingdom perspective, that is, from a knowledge of Father's heart, the reality of Holy Spirit's function and what the Trinity's plan has always been for humanity, the best understanding is this one:

- "For the new spiritual principle of life "in" Christ lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death." (J.B. Phillips)

See how an understanding of the reality of the **KINGDOM**, being taught by Father and having greater understanding of the realities of our spiritual life, gives us a different **PERSPECTIVE**? It takes us right away from religion and legalism and helps us comprehend the greatness of the New Covenant and our life as Father's sons.

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References are on the next page

REFERENCES

- i – Romans 8:2
- ii – Romans 8:10; 2 Corinthians 3:6
- iii – Romans 8:1-4
- iv – Romans 8:3 [See EXB, CEV, NLT]
- v – Romans 8:3 (NIV) [See also: ISV, NABRE, NIVUK]
- vi – Romans 8:4 (PHILLIPS)
- vii – Romans 5:12; 6:16, 23; 1 Corinthians 15:56; James 1:15
- viii – Romans 6:9-10; 1 Peter 3:18