

## GOD'S WORD IS LIFE

### Key Greek Terms in Romans 8

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#### 1. Νόμος (Nomos) – “Law”

- **Occurrences in Romans 8:** Appears in vv. 2, 3, 4, and 7.
  - **Meaning:** "Νόμος" refers to law or a principle. In Romans 8, Paul uses this term to contrast two kinds of "laws" or governing principles: the law of the Spirit and the law of sin and death. The "law" can refer to the Mosaic Law, but here Paul expands its meaning to include spiritual law.
  - **Verse Context:** *“For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”* (Romans 8:2)
  - **Theological Significance:** Paul contrasts the old order of the law of sin, which leads to death, with the new law of the Spirit, which brings life. We recognize the baptismal language of Romans 6 here. While the Mosaic Law could not bring righteousness due to human sinfulness, the law of the Spirit in Christ brings authentic freedom and the fulfillment of God's will.
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#### 2. ἁμαρτία (Hamartia) – “Sin”

- **Occurrences in Romans 8:** Appears in vv. 2, 3, 10.
  - **Meaning:** "ἁμαρτία" refers to sin, the power that opposes God's will. In Paul's thought, sin is more than just wrong actions; it is a power or force that enslaves humanity.
  - **Verse Context:** *“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (ἁμαρτία), he condemned sin in the flesh.”* (Romans 8:3)
  - **Theological Significance:** In Romans 8, Paul explains how believers are freed from the power of sin through Christ's sacrifice. Sin no longer holds dominion over those who are in the Spirit, though its effects are still present in human flesh (Romans 7).
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#### 3. Σάρξ (Sarx) – “Flesh”

- **Occurrences in Romans 8:** Occurs in vv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13.
- **Meaning:** "Σάρξ" refers to the physical body or, more often in Paul's writings, to the human nature corrupted by sin. It describes a human existence that is weak and inclined toward sin.

- **Verse Context:** *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”* (Romans 8:5)
  - **Theological Significance:** Paul sets up a fundamental opposition between life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. The "flesh" refers to life dominated by sinful desires, unable and unwilling to submit to God's law (v. 7). In contrast, life in the Spirit brings freedom and peace. Paul emphasizes that although believers still live in their physical bodies, they are no longer enslaved to the desires of the flesh because of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Sin does not have the last word, though it speaks loudly!
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#### 4. Πνεῦμα (Pneuma) – “Spirit”

- **Occurrences in Romans 8:** Appears frequently throughout the chapter (vv. 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 26).
  - **Meaning:** "Πνεῦμα" refers to the Holy Spirit, the divine breath or wind of God, who brings life and renewal. In this chapter, Paul uses "pneuma" to describe the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit in believers, given in baptism.
  - **Verse Context:** *“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit (πνεῦμα) who dwells in you.”* (Romans 8:11)
  - **Theological Significance:** The Holy Spirit is central to Paul's understanding of the Christian life in Romans 8. It is through the Spirit that believers are given freedom from sin, life, and adoption as God's children. The Spirit empowers believers to live out the righteousness of God, transforming their mortal bodies, conforming us to the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.
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#### 5. Δικαίωμα (Dikaioma) – “Righteous Requirement”

- **Occurrences in Romans 8:** Appears in v. 4.
- **Meaning:** "Δικαίωμα" refers to a righteous decree, ordinance, or requirement. In Romans 8, Paul uses it to describe the righteous requirement of the law that is fulfilled in those who walk in faith according to the Spirit.
- **Verse Context:** *“...in order that the righteous requirement (δικαίωμα) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”* (Romans 8:4)
- **Theological Significance:** Through the Holy Spirit, believers fulfill the righteous requirements of the law that they could never achieve in the flesh. Paul emphasizes that it is not through human effort but through life in the Spirit that God's law is truly fulfilled.

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## 6. Υιοθεσία (Huiothesia) – “Adoption”

- **Occurrences in Romans 8:** Appears in v. 15.
- **Meaning:** "Υιοθεσία" refers to the legal act of adopting a child into a family, giving them all the rights and privileges of biological children.
- **Verse Context:** *“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption (υιοθεσία) as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”* (Romans 8:15)
- **Theological Significance:** Adoption is one of the most powerful images in Paul’s theology. Through the Spirit, believers are made sons and daughters of God, with all the privileges of family members, including inheritance and intimate relationship with the Father. This contrasts with a life of fear under the law, promising that Christians are no longer slaves but children of God.

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## 7. Δόξα (Doxa) – “Glory”

- **Occurrences in Romans 8:** Appears in vv. 18, 21, 30.
- **Meaning:** "Δόξα" refers to glory, honor, splendor, or divine radiance. In Romans 8, Paul uses the term to describe both the future glory that awaits believers and the glory of God that is revealed through Christ.
- **Verse Context:** *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory (δόξα) that is to be revealed to us.”* (Romans 8:18)
- **Theological Significance:** Paul presents glory as the future state of believers when they are fully conformed to the image of Christ, when the New Creation is revealed. This glory is both a present hope and a future reality, guaranteed, promised by the Spirit. It also reflects the transformation of all creation, which will share in the liberation and glorification of God’s children.