

I'm A Mess Romans 7:13-25

Who is the narrator? Various views—Paul is:

1. Personating an unregenerate man (Arminius)
 - a. v. 5 "I am carnal"
 - b. v. 5 "sold under sin"
 - c. v. 18 "ability to do good absent"
 - d. v. 24 "wretched man"
 - e. It is undisputed that Paul speaks of his former unregenerate state in vv. 7-13
 - f. Ch 6 teaches that believers have already been delivered to such bondage to sin
2. Personating the Jewish nation or individual Jews still under the Law (Early Greek church fathers, Grotius)
 - a. v. 1, Paul is speaking to those who know the Law
3. Personating a Gentile without the law (Erasmus)
4. Personating anyone, regenerate or not, who attempts to gain righteousness by his own Law-keeping (W. H. G. Thomas)
5. Personating an immature or backslidden believer (Newell)
6. Speaking of himself and by extension all believers (Augustine, Luther, Calvin)
 - a. v. 25 "I myself"
 - b. v. 22 "Delight in the law of God in the inner man" (cf. 8:7)
 - c. He deplores his sin
 - d. v. 25 "Serve the law of God"
 - e. "Carnal" is used by Paul to describe Christians but never unbelievers.
Cf. 1 Cor 3:11, 3
 - f. "Sold under sin" is passive, not active—the transaction is contrary to the will of the person in question
 - g. v. 21 "the inner man" is elsewhere used by Paul exclusively to describe the regenerate heart. Cf. II Cor 4:16
 - h. The verb tense changes from past in vv. 7-13 to present in vv. 14-25
 - i. The passage as a whole dwells not only on sin, but on the struggle for victory over sin.
 - j. 6:5, 12, 13, & 19 imply that our deliverance from the bondage of sin will not be complete until the final resurrection, and that we cooperate in the process.

Law of:

1. God: holy, righteous, good (12); spiritual (14); does not dwell in the flesh (16-18); is served by the regenerate heart (25)
2. Sin: present in the flesh (21); successfully wages war and takes POWs (23); is served by the flesh (25)
3. the Mind (inner man): desires to do good (18); joyfully concurs with the Law of God (22); must attempt to defend the subject against attacks by the Law of Sin (23); serves the law of God (25)
4. the Spirit of life (8:2): has freed from the Law of Sin those who are in Christ Jesus.