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**Romans 8:1:  
Is “who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit”  
a Textual Addition or Original?**

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**Introduction**

I have a twofold purpose for this article. First, through the process of textual criticism I will attempt to establish the original reading of Rom. 8:1. I will do this by listing the textual variants, weighing the internal and external evidence before coming to a conclusion concerning the most likely reading. Second, I will explain the impact my findings have on understanding Rom. 8:1 ff.

**I. Methodology**

There are basically two styles of handwriting significant in the production of the New Testament: *minuscule* and *uncial*. The

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<sup>1</sup> Craig A. Smith, *Sermon Illustrations for an Asian Audience* (Manila, Philippines: OMF Publishers, 2004); *Timothy's Task, Paul's Prospect: A New Reading of 2 Timothy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006); *At the Cross, At the Crossroads: Loving our Enemies in the 21st Century* (Manila: OMF Literature, 2007).

*minuscule* script (comes from Latin *minusculus* which means “rather small”), is a style of handwriting which replaced the uncial script around the eight or ninth century style for ease of reading and speed of writing. When literary works were produced in Greek they were written in *uncials*, a style of handwriting in which no space was placed between words and sentences. The original New Testament documents and subsequent copyists would have written them in a modified form of the uncial script called the *cursive* style. The cursive style would be comparable to our long-hand writing today. Therefore to determine how the different variants arose, one must look at them in their uncial form since this would have been the form in which they were originally written (though cursive). Presenting them as uncials the reader can see more clearly how they were created either intentionally or unintentionally. I will also present the different textual variants as minuscules with their respective English translations so that the reader can follow more easily. In order to facilitate understanding the external evidence I will give the letter or number and date of the manuscripts.

In the listings of the textual variants I will separate the Greek Church Fathers from the Latin Church Fathers. In my mind the works of the Church Fathers and particularly those written in Greek provide invaluable evidence in determining the original text since in many instances they are written very close to the time of the autograph or at least the early copies.

I recognize that there are different approaches to textual criticism. Some scholars consider the Alexandrian text as the neutral text (with the fewest infelicities) and understand that certain texts are associated with specific geographic locations (e.g. Alexandria, Caesarea)<sup>2</sup>. They place greater value on the uncials than the papyri when evaluating texts. Though there strengths to this method I will use the method presented by Aland and Aland in their book<sup>3</sup>.

Aland and Aland reject the idea that certain geographic locations had their own texts prior to the fourth century rather the manuscripts

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<sup>2</sup> See Greenlee, H., *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) and Metzger, B. M. and B. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Aland, K., *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

circulated quite freely around the Roman Empire. They suggest that these copies varied in their degree of accuracy and reliability and that the manuscripts closest to the date of the autograph are usually the best copies since they have the least likelihood of being corrupt. For this reason they give more weight to the papyri than to the uncials or minuscules in their analysis of the manuscripts. They categorize the manuscripts into free, normal and strict. I will use these categories in my analysis of the textual variants in Rom. 8:1.

## II. External Evidence

### A. Variant #1

Minuscules: Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Uncial:

ΟΥΔΕΝΑΡΑΝΥΝΚΑΤΑΚΡΙΜΑΤΟΙΣΕΝΧΡΙΣΤΟΣΙΗΣΟΥ

Translation: Therefore now there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

Manuscript Support:

Manuscript <sup>4</sup>	Date (century )	Category
Ⲛ*	4	I
B	4	I
C <sup>1</sup> (C* illegible)	5	II
D*	6	II
F (with space for addition)	9	II
G (with space for addition)	9	III
6	13	
424 <sup>1</sup>	11	
1506	14	
1739	10	
1881	14	
it <sup>b, d*, g, mon</sup>	5/6	

<sup>4</sup> The following symbols will be used with respect to the manuscripts:

\* is the original reading of the text

<sup>1</sup> is the first corrector

<sup>2</sup> is the second corrector

cop <sup>sa, bo</sup>	3-4	
arm <sup>ms</sup>	5	
geo <sup>*</sup>	5	
eth	6	
Marcion <sup>acc to Adamantius</sup>	2	
Origen <sup>lat</sup>	AD 254	
Adamantius	AD 300	
Athanasius	AD 373	
Diodore	before 394	
Didymus	398	
Cyril	AD 444	
Augustine	AD 430	
Ambrosiaster	after 384	

### B. Variant #2

Minuscules: Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦμῃ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν

Uncial:

ΟΥΔΕΝΑΡΑΝΥΝΚΑΤΑΚΡΙΜΑΤΟΙΣΕΝΧΡΙΣΤΟΣΙΗΣΟΥΜΗΚΑΤ  
ΑΣΑΡΚΑΠΕΡΙΠΑΤΟΥΣΙΝ

Translation: Therefore now there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh.

Manuscript Support:

Manuscript	Date (century )	Category
A	5	I
D <sup>1</sup>	6-7	II
Ψ	8	III
81	11	
256	11-12	
263	13	
365 (τοις for μή)	12	
629	14	
1319	12	
1573	12-13	

1852	13	
2127	12	
it <sup>d(i)</sup>	5/6	
it <sup>dem</sup>	13	
it <sup>f, m, x, z</sup>	9/4-9/9/8	
vg	4-5	
syr <sup>p</sup>	4-7	
goth	4	
arm	5	
Chrysostom	AD 407	
Basil	AD 379	
Victorinus- Rome	AD 362	
Jerome	419-420	
Pelagius	after 418	
Ambrosiaster <sup>mss</sup>	4	
Ephraem	AD 373	
Speculum	5	

### C. Variant #3

Minuscules: Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦμὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα

Uncial:

ΟΥΔΕΝΑΡΑΝΥΝΚΑΤΑΚΡΙΜΑΤΟΙΣΕΝΧΡΙΣΤΟΣΙΗΣΟΥΜΗΚΑΤ  
ΑΣΑΡΚΑΠΕΡΙΠΑΤΟΥΣΙΝ

Translation: Therefore now there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Manuscript Support:

Manuscript	Date	Category
Ⲛ <sup>1</sup>	4-6	I
D <sup>2</sup>	9	III
M	9	V
33 <sup>vid</sup>	9	II
88	12	

104	11	
181	11	
326	12	
330	12	
424*	11	
436 (omit μή)	11	
451	11	
459	1092	
614	13	
630	14	
1175	10	
1241	12	
1877	14	
1912	10	
1962	11	
1984	14	
1985	16	
2127	12	
2200	14	
2492	13	
2495	14/15	
2464	9	
Byz		
Lect		
it <sup>ar</sup>	9	
it <sup>e</sup> (vid)	5	
syr <sup>h</sup>	4-7	
geo <sup>l</sup>	5	
slav	9	
Theodoret	AD 466	
Ps-Oecumenius	10	
Cyrl <sup>lem</sup>	444	
Theophylact	AD 1077	

These are the three variants in Rom. 8:1. In the following section I will examine the external evidence.

### III. Analysis of External Evidence

In this section I am concerned primarily to sort the copies in terms of their date, quality and textual category.

#### A. Variant #1

This variant reading has strong support in four areas: uncials, early versions, early church fathers and minuscules. Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, both category I manuscripts, come from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. These are important manuscripts of “a very special quality” according to Aland<sup>5</sup> and show little influence of the Byzantine text. Codex D, a 6<sup>th</sup> century manuscript, and Codex F, 9<sup>th</sup> century manuscript, according to Greenlee belong to the Western Text. Aland considers them to be *category II* texts and therefore of special quality<sup>6</sup>. From Aland’s book it appears that he believes that Paul’s letters were less affected<sup>7</sup> by the Byzantine text than the Gospels and Acts since the latter are considered category IV texts. Codex C is a fifth century manuscript<sup>8</sup> which has been corrected later though the original text is impossible to determine.

The variant has fairly wide support from the ancient versions. Both the Bohairic and Sahidic Coptic versions from the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century support this variant. Two manuscripts of the Old Latin version support this variant and are dated quite early, around 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century AD. The Ethiopic version from the sixth century AD also backs this variant. Other versions include the Georgian and Armenian which are both dated around the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

This variant has the largest support from the early church fathers, eight in total. It is significant that Marcion (2<sup>nd</sup> century; died around AD 154) and Origen (mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century) support this variant because of their very early dates. The support of these eight church fathers also shows the wide geographical distribution this variant has.

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<sup>5</sup> Aland, *Text*, p. 335.

<sup>6</sup> Aland, *Text*, p. 159.

<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that the corrected copy of Paul’s letters in Codex D he places in *category III* since they clearly show intentional changes which are different from the original text.

<sup>8</sup> Aland believes that C\* and C<sup>1</sup> are contemporary, thus little time has occurred between the time of the original copy and the subsequent copy; Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, p. 48.

### **B. Variant #2**

The two earliest uncials supporting this variant, uncials A (category I) and D (category II; a later correction of the 6<sup>th</sup> century copy), come from the fifth and sixth/seventh century respectively. The only other uncial (Ψ) is from a later date (8<sup>th</sup> century) and is of a lesser quality (category III).

There is wide support of this variant among the ancient versions, including the Old Latin (six manuscripts), Vulgate (4-5<sup>th</sup> century), Syriac Peshita (4-7<sup>th</sup> century), Gothic (4<sup>th</sup> century) and Armenian (5<sup>th</sup> century).

Four church fathers include this variant in their works and almost all of them are from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Some important figures are included, Chrysostom, Basil and the Latin Church father Ambrosiaster.

### **C. Variant #3**

Above, in section B, I presented Uncials a\* and D\* as supporting variant #1. Codex a1 is a first hand correction to a\* probably between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. Uncial D2 is a second hand correction D<sup>1</sup> from a much later period of time (9<sup>th</sup> century) which makes it less reliable. The only other uncial supporting this variant is Codex M, a ninth century document. This late dating coupled with the fact that this manuscript is of a predominately or purely Byzantine text makes this manuscript less than ideal for textual criticism purposes.

Minuscule 33 is of category II but not reliable as a textual support for this variant since the manuscript is so badly damaged that one cannot be certain that it actually supports this reading. There are many other minuscules in support of this variant but they are of a very late date (post tenth century).

A few ancient versions (Old Latin, Syriac Harclean) support this reading though they are generally of a later date (4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century). Only two church fathers, from the fifth century, contain this variant.

## **IV. Conclusion from Analysis of the External Evidence**

In this section I am concerned to determine which variant has the best manuscript support. The two main factors I will consider are the quality of the manuscript and its date. I will be also interested to determine the relationship between manuscripts, particularly if there is a corrected copy.

### **A. Date and Quality of Manuscripts**

Variant #2 has little early manuscript support except Uncial A, which comes from the 5<sup>th</sup> century and is of very good quality (category I), and Uncial D<sup>1</sup>, which is a correction<sup>9</sup> of the 6<sup>th</sup> century manuscript and is of good quality (category II). Nevertheless the majority of the witnesses for this variant reading come from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century which are too late to be viable support.

Almost all the textual support for variant #3 comes from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century and is Byzantine in character and therefore of poorer quality.

On the basis of the date and quality of manuscripts it is clear that variant #1 is the best reading. It has the earliest manuscripts supporting it (a, B, C, D). This reading also has very early support from the Church Fathers. Marcion from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Origen and Adamantius from the third century and four others from the fourth century give strong early support for this reading. In terms of quality of witnesses, variant #1 has the most reliable manuscripts coming from category I and II. It is to be noted that variant #3 shares Codex a and D with variant #1 but these are corrected copies that come later. When I look at the internal evidence I will demonstrate how these differences came about.

### **B. Geographical Distribution**

When determining geographical distribution it is best to look at the Church Fathers rather than “manuscript families” since they can be located with more precision. In my estimation it is very difficult to ascertain with any certainty localized texts (e.g. Alexandrian) prior to the fourth century. The next most helpful indicator is the versions. In terms of geographical distribution, variant #1 has the widest distribution among the Church Fathers and versions though variant #2 is comparable. Variant #3 has the poorest geographical distribution. Though geographical distribution is not strong external evidence it has limited merit.

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<sup>9</sup> The date of this correction is around 6-7<sup>th</sup> century.

### C. Conclusion

On the basis of external evidence the best reading is variant #1. Variant #2 and variant #3 are about equal in terms of external evidence.

## V. Internal Evidence

### Introduction

Holmes' comment "the variant most likely to be original is the one which best accounts for the existence of others"<sup>10</sup> is the best *modus operandi* in examining the internal evidence and will be the approach taken here. There are two aspects of the internal evidence which I will consider in my examination of this text in order to ascertain the probability of certain readings.

- The probability of the reading based on issues which have to do with the transcriptional process. Under this heading I will be examining how the variant might have arisen assuming that the preferred reading will be:
  - Generally the shorter reading though the issue of intentionality must be considered carefully.
  - Generally the most difficult reading for the scribe since the tendency is to make the text easier to read and understand.
  - Generally the text which appears not to be harmonized with another, though the test of "reasonableness" must be applied.
  - Generally the text which has not undergone clear grammatical and linguistic changes.
- The probability of the reading based on what is characteristic of the author. Style, form, vocabulary, context are important factors to consider in this process.

The reader of Rom. 8:1 is immediately confronted with a number of manuscripts that have been corrected. The most important document is of course Codex a. But other important manuscripts (C, D) include corrections. Uncial C is important in that it informs us that a correction has been made but because of its illegible condition it is impossible to know what the original reading was. Uncial D is

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Holmes, "Textual Criticism" in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 929.

important since it has been corrected twice. Minuscule 424 is a corrected manuscript too. A couple of the versions include corrections too (Georgian, Old Latin) suggesting that they made these changes based on having another Greek manuscript at hand or different copies of that version.

## A. Transcriptional Analysis

### 1. Shorter Reading

The majority of the manuscripts which have been corrected have added to the text either the clause, *μη̄ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν* (variant #2) or *μη̄ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα* (variant #3). These copyists have made changes to the manuscript which have lengthened the text. The question is whether these changes were intentional or unintentional. If the error in copying was unintentional then it is possible that the copyist of Codex **Σ** is guilty of an error of *homoioteleuton*. The copyist's eyes have skipped to Rom. 8:4 and inadvertently added the phrase *μη̄ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν* (variant #2). Yet it is hard to comprehend why the copyist only included this phrase and not the rest of the statement in Rom. 8:4 (*ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα*) which is found in variant #3. Even if one assumes that this change is unintentional, it is more difficult to presume that the change in Uncial D from variant #2 (*μη̄ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν*) to variant #3 (*μη̄ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα*) was unintentional. Therefore it is not too probable that these are unintentional errors.

If the copyist intentionally added the material to Codex **Σ** then this was likely done in order to harmonize 8:1 with Rom. 8:4. This intentional change came in two stages as Codex D makes clear. First came the addition of *μη̄ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν* (variant #2 in D<sup>1</sup>) and then the later addition of *ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα* (variant #3 in D<sup>2</sup>).

### 2. Most Difficult Reading

Whereas in some NT variants this criterion is important (1 Cor. 13:3; 1 Thess. 2:7), it does not play a significant role in this text. Though of the three variant readings, variant #1 is probably the most difficult reading since it is the least descriptive. The addition of *μη̄ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν* in variant #2 and *μη̄ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα* in variant #3 appear to be

subsequent intentional attempts to clarify the meaning of τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ in Rom. 8:1.

### 3. Harmonization

Under the heading of “Shorter Reading” I concluded that the later copyists lengthened the text. This was done in order to harmonize Rom. 8:1 with Rom. 8:4. The data supports this conclusion since the majority of the changes made to the text were from the reading of variant #1, τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, to a longer reading and not vice versa. Though the instance of minuscule 424 demonstrates the opposite phenomenon; changing the text from the original reading of μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The most likely explanation for this is that the copyist has found a copy of an earlier manuscript with variant #1 and changed it accordingly.

### 4. Grammatical and Linguistic Changes

This criterion does not apply since there are no grammatical or linguistic changes made to the text.

## B. Characteristic of the Author

### 1. Vocabulary

In terms of vocabulary the phrases ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κατὰ σάρκα and κατὰ πνεῦμα are common in the Pauline corpus; 47, 20 and 4 respectively. Thus in terms of vocabulary the most common phrase is variant #1.

### 2. Style and Form

In terms of style and form, the exact phrases τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν and μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα are only found in Rom. 8:4. In a few instances in his letters, Paul does combine “flesh” and “walking” (2 Cor. 10:2, 3) and “flesh” with “living” (Rom. 8:12). The combination of ἐν Χριστῷ with the article (and noun) is found in the letter openings of Eph. 1:1 and Phil. 1:1. But this phrase is also used with other nouns to refer to a group of believers (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:7; 3:21; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:9). Thus, in terms of style and form, variant #1 is more characteristic of the Pauline corpus than variants #2 and #3.

### 3. Context

Paul has just clarified in Rom. 7 the desperate state of the person without Christ. He then summarizes the position of the person with Christ: he or she is not condemned. The point is that the Law has no more jurisdiction over the person in Christ and cannot be used to condemn a person. Paul uses a general reference to believers in 8:1 as τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. He subsequently expands this phrase further as those μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα (8:4). Thus in terms of context it makes much better sense to accept variant #1 as the original reading and not variants #2 or #3.

### C. Conclusion

The conclusion I came to in the internal evidence confirms the results of the external evidence: the most probable reading is variant #1. The certainty of my conclusion concurs with the certainty of the editors of the UBS Greek Testament, who accept variant #1 with an “A” ranking<sup>11</sup>.

## VI. Impact of the Conclusions on the Interpretation of Rom. 8:1

In the above analysis I concluded that variant #1 was the most likely reading of the text. This conclusion I believe makes the best sense of the text and what Paul is attempting to communicate in Rom.7-8. In Rom. 7:1-6 Paul has concluded that the Law only has jurisdiction over a person only as long as it is in effect. Paul uses the illustration of a woman married to a man. When her husband dies she is free to remarry. Likewise the Mosaic Covenant of the Law was in effect until the time Christ came on earth and died for humankind, at which time it was nullified. Paul concludes in 7:6 that the purpose Christ’s death was so that believers could live by the Spirit and not the Law (7:6). He makes it abundantly clear that his conclusion is founded on Christ’s death and the sinfulness of humankind and not because there was some fault in the Law; the Law is righteous, holy and good (7:7, 12). The Law is not sinful but it does expose sin.

In Rom. 7:7-25, Paul digresses, reflecting on his former life under the Law, without Christ. He found that the Law exposed not only his sinful actions but also the sinful nature within him. Paul was torn between two strong powers, the good in him which sought God

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<sup>11</sup> Bruce Metzger ed., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Society, 1994), pp. 455-56.

and His righteous commandments and his sinful nature which sought that which is evil. These two powers waged war in his inner being causing him to feel and conclude that he was a “wretched man”, enslaved and without someone or some way to be delivered. This was his life until he met Christ on the Damascus Road as His Lord (7:25)<sup>12</sup>.

In Rom. 8:1ff. Paul describes his life as a believer as one in Christ though he expands this to include others (all those who are in Christ; τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Whereas in his former life he felt condemned, now in his present life he feels free (8:1). The reason Paul does not include here, the subsequent phrase found in 8:4 (μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα) is because he wants to emphasize the lack of condemnation that he is presently experiencing in contrast to his former life. Paul expands on this personal experience in 8:2ff. For this reason I conclude that the textual variant in 8:2 should be corrected from σε to με and that 8:2 should be read ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν με ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου (For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and death). This is his new hope and also for others though he focuses on his own life in 8:2. It is a hope founded on Christ’s fulfillment of the Law which he was powerless to accomplish because of his sinful nature. With sin now condemned in Christ’s body on the Cross he was now free and able to fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law through living in accordance with the Spirit, not the flesh (8:4). It is at this point that Paul adds the phrase μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα. The addition of this phrase at this point makes sense and fits neatly into the logic of his argument. To include this phrase in 8:1 would preempt his argument. Having set the groundwork for the new status of the believer, Paul is now able to discuss the difference between living by the Spirit and living by the flesh.

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<sup>12</sup> I realize that Rom. 7:7ff. is a strongly disputed passage which some consider to refer to his pre-conversion life and others his post-conversion life. I have chosen the former position. It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on this issue since the main issue I am addressing is the textual critical one. Nevertheless variant #1 seems to fit better under the pre-conversion schema than the post-conversion schema.

Rom. 8:1 is an important textual variant to resolve because of the impact this verse has on the rest of the chapter. I believe that I have shown that the most probable reading of Rom. 8:1 is the shorter reading Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Therefore now there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus) based on the external and internal evidence. I concluded this paper by showing that this reading is most compatible with the argument of Rom. 7-8.