

## **Rom. 7 LAW AND THE SIN NATURE (7:1-25).**

### **The jurisdiction of the Law is limited to the living. (7:1-6)**

#### **a. Principle**

“<sup>1</sup> Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who **know the law**), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?”

#### **What are we expected to know about the Law?**

1. **I Tim.1:8** “the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,”
  - a. The Law has a use in this age of Grace.
  - b. But its use is guided by a proper understanding of the Law. The Greek term, translated “law” can refer to a number of things.
    1. It may refer to part or all of the Old Testament Scriptures. (Lk.24:44; Matt.12:5; Jn.10:34,35)
      - a. **The O.T. Scriptures as a whole** (TORAH) Rom.3:10-18 Paul quotes as Law (vs.19) various passages of the O.T. that are not part of the Mosaic covenant or Pentateuch. Isa.28:11-12 is labeled Law in I Cor.14:21.
      - b. **The Pentateuchal (first five books) portion of the O.T.** Rom.3:21b “to which the law and the Prophets testify.” Gal.4:21b “Are you not aware of what the law says?” He then alludes to Gen.16:15 and 21:2,9.
      - c. **The Mosaic Covenant** (This is Paul’s most frequent meaning of the Law.)
    2. It can refer to any rule of conduct.
      - a. **The law of conscience.** (Rom.2:14-15)
      - b. **The Law of Moses** (the Ten Commandments, the ordinances, and judgments)
      - c. **The law of Christ.** (I Cor.9:21; Gal.6:2) This is best understood as the moral standard that is set by the man Jesus. His Spirit expresses His life in His church.
        - 1) **The law of liberty** (Jas.1:25) This is the moral standard that flows from the freedom of God’s people as they walk in the Spirit.
        - 2) **The royal law** (Jas.2:8) This is best understood as the Law of Christ.
    3. It can refer to any recognized principle of operation.
      - a. **The law of sin and death.** (Rom.7:21-23, 8:2)
      - b. **The law of works.** (Rom.3:27) Note Malachi 3:7 “‘Return to me, and I will return to you.’ says the Lord Almighty.”
      - c. **The law of faith.** (Rom.3:27)
      - d. **The law of the Spirit of life.** (Rom.8:2)
  2. **Its relationship to Israel.**
    - a. It was given **to Israel** (not to the church or the world). (Lev.26:46; Rom.2:14, 3:2, 9:4)
    - b. It was given **to Israel as a unit.** Attempts to divide the law into moral and ceremonial / civil parts are based on assumptions without clear Biblical support.

There is clear evidence from extra Biblical sources that the Jewish community never made a distinction between moral and ceremonial/civil parts. This is an important issue when we read Paul's words concerning the believer's freedom from the Law. It was not just the ceremonial law that he had in view.

- c. It was elaborated by Christ. (Matt.5-7) Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is best understood as an explanation of the Mosaic Law's true demands which were to result in the breaking of the Jews pride so they would "hunger and thirst" for a righteousness that they did not yet have.
- d. It was to be in effect **over a definite period of time** and then terminated as a covenant of blessing and cursing. (Gal.3:19-25)
- e. It was related to the "**law of works**" **righteousness**. Ezek.18:9 "Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord." (Rom.10:4-5; Gal.4:21-31)
- f. It contains an **implicit promise of eternal life** to its doer. (Matt.19:17; Rom.2:13; 7:10; 10:5; Lev.18:5; Phil.3:9; Deut.4:1,8;; 27:26; 28:58-59) Note: The N.T. texts (Rom.3:20; Gal.2:16) make it clear that this promise is only in theory for no one can in practice keep the Law so as to gain life.
- g. It was expected that Israel should be able to obey the law as it was not too difficult for them. (Deut.30:10-11) It is important to understand that the Law made provision through animal sacrifice for pardon from sin so that the one who failed to keep a part of the moral law could make things right. With this provision, life under the Law was manageable.
- h. It is "**eternal**" (Lev.16:24; 24:8). The Hebrew term used here means "lasting for an age". The same term is used for the Levitical priesthood in Ex.40:15 which the book of Hebrews tells us came to an end with Christ. It must be noted that to the extent that the Law reflects the unchangeable holy nature of God, it abides forever. This is to be distinguished from its role as a covenant.

### **b. Illustration - marriage**

<sup>2</sup> For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. <sup>3</sup> So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man.

#### **1. The Law of Moses does not have jurisdiction over the dead.**

- a. At Christian baptism, the believer died and rose with Christ.
- b. In the illustration, the behavior of the woman does not change. What changes is the jurisdiction of the Law and the guilt or lack –there-of.

#### **2. The Christian cannot be condemned by the Law of Moses because he or she is dead in Christ.**

### **c. Application**

<sup>4</sup> Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup> For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were {aroused} by the Law, were at work

in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup> But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

**1. Freedom from the Law does not mean freedom from responsibility to bear fruit.**

- a. A life of obedience is expected both under Law and under Grace. The difference is the motivation and source of power.
- b. The “newness of the Spirit” suggests that this condition was not available to O.T. believers but was initiated at Pentecost.

**2. The Law had the effect of “arousing” sinful passions.**

- a. Literally the verse reads – “the passions of sin operated through the Law”.
- b. There is something about the Law Covenant that excites sin.

**The role of the Law is limited to exposing sin. (7:7-13)**

**a. The purpose of the law (7:7) - to expose sin**

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “*You shall not covet.*”

**1. The Law exposes but does not expunge sin.**

- a. The Law reflects the holy character of God and is therefore good.
- b. Rather than providing a means to please God, the Law had the effect of showing us how helpless we were to please God.

**b. The experience of Paul**

<sup>8</sup> But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin {is} dead. <sup>9</sup> And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; <sup>10</sup> and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; <sup>11</sup> for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

**2. The commandment which pointed the way to life, could not bring Paul to that life.**

- a. Paul was not conscious of the coveting in his life until the Law exposed it as sin resulting in a deep sense of guilt. Paul began to see coveting everywhere. He lost hope and a sense of confidence before God.
- b. Sin used the Law to kill Paul of any hope.
- c. Some have suggested that the “I” in verse 9 is a reference to Paul “in Adam”. Adam was alive to God until the commandment came and was broken. But this would suggest that sin was present but asleep in Adam before the Fall.

**c. Conclusion**

<sup>12</sup> So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. <sup>13</sup> Therefore did that which is good become {a cause of} death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

