

METAPHOR, MORALITY, AND  
THE SPIRIT IN ROMANS 8:1–17

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# METAPHOR, MORALITY, AND THE SPIRIT IN ROMANS 8:1–17

William E. W. Robinson

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Soli Deo gloria!

William E. W. Robinson

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## Abbreviations

1QH <sup>a</sup>	<i>Hodayot<sup>a</sup> or Thanksgiving Hymns<sup>a</sup></i>
1QS	<i>Serek Hayahad or Rule of the Community</i>
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David N. Freedman et al. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
AcBib	Academia Biblica
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BRLAJ	Brill Reference Library of Ancient Judaism
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CEB	Common English Bible
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
ESV	English Standard Version
EUS	European University Studies
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments

HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
IBS	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KD	<i>Kerygma und Dogma</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
NASB	New American Standard Bible
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NIBCNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>Poet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Rhetoric</i>
RESLA	<i>Revista Española de Lingüística Aplicada</i>
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek
SLCS	Studies in Language Companion Series
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	<i>Word and World</i>

## Introduction

As the title of this book indicates, my project centers on what I contend are three essential components of Paul's thought in Rom 8:1–17: metaphor, morality, and the Holy Spirit. In this introduction, I address these three elements in turn, as each provides a window into the purpose, scope, and thesis of the present monograph.<sup>1</sup> This opening chapter also includes an explanation of the choice of Rom 8:1–17 as the textual focus for this study and an overview of the book's structure.

### 1.1. Metaphor

Metaphor permeates all discourse, ordinary and special, and we should have a hard time finding a purely literal paragraph anywhere.

— Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art*

In the past thirty years or so, scholars have become more attentive to the metaphors that pervade biblical texts.<sup>2</sup> Until recently, however, critical developments in the field of cognitive linguistics with respect to metaphor theory have not been taken into account.<sup>3</sup> Instead, metaphors in the

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1. Though I present these three elements individually, there is overlap among them.

2. Brad E. Kelle, *Hosea 2: Metaphor and Rhetoric in Historical Perspective*, AcBib 20 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 39. There are still those, however, who fail or choose not to attend to the metaphors in the texts they study. C. K. Barrett, for instance, does not identify the metaphoric use of “walk” in Rom 8:4. Charles Kingsley Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2nd ed., BNTC (London: Black, 1991), 147–48.

3. Some notable exceptions include Claudia V. Camp and Carole R. Fontaine, *Women, War, and Metaphor: Language and Society in the Study of the Hebrew Bible*, *Semeia* 61 (1993); Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21–33*, *BibInt* 30 (Leiden: Brill, 1998); Nelly Stien-

Bible have been examined largely through the lens of a popular, traditional understanding of metaphor that is more or less tethered to the thought of Aristotle,<sup>4</sup> who viewed metaphor as a purely linguistic phenomenon and as a special, uncommon feature of language.<sup>5</sup> As a result, when one opens most commentaries today, including those recently published, one finds that the authors view the metaphors in biblical texts through that Aristotelian interpretive lens.<sup>6</sup> Looking through that lens, they usually analyze each metaphorical expression separately and in isolation from others in a given passage. Consequently, the metaphorical analysis of biblical texts has tended to miss the connections between figurative expressions: how they are related—even *interrelated*—conceptually. This is where cognitive linguistics makes a critical contribution. In a 2006 paper Joel B. Green observes: “Given that biblical studies typically defines itself first in philological terms and its consequent emphatic interest in how words are involved in the construction of meaning, the potential contribution of this

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stra, *YHWH Is the Husband of His People: Analysis of a Biblical Metaphor with Special Reference to Translation* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993); Sam K. Williams, “Again *Pistis Christou*,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 431–47.

4. Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*, NSBT 22 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); John Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-historical and Exegetical Examination*, WUNT 2/162 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012); Raymond F. Collins, *The Power of Images in Paul* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008); I. A. H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church: From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century*, JSNTSup 156 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998); A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, eds., *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah*, AIL 4 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009); Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); Barbara Green, *Like a Tree Planted: An Exploration of Psalms and Parables through Metaphor* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997); Erik Konsmo, *The Pauline Metaphors of the Holy Spirit: The Intangible Spirit’s Tangible Presence in the Life of the Christian*, StBibLit 130 (New York: Lang, 2010); Kirsten Nielsen, *There is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah*, JSOTSup 65 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989). As stated above, some of these monographs are more wedded to the traditional, Aristotelian view of metaphor than others.

5. This common view of metaphor is expounded in chapter 2.

6. Brendan Byrne, S.J., *Romans*, SP 6 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996); Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); Leander E. Keck, *Romans*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005); Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

metaphor theory is significant.<sup>7</sup> In fact, as more scholars have begun to learn about the metaphor theories in cognitive linguistics and recognize their potential in the interpretation of biblical texts, an increasing number of studies have appeared that deploy aspects of these theories.<sup>8</sup>

My study is one of the first to apply to the text of Romans apposite features of two tried and tested theories of cognitive linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory.<sup>9</sup> In applying these theories to Rom 8:1–17, it will become apparent that metaphors are not merely artistic figures of speech (as commonly assumed) but are fundamentally conceptual in nature, ubiquitous in thought and in language, and

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7. Joel B. Green, “Conversion in Luke-Acts: The Potential of a Cognitive Approach” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Washington, DC, 19 November 2006), 20.

8. David H. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery*, BRLAJ (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Reidar Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters! Christian Siblingship in Paul*, JSNTSup 265 (London: T&T Clark, 2004); Alec Basson, *Divine Metaphors in Selected Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002); Sarah J. Dille, *Mixing Metaphors: God as Mother and Father in Deutero-Isaiah*, JSOTSup 398 (New York: T&T Clark, 2004); Bonnie Howe, *Because You Bear This Name: Conceptual Metaphor and the Moral Meaning of 1 Peter* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Bonnie Howe and Joel B. Green, eds., *Cognitive Linguistic Explorations in Biblical Studies* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014); Lynn R. Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned: Reading Metaphor in John’s Apocalypse*, ESEC 10 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007); Kelle, *Hosea 2*; Øystein Lund, *Way Metaphors and Way Topics in Isaiah 40–55*, FAT 2/28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007); Jennifer Houston McNeel, *Paul as Infant and Nursing Mother: Metaphor, Rhetoric, and Identity in 1 Thessalonians 2:5–8*, ECL 12 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014); Jane Lancaster Patterson, *Keeping the Feast: Metaphors of Sacrifice in 1 Corinthians and Philippians*, ECL 16 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015); Frederick S. Tappenden, *Resurrection in Paul: Cognition, Metaphor, and Transformation*, ECL 19 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016); M. E. Vroon-van Vugt, *Dead Man Walking in Endor: Narrative Mental Spaces and Conceptual Blending in 1 Samuel 28* (Ridderkerk: Ridderprint BV, 2013); Charles A. Wanamaker, “Metaphor and Morality: Examples of Paul’s Moral Thinking in 1 Corinthians 1–5,” *Neot* 39 (2005): 409–33; Blake E. Wassell and Stephen R. Llewelyn, “‘Fishers of Humans,’ the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor, and Conceptual Blending Theory,” *JBL* 133 (2014): 627–46. In addition to these studies, in 2006 the Society of Biblical Literature began offering seminars at its Annual Meeting on the application of cognitive linguistics to biblical texts.

9. Conceptual Metaphor Theory is also called Cognitive Metaphor Theory, and Conceptual Integration Theory is also called Conceptual Blending Theory. I will use Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory in this monograph.

grounded in our everyday human experience as embodied beings. Furthermore, by applying facets of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory to selected metaphorical constructions in Rom 8:1–17, I will delineate the underlying cognitive metaphors, their structure, their function, what they mean, and how Paul's audiences then and now are able to comprehend their meaning.<sup>10</sup> As Volker Rabens rightly observes, how one interprets Paul's metaphorical language in these verses is vital to understanding the Spirit's function.<sup>11</sup> This book seeks to show that conceptual metaphor pervades and unites Paul's discourse in Rom 8:1–17. Because historical and cultural context is necessary to properly identify and interpret the metaphors that Paul uses, I will examine each metaphor in the light of relevant aspects of the Greco-Roman world and Paul's Jewish background.<sup>12</sup> Before employing Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory in the interpretation of Rom 8:1–17, I will provide a basic introduction to these methods in chapter 2. Indeed, a general aim of the present monograph is to provide an overview of metaphor theory and an orientation specifically to prominent features of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory.

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10. As I will show in this study, conceptual metaphors and the embodied experiences that undergird them provide a key to understanding the cognitive basis of concepts that contemporary audiences have in common with first-century writers like Paul.

11. Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life*, WUNT 2/283 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 15, 305–6.

12. Jan G. van der Watt avers that “the socio-historical framework within which a metaphor was originally created plays an important role in the continued cognitive and emotive functioning of metaphor. When reading ancient texts, it is even more critical that one should assimilate socio-historic data when interpreting metaphors. In order to understand the intensity, intent, and meaning of a metaphor in an ancient text, it is necessary to understand the socio-historical context in which it was originally used” (Jan G. van der Watt, *Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel according to John* [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 12). It is increasingly clear to scholars that Paul's sociohistorical context included both Judaism and Hellenism. See, e.g., Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (London: SCM, 1974); Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

## 1.2. Morality

It is uncontested that for the apostle Paul the Spirit was actively related to ethical living.

— Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*

The vast majority of Pauline scholars, myself included, would assent to Rabens's assertion that for Paul the Spirit is integral to ethical living. What has been and continues to be contested, though, is Paul's understanding of *how* (and to what extent) the Spirit was actively related to ethical living. As a result, Rabens observes, "The past 140 years of Pauline scholarship have generated diverging explanations of the ethical work of the Spirit."<sup>13</sup> On the one hand, scholars such as Hermann Gunkel see the Spirit as the author of the entirety of Christian religious and ethical life. Gunkel declares, "The entire life of the Christian is an activity of the πνεῦμα."<sup>14</sup> Gordon D. Fee also stresses the priority of the Spirit in ethical living. Fee states that "the Spirit's major role in Paul's view of things lies with his being *the absolutely essential constituent of the whole of Christian life*, from beginning to end."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, others give more weight to the role that believers play in their ethical existence. Rudolf Bultmann, for instance, sees the Spirit's role predominantly as opening the door to the possibility of new life. Yet believers themselves have to walk through that door.<sup>16</sup> In fact, according to

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13. Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 2, 304. In a lengthy appendix, Rabens provides a critical survey of the last 140 years of research on the Spirit and ethics in Paul.

14. Hermann Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit: The Popular View of the Apostolic Age and the Teaching of the Apostle Paul; A Biblical-Theological Study*, trans. R. A. Harrisville and P. A. Quanbeck II (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 95–96. Gunkel explains: "This means that the entire life of the Christian reveals a powerful, transcendent, divine power ... the Christian is the pneumatic" (96). Wolfgang Schrage claims that Gunkel's "basic position has not been refuted: for Paul the Spirit is essentially the fundamental force and principle of the new life and the new way of living" (Wolfgang Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, trans. David E. Green [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988], 178).

15. Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 898, emphasis original.

16. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1951–1955), 1:332–33, 335–36, 338. Bultmann refers to the believer's role as the "obedience of faith." Following in Bultmann's footsteps, Kurt Stalder sees the Spirit's chief role in the ethical life of believers as apprising them of their salvation, which thereby enables them in their own power to do what the Spirit



Bultmann, after the Spirit leads believers through the door the first time, all subsequent ethical actions are the result of believers walking through it on their own.<sup>17</sup>

Friedrich W. Horn has argued that the Spirit's activity in believers' ethical existence is further circumscribed: it is restricted solely to enabling love of fellow believers and love of neighbor.<sup>18</sup> Thus, he believes that for Paul the Spirit does not induce the entire moral life of believers. For instance, Horn says that Paul does not articulate a pneumatological basis for his ethics of marriage, sexuality, slavery, work, and possessions.<sup>19</sup> Instead, Paul appeals to the torah, custom, the word of Jesus, his own opinion, and the like when he treats such topics.<sup>20</sup> In sum, Horn claims that the link between the Spirit and ethics is limited precisely because Paul does not refer to the Spirit when addressing a number of moral questions.<sup>21</sup> Horn grounds his thesis on several passages, including Rom 8:1–17.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to varying explanations of the Spirit's ethical work, some scholars question whether Paul has the behavior of believers in view at certain points in Rom 8:1–17. According to Sylvia C. Keesmaat, for example, Paul's references to the Spirit in verses 14–17 are not about religioethical conduct<sup>23</sup> but are instead part of an unconscious allusion to the exodus event, an allusion that extends to the end of the chapter.<sup>24</sup> For Keesmaat,

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commands (Kurt Stalder, *Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus* [Zurich: EVZ-Verlag, 1962], 215, 471–75, 485).

17. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:337. The metaphorical language of opening and walking through a door is my own; however, it expresses accurately Bultmann's view.

18. Friedrich W. Horn, "Wandel im Geist: Zur pneumatologischen Begründung der Ethik bei Paulus," *KD* 38 (1992): 149, 170.

19. *Ibid.*, 150.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, 153. Rabens believes that Horn contradicts this particular claim in Horn's book, *Das Angeld des Geistes: Studien zur paulinischen Pneumatologie*, FRLANT 154 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); see Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 297–98.

22. Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 295–99.

23. For Paul the conduct or behavior of believers was both religious and ethical in nature. Consequently, I will use interchangeably religioethical, religiomoral, religious-ethical, and religious-moral conduct or behavior in the study to signify this reality. See, e.g., Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 16–17; Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 208–12.

24. Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story: (Re)interpreting the Exodus Tradition*,



then, those verses are not about morality but about the new exodus of God's children in Christ.<sup>25</sup> As such, Paul has eschatology in mind, not ethics. Joseph A. Fitzmyer likewise would concur that the apostle does not have ethics in mind throughout the pericope.<sup>26</sup>

In light of divergent explanations of and challenges to the ethical character of Rom 8:1–17, a chief aim of the present monograph is to demonstrate that Rom 8:1–17 should be primarily understood as ethical in its thrust, which does not require denying or excluding eschatological, ontological, or other accents in the pericope. Given the cognitive metaphors Paul uses in the passage, I will argue more specifically that Paul portrays the Spirit as the principal agent in the religious-ethical life of believers. At the same time, by employing Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory, analysis of the passage will show that the conceptual metaphors in Rom 8:1–17 convey the integral role of believers in ethical conduct. Where the stress lies—on the agency of the Spirit or on that of believers—depends at least in part on the structure of each cognitive metaphor. For instance, conceptual metaphor analysis reveals a significant difference between the expressions ἐν πνεύματι (“in the Spirit”)<sup>27</sup> and πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν (“the Spirit of God dwells in you”), contrary to interpretations that see them as synonymous.<sup>28</sup> These two metaphorical expressions signal differing emphases on the agency of the Spirit and that of believers in religioethical life.

### 1.3. The Spirit

By and large the crucial role of the Spirit in Paul's life and thought—as the dynamic, experiential reality of Christian life—is often either overlooked or given mere lip service.

— Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*

JSNTSup 181 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999). I will counter Keesmaat's claim in chapters 3 and 5.

25. Ibid., 96–97.

26. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 488. Fitzmyer, for example, contends that Rom 8:5 is a statement of ontology, not ethics. Fitzmyer's contention is addressed in chapter 3.

27. Unless stated otherwise, all of the translations from the Bible are mine.

28. The arguments of these interpreters are addressed in §4.4.

While Fee's claim about neglect of the Spirit in Pauline studies is probably less true now than it was in the early 1990s, the Spirit's pivotal place in Paul's life and thought is still frequently overlooked or only given lip service in scholarly circles. In a recently published book of essays on Rom 5–8, for example, there is scant treatment of the Holy Spirit, even though Paul provides his most extensive discussion of the Spirit and the Spirit's work in the lives of believers in Rom 8.<sup>29</sup> By applying particular features of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory to Rom 8:1–17, I will highlight the central role that the Spirit plays in Paul's understanding of the religiomoral behavior of believers. Though the Spirit makes only cameo appearances elsewhere in the letter, in Rom 8:1–17 the Spirit is the protagonist in the ethical existence of believers.

In addition, I will use Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory to shed new light on the vigorous debate over the relationship between the Spirit (πνεῦμα) and the flesh (σάρξ) in this pericope. Though I do not expect my analysis to settle this long-standing, thorny debate, my use of cognitive linguistics will enable one to see, for example, how the cognitive metaphors underlying figurative expressions such as περιπατοῦσιν ... κατὰ πνεῦμα ("walk ... according to the Spirit") and μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ("walk not according to the flesh") are structured conceptually and therefore how they function and may be interpreted. Indeed, given the axiom of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory that linguistic formations and interpretation are rooted in bodily experience and in light of Paul's historical and cultural background, this monograph aims to uncover the most commonly understood meaning of constructions such as περιπατοῦσιν ... κατὰ πνεῦμα ("walk ... according to the Spirit") and μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ("walk not according to the flesh").<sup>30</sup> Moreover, these two theories demonstrate that human physiology and cultural constructs place some limits on a

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29. Beverly Roberts Gaventa, ed., *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013). The Spirit-talk in the book is peripheral to other concerns and never the focus of attention.

30. Mary Therese DesCamp addresses succinctly some of the interpretive implications of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory for biblical texts in *Metaphor and Ideology: "Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum" and Literary Methods through a Cognitive Lens*, BibInt 87 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), xi–xii.

text's interpretation and supply a cognitive explanation for conclusions that many biblical interpreters arrive at intuitively.<sup>31</sup>

#### 1.4. Why Romans 8:1–17?

Rom. 8:1–27 is unquestionably the high point of Paul's theology of the Spirit.

— James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*

With other Pauline scholars, I concur with Dunn that Rom 8 is the apex of Paul's thought regarding the Spirit.<sup>32</sup> One reason Dunn and others deem Rom 8 the "high point" of Pauline pneumatology is that the chapter is Paul's "most sustained exposition on the work of the Spirit."<sup>33</sup> It contains twenty-one of the thirty-four references to the Spirit in the epistle: 62 percent of the total.<sup>34</sup> In the Pauline corpus, only 1 Corinthians has more

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31. Ibid., xi; Eve Sweetser, "'The Suburbs of Your Good Pleasure': Cognition, Culture and the Bases of Metaphoric Structure," in *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*, vol. 4, *Shakespeare Studies Today*, ed. Graham Bradshaw, Tom Bishop, and Mark Turner (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 24–55. With respect to metaphors in Shakespeare (e.g., "the suburbs of your good pleasure"), Sweetser writes: "[Shakespeare's] work thus 'catches' a modern audience partly because it is built on artistic use of image structures and metaphors which they share with the original audience—some of this shared structure being due to historical cultural continuity, and some to shared human embodiment and neural structure" (24).

32. Elsewhere Dunn declares that Rom 8 "forms the climax to Paul's exposition of the gospel in Romans 1–8. That is to say, the work of the Spirit as described in Romans 8 is Paul's climactic account of the way the grace of God comes to clearest and fullest effect in believers" (James D. G. Dunn, "Spirit Speech: Reflections on Romans 8:12–27," in *Romans and the People of God: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Fee on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. Sven K. Soderlund and N. T. Wright [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 82). Horn avers, "Paul's doctrine of the Spirit is most fully expounded in Romans" (Friedrich W. Horn, "Holy Spirit," *ABD* 3:274). Alexander J. M. Wedderburn declares, "One of the most important passages on Pauline pneumatology, if not the most important, is Romans 8" (Alexander J. M. Wedderburn, "Pauline Pneumatology and Pauline Theology," in *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins: Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*, ed. Graham N. Stanton, Bruce W. Longenecker, and Stephen C. Barton [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 153).

33. Dunn, "Spirit Speech," 82.

34. Emerson B. Powery, "The Groans of 'Brother Saul': An Exploratory Reading of Romans 8 for 'Survival,'" *WW* 24 (2004): 320; Eduard Lohse, "Zur Analyse und Interpretation von Römer 8:1–17," in *"The Law of the Spirit" in Rom 7 and 8*,

material on the Spirit than Romans.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the Spirit is mentioned more frequently in Rom 8 than in any other chapter in the rest of the New Testament,<sup>36</sup> so that it is sometimes aptly called the “chapter of the Spirit.”<sup>37</sup> Most of the Spirit references occur in the first seventeen verses of the chapter, and thus they form the focus of the present monograph.

My singular focus on Rom 8:1–17 distinguishes this book from most studies on the Spirit and ethics in Paul.<sup>38</sup> The relationship between the Spirit and morality is more commonly explored via analysis of relevant texts in all seven undisputed letters.<sup>39</sup> This broader, more synthetic approach is not without merit, as it allows for the examination of similarities and connections between the Spirit and ethics among Paul’s epistles. Horn, for instance, discerns development in Paul’s understanding of the Spirit and ethics.<sup>40</sup> More specifically, Horn claims that Paul moved from a stronger emphasis on the Spirit’s ethical work in Galatians to a stronger emphasis on the moral decision of the believer in Romans.<sup>41</sup> One of the primary problems with a developmental thesis like Horn’s, however, is that we simply do not know the exact chronology of Paul’s letters, leaving such theses on shaky ground.<sup>42</sup>

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ed. Lorenzo De Lorenzi, *Benedictina* 1 (Rome: St. Paul’s Abbey, 1976), 133; James R. Edwards, *Romans*, NIBCNT (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 197; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 480. Fitzmyer rightly observes that Paul mentions the Spirit only three times in the letter prior to chapter 8: in 1:4, 5:5, and 7:6 (480).

35. Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 204.

36. Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, 135.

37. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 642. Dunn also calls Rom 8 “the great Spirit chapter.” Dunn, “Spirit Speech,” 90.

38. Two recent exceptions are John A. Bertone, “*The Law of the Spirit*: Experience of the Spirit and Displacement of the Law in Romans 8:1–16,” *StBibLit* 86 (New York: Lang, 2005); and Monika Christoph, *Pneuma und das neue Sein der Glaubenden: Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der Rede von Pneuma in Röm 8*, *EUS* 23/813 (Frankfurt: Lang, 2005).

39. See, e.g., Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 642–49; Horn, “Wandel im Geist”; Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*; Stalder, *Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus*.

40. Horn, “Wandel im Geist.” Horn argues more generally that there is development in Paul’s pneumatology in *Das Angeld des Geistes*.

41. Horn, “Wandel im Geist,” 167.

42. For critiques of Horn’s developmental thesis in “Wandel im Geist,” see Rabens, *Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 295–99; Wedderburn, “Pauline Pneumatology and Pauline Theology,” 144–56.

Scholars today are also more attuned to the situational character of Paul's letters, especially in the wake of J. Christiaan Beker's *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*.<sup>43</sup> Stanley E. Porter asserts: "One of the major emphases in recent Pauline interpretation is the realization that all of Paul's letters are contingent."<sup>44</sup> In other words, there is a greater awareness of and emphasis on the fact that Paul wrote to particular faith communities, addressing the specific concerns and context of each community. As a result, "like widely differing siblings raised by the same parents, each letter produced by Paul has its own distinguishing character."<sup>45</sup> So, with regard to Paul's teaching on the Spirit, Alexander J. M. Wedderburn maintains that in each letter "different aspects of Paul's thinking on the Spirit emerge, reflecting in large measure his differing concerns in each letter."<sup>46</sup> While recognition of contingency does not deny or ignore instances of overlap and parallels in Paul's epistles, it does inform my decision to concentrate on Paul's presentation of the Spirit and ethics in Rom 8:1–17. Thus, rather than paint a landscape of the Spirit's role in the ethical life of believers based on several of Paul's letters, I paint a portrait of the Spirit's role based on metaphors Paul employs in Rom 8:1–17.

My decision to paint this portrait is justified further by my view of the relationship between Rom 8:1–17 and Rom 7:7–25. First, the terminology that Paul employs in 7:5 is echoed in 7:7–25, so that 7:7–25 seems to

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43. Stanley E. Porter notes that Beker's emphasis on the contingency of Paul's letters was anticipated by G. Adolf Deissmann in two works—*Bible Studies*, trans. Alexander Grieve (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 1–59; and *Light from the Ancient East*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan, 4th ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927), 227–45—and also by Rudolph Bultmann in *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:190. See Stanley E. Porter, "Is There a Center to Paul's Theology? An Introduction to the Study of Paul and His Theology," in *Paul and His Theology*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, *Pauline Studies* 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 7.

44. Porter, "Is There a Center to Paul's Theology?," 12. Cf. E. Elizabeth Johnson and D. M. Hay, eds., *Pauline Theology*, vol. 4, *Looking Back, Pressing On* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), a collection of essays that originated in the Pauline Theology Group that met annually from 1986 through 1995, for which the contingency of Paul's letters emerged as a major emphasis.

45. Keck, *Romans*, 19.

46. Wedderburn, "Pauline Pneumatology and Pauline Theology," 145, 155. In his introduction to the same essay, Wedderburn says that Paul's thinking about the Spirit in each epistle "is crystallized anew in response to a different situation" (145).

expound his statement in 7:5 about believers' *former* life in the flesh. Likewise, the language that Paul uses in 7:6 corresponds to his language in 8:1–17, so that 8:1–17 seems to explicate his assertion in 7:6 about believers' *present* life in the Spirit. Therefore, the antithetical statements in 7:5 and 7:6 anticipate Paul's contrasting depictions in 7:7–25 and 8:1–17 of life "in the flesh" and life "in the Spirit." Second, I cannot reconcile Paul's unequivocal declaration of enslavement to sin in 7:14 with his metaphors and language about the Spirit and believers in 8:1–17. Romans 7:14 is better understood as an expression of believers' previous life under sin's rule (see also 7:23). Finally, Paul does not mention the Spirit in relation to believers in 7:7–25. As Fee avers, "The absence of the Spirit in this picture [in 7:7–25] affirms that Paul is not describing life under the new covenant."<sup>47</sup>

### 1.5. The Structure of the Study

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.

— Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

The road that I travel in this monograph is obviously not the only possible one. Yet it is a "less traveled" road because of my use of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory. At the same time, mine are not the only footprints on this road since other scholars have studied the Spirit and ethics in Rom 8 by applying their own chosen research methods. My hope is that the particular road I take will not only make "all the difference" by enhancing my own understanding of Rom 8:1–17 but will also make a difference by amplifying others' apprehension of the passage.

The journey starts in chapter 2 with a survey of metaphor theory, attending first to Aristotle and the traditional view of metaphor anchored in his thought. Two long-held, linchpin beliefs of that view are that metaphor is a phenomenon of language (i.e., uniquely a product of language) and that it is an exceptional rather than common and integral component of language. As stated above, most scholars today look at figurative language in biblical texts through the eyes of Aristotle. In more recent attempts to apprehend metaphor, however, theorists have argued that

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47. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 514. For a more detailed analysis of how Rom 8:1–17 relates to Rom 7:7–25, see chapter 3, n. 97.

metaphor is fundamentally conceptual and a central and thus ordinary constituent of language that is rooted in human experience. Arguments such as these anticipated key findings of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory. The rest of chapter 2 provides an orientation to these two distinct but related and complementary theories in the field of cognitive linguistics. Because this field of study is complex, my orientation to these two theories will focus on key concepts and features that pertain to understanding metaphor. I will introduce and apply other pertinent facets of these theories in subsequent chapters as appropriate.

With the method of analysis in hand, I apply it in chapter 3 to the phrases *περιπατοῦσιν ... κατὰ πνεῦμα* (“[they] walk according to the Spirit”) in verse 4 and *πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται* (“[they] are led by the Spirit of God”) in verse 14. I begin by probing the literary and historical context and meaning of *περιπατοῦσιν ... κατὰ πνεῦμα* and explain via cognitive metaphor analysis why contemporary audiences are able to comprehend it. Next I demonstrate that these two constructions are not discrete figures of speech but rather figurative expressions of the same underlying conceptual metaphor that stems from the experience of walking on journeys. After a critique of Keesmaat’s claim that *πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται* (“[they] are led by the Spirit of God”) in verse 14 is an allusion to the exodus that lacks any moral concern, I examine some implications of the cognitive metaphor underlying these two formulations to see what they disclose about the roles that the Spirit and believers play in religious-moral conduct. Finally, I address a key question that has divided Pauline scholars: does Paul’s contrast between *περιπατοῦσιν ... κατὰ πνεῦμα* (“[they] walk according to the Spirit”) and *κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν* (“[they] walk according to the flesh”) convey a conflict *within* the believer or two incompatible *lifestyles*? Dunn is a chief exponent of the conviction that Paul is describing a conflict within the believer between “flesh” and “Spirit” in Rom 8.<sup>48</sup> Based on findings in this chapter, however, I contend that Paul’s Spirit-flesh contrast is best understood as a description of two mutually exclusive ways of life.

In chapter 4 I examine the phrases *ἐν πνεύματι* (“in [the] Spirit”) and *πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν* (“God’s Spirit dwells in you [pl.]”) and the latter’s parallels in verse 11. For centuries, biblical scholars have disputed what Paul means by these enigmatic expressions. I employ cognitive metaphor

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48. Dunn’s position is summarized in §3.7.



theory to discern their meaning and thereby to justify interpreting them as figurative, not literal, formulations. Next I show how a conceptual metaphor that is rooted in daily experiences with containers (eating from bowls, living in houses, etc.) underlies the constructions ἐν πνεύματι and πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν (as well as its analogs in v. 11) and establish that these are distinct, not synonymous, figurative expressions with different functions in Rom 8. By examining some of the entailments of this conceptual metaphor, I buttress the argument in chapter 3 that πνεῦμα and σὰρξ denote distinct ways of life in Rom 8 rather than two entities at war within the believer.<sup>49</sup> Finally, I utilize cognitive constructs associated with this particular metaphor to delineate the roles of the Spirit and believers in the religioethical conduct of believers.

In chapter 5 I identify and elucidate four additional metaphors related to morality in Rom 8:1–17, supplying relevant information about the historical background of each. After an introduction to the basis and operation of a moral metaphor that is based on elemental knowledge of financial accounting, I demonstrate how that metaphor is manifest in Rom 8:1–17 through one of its so-called moral schemas, the REWARD AND PUNISHMENT moral schema.<sup>50</sup> The second conceptual metaphor is a forensic one that is elicited by Paul's use of courtroom/legal language in verses 1–4 and verse 13. I then analyze a metaphor in verse 13 derived from familiarity with executions. That metaphor provides a cognitive linguistic explanation for how to interpret the dative noun πνεύματι in that verse. Greco-Roman adoption language in verses 14–17 evokes a fourth metaphor. In my analysis of that cognitive metaphor, I show how Paul adapts it for his particular purposes. After analyzing Paul's adoption metaphor, I provide a critique of Keesmaat's contention that the language in verses 14–17 instead constitutes an "echo" of the exodus story.

Our journey through Rom 8:1–17 comes to an end in chapter 6 with a summary of the major arguments, findings, and implications of the study as well as some suggestions for further research. In particular, application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory to parallel texts in Galatians promises to further illumine the connection between the Holy Spirit and morality. The conclusion of my monograph confirms the import and value of studying the cognitive metaphors that

49. For a definition and discussion of entailments, see §§2.5.3 and 4.5 and chapter 4, n. 44.

50. Moral schemas are explained in §§5.2.2 and 5.2.3.



Paul uses in Rom 8:1–17 to paint his portrait of the religious-ethical life of believers and the place of the Spirit and believers in that portrait. However, the journey must begin with a basic understanding of metaphor theory and an orientation specifically to Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory. I turn to those next steps in chapter 2.

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