

Romans 8:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Analysis

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us (hina to dikaiōma tou nomou plērōthē en hēmin)—The hina clause indicates divine purpose: Christ's work aimed at producing practical righteousness in believers. Dikaiōma refers to the law's righteous requirement (singular), likely summarized in love for God and neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:8-10). The passive voice plērōthē ("be fulfilled") indicates this is God's work in us, not our achievement through willpower.

Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit—This distinguishes two orientations: kata sarka (according to flesh) versus kata pneuma (according to Spirit). "Flesh" (sarx) in Paul often means unregenerate human nature in rebellion against God, not merely physical body. The Spirit's indwelling changes the believer's fundamental orientation from self-centered autonomy to God-centered submission, enabling obedience the law commanded but couldn't produce.

Historical Context

The early church debated whether Gentile converts needed to observe Mosaic law (Acts 15; Galatians 2). Paul's argument is revolutionary: the law's deepest intention (righteousness) is fulfilled not through external compliance but through the Spirit's internal transformation of desires and affections.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the Spirit fulfill the law's righteous requirement without imposing external legal codes?
2. What is the relationship between justification (declared righteous) and sanctification (made righteous in practice)?
3. How does "walking after the Spirit" differ from legalistic rule-keeping?

Interlinear Text

ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν
That G3588 the righteousness G3588 of the law might be fulfilled in us
G2443 G1345 G3551 G4137 G1722 G2254

τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα
G3588 not after the flesh who walk but after the Spirit
G3361 G2596 G4561 G4043 G235 G2596 G4151

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 5:16 (Spirit): This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Colossians 1:22 (Parallel theme): In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unrepentable in his sight:

Hebrews 12:23 (Righteousness): To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Revelation 14:5 (Parallel theme): And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Jude 1:24 (Parallel theme): Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

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