

Romans 7:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Analysis

But I see another law in my members—Blepō de heteron nomon en tois melesin mou (βλέπω δὲ ἔτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου, "but I see a different law/principle in my members") introduces the counter-force to v. 22's inward delight. Mele (μέλη, "members") refers to bodily faculties as instruments of remaining sin. This "law" is sin's patterns operating through the flesh.

Warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members—Antistrateuomenon (ἀντιστρατευόμενον, "making war against") is military terminology for active combat. Aichmalōtizonta (αἰχμαλωτίζοντα, "taking captive") depicts prisoners of war. The "law of my mind" (tō nomō tou noos mou) is regenerate reason aligned with God; "law of sin" (tō nomō tēs hamartias) is remaining corruption. These wage war continuously, with sin temporarily gaining advantage, producing Paul's anguish (v. 24).

Historical Context

Paul's warfare metaphor would resonate with Roman believers familiar with military conquest imagery. The Christian life is depicted not as peaceful coexistence between flesh and Spirit but total war, with the Spirit ultimately victorious (chapter 8) but real battles lost along the way. This realism prevents triumphalist presumption while maintaining confidence in final victory.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Where do you most clearly see the 'warfare' between the law of your mind (regenerate desire) and the law of sin (remaining corruption)?
2. How does the warfare metaphor help you understand why sanctification feels like battle rather than automatic progression?
3. What strategies has God given you for fighting sin's 'captive-taking' attempts?

Interlinear Text

βλέπω δὲ ἔτερον νόμῳ ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου
I see But another law in which members my
G991 G1161 G2087 G3551 G1722 G3588 G3196 G3450

ἀντιστρατεύμενον τοῖς νόμῳ τοῖς νοός μου καὶ
warring against which law which mind my and
G497 G3588 G3551 G3588 G3563 G3450 G2532

αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με τοῖς νόμῳ τοῖς ἀμαρτίας τοῖς ὅντι
bringing me which law which of sin which is
G163 G3165 G3588 G3551 G3588 G266 G3588 G5607

ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου
in which members my
G1722 G3588 G3196 G3450

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 5:17 (Parallel theme): For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

James 4:1 (Parallel theme): From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

Romans 8:2 (Word): For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 7:25 (Word): I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 6:19 (Sin): I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

1 Peter 2:11 (Parallel theme): Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Hebrews 12:4 (Sin): Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Psalms 142:7 (Parallel theme): Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 (Sin): For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Romans 7:5 (Word): For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.