**Romans Chapter 7**

# 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?

* 1. Speaking to those who know the Law
     1. Paul is addressing the Jews.
  2. The Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives
     1. Such a person is under the Law, under the obligation to keep it.
     2. The phrase "under the Law" occurs eleven times in the NASB. Rom. 2:12; 3:19; 1 Cor. 9:20, 21; Gal. 3:23; 4:4, 5; 5:18.

# 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.

# 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. Exo. 20:14, "You shall not commit adultery."
  2. Gen. 2:23–24, "The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man. 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.'"
  3. Matt. 19:6, "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."
  4. 1 Cor. 7:39, "A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord."

# Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

* 1. The Christian is free from the obligation to keep the Mosaic Law in order to be saved – because we have died with Christ (Rom. 6:8; Col. 3:3). This is due to Federal Headship.
     1. Rom. 6:8, "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."
     2. Col. 3:3, "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."
  2. However, we *are* obligated to keep the moral Law. We are not to lie, murder, commit adultery, etc. This is because these laws are a reflection of the character of God. Therefore, all people are obligated to keep them.
     1. Nine of the Ten Commandments are carried over into the New Testament. Six in Matt. 19:18, murder, adultery, stealing, false witness, honor parents, and worshiping God; Romans 13:9 speaks against coveting. The Sabbath is not carried over because Jesus is our Sabbath.
        1. Matt. 11:28, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."
        2. Heb. 4:9–10, " So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.
  3. But, keeping them does not save us.
     1. Rom. 3:20, "because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.
     2. Gal. 2:16, "Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified."
     3. Gal. 2:21, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."
  4. We are either led by the Spirit, or under the Law
     1. Gal. 5:18, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."
  5. Note on the Law and the Gospel
     1. The Law reveals our sinfulness (Rom. 3:20; 7:7)
     2. The Law brings judgment (Rom. 4:15)
     3. The Law is for the ungodly (1 Tim. 1:9)
     4. The Law is for those who are not under grace. (Rom. 3:19; 6:14).
     5. The Law justifies no one (Rom. 3:20; 3:28; 5:1; Gal. 2:16)
     6. The Law is spiritual: It works on the Spirit, not the body (Rom. 7:14)
     7. The Law makes demands of perfection (Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10)
     8. The Law prepares us for the gospel. (Gal. 3:24)
     9. The Law and the gospel both promise eternal life.
        1. The Law gives life by complete obedience to all its commands   
           (Lev. 18:5; Luke 10:26).
        2. The gospel gives live by God's grace conditioned on our faith   
           (Rom. 3:22-24, Eph. 2:8-9).
     10. The Law and Gospel are different in many ways.
         1. The Law is revealed in the hearts of man (Rom. 2:14-15; 3:20). The gospel is by direct revelation; it is not written on the heart (1 Cor. 15:1).
         2. The Law tells people what they are to do (our works). The Gospel reveals what God has done (God's work).  The only demand the gospel makes is faith (Rom. 6:23).
         3. The Law is a reflection of God's righteousness (1 Pet. 1:16). The gospel is a reflection of God's love (John 3:16)
         4. The Law tells us what to do, but does not enable us to do it (Gal. 3:10; James 2:10).  The Gospel tells us what God does and He enables us to do it (Phil. 1:29; John 6:29; Rom. 10:17)
         5. The Law condemns us (Rom. 2:12; 6:23). The Gospel saves us (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
         6. The Law is preached to sinners (1 Tim. 1:8-10). The Gospel is preached to smitten by the Law (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:24)

# 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.

* 1. In verse seven below, Paul speaks of the Law revealing sin.
  2. Here, he speaks of the Law that arouses death in us.
     1. 1 Cor. 15:56, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law."
  3. The Law reveals to us those things that are right and those against which rebel.
  4. We rebel when we seek our own lusts, pride, stubbornness, self-righteousness, etc. We rebel when we do not consider others more important than ourselves (Phil. 2:3)

# 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. We have been released from the Law by the death of Christ.
  2. We were in Him (Federal Headship) and so we died with Him (Rom. 6:8; Col. 3:3).

# 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. Is the Law sin?
     1. Paul is dealing with the natural objection that if the Law only produces death in us, is it defective? Is it sin?
     2. The Law was given to stop people from sinning. But through it, our corrupt nature is revealed, and we produce sin in our rebellion against the Law.
  2. I would not have come to know sin except through the Law.
     1. Because the Law is a reflection of the character of God, it reveals righteousness and unrighteousness. It exposes sin.
        1. Matt. 12:34, "…For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."
     2. The first Law given was by God that dealt with the issue of good and evil. Thus, the first Law is defined with a punishment upon breaking it.
        1. Gen. 2:17, "But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

# But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

* 1. Sin, taking opportunity through the commandment
     1. Paul personifies sin. He gives it characteristics of action. And so, it would seem that this personification is accurate. After all, we are all aware of what sin does to us. It is almost as though it is alive and crawls through her soul, wreaking havoc wherever it goes.
     2. The Law and all of God's commandments are holy because it comes from God – who is holy.
     3. 1 Peter 1:16, "because it is written, 'YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.'"
  2. Apart from the Law sin is dead
     1. 1 Cor. 15:56, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law."
     2. The Law, being a reflection of God's character, has power because God gives it power. He is the one who assigns a consequence to breaking its commands.
        1. Gen. 2:17, "but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."
        2. Isa. 59:2, "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. "
        3. Rom. 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

# I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died

* 1. Before we knew what the Law was, before we encountered the absolutes of moral truth revealed by God, we considered ourselves good. This is conceit. After all, we tend to measure truth and morality by our own conscience, not by God's standard.
  2. Therefore, people who don't have the revelation of the Law feel that they are good. But when the Law is revealed to them, they become aware of their sin and its consequence - death.

# and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

# for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

* 1. Again (v. 7), the Law was given to stop people from sinning. But through it, our corrupt nature is revealed, and we produce sin in our rebellion against the Law.
     1. Gal. 3:12, "However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them."
  2. But through our corruption and self-righteousness, whether ignorantly or on purpose, we rebel against the Law of God. Therefore, it results in death.
  3. But, of course, the redeemed are freed from the Law's power (Rom. 7:4). We are not bound by its penalties.

# So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

* 1. The Law and all of God's commandments are holy because it comes from God – who is holy.
     1. 1 Pet. 1:16, "because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

# 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, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

* 1. Paul anticipates another objection. He points out that the Law is not flawed. It is we who are flawed.
  2. Sin, which is breaking the Law, uses the Law to kill. Again, 1 Cor. 15:56.
  3. The Law is good and so it shows the sinfulness of sin. In other words, it shows how bad sin really is.
  4. Just as being in God's presence reveals our sinfulness and our lack of holiness, being before the Law of God reveals our sinfulness and our lack of holiness.

# For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

* 1. **Note**: The following section of Scripture is debated among theologians. Is Paul's personification of the struggle with sin a declaration of what the unbeliever goes through? Or is it a declaration of what the believer goes through?  
      If it is a personification of the struggle the unbeliever goes through, then how is it that an unbeliever who was a slave of sin (Rom. 6:14-20), hates his own sin?
  2. The Law is spiritual (πνευματικός pneumatikós)
     1. The spiritual nature of the Law rests in the heart and mind of God since it came from Him.
     2. The Law affects our spirit, our inner man.
  3. Sold into bondage to sin
     1. The imagery of the time, slavery, is used here. In this context, the implication is that such slaves have no freedom.
     2. Rom. 6:14, "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace."
  4. Paul speaks in the present tense and uses the first person. Is this an exaggeration, an illustration? Or is Paul referring to himself?
  5. Notice the contrast between spiritual and flesh.

# For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

* 1. By acting on our impulses to sin, we are behaving as though we are in bondage to sin. We are willingly participating in ungodliness. In this, we feed the flesh, and it becomes stronger.
  2. This is because we struggle with our sinful nature.

# But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

* 1. When we acknowledge that we are doing wrong, we agree with God's revelation in the Law.
  2. So, for example, when we covet and war against our coveting, we agree with the truth of the Law that says do not covet (Exo. 20:17). The same goes for lying, lust, conceit, selfishness, etc.

# So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

* 1. Paul is not saying he's not committing any sin. He is personifying the war with the flesh that he is undergoing.
  2. He gives sin the attributes of personhood in that it has the ability to do something.
  3. Sin is, however, an abstraction – not a physical thing. It has no life in itself because it cannot breathe or think. But, it certainly acts as though it is alive in us and seeks to be our master while it seeks to enslave us.

# For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

* 1. The more we know ourselves, the more we know that nothing good is in us.
  2. As Christians, the older we get, the more we realize our hearts' depravity.
  3. A well of sin within us springs up and gushes forth selfishness, pride, anger, wrath, and so much more.
  4. The only good thing in us is God. His grace, kindness, and love are working in us and through us.

# For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

* 1. Because we are alive in Christ and because we are born again, we recognize the sinfulness of our flesh.
  2. We recognize that there is good we want to do, and yet at the same time, we do the opposite of the goodness we desire.
  3. This is the perennial struggle we undergo while still housed in our fallenness.

# But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

* 1. Paul continues to personify sin. Thus it is a way of separating from it.
  2. In one way, that life of sin is separate from him.
  3. Sin in him, this thing, this oppressor enslaves him.
  4. Therefore, it is the living sinfulness within him with which he struggles.

# I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

* 1. The principle
     1. Literally in the Greek is 'the law.' τὸν νόμον, ton nomon
     2. Principle: NASB, LEB
     3. Law: ASV ESV, KJV, RSV, NIV, CSB
     4. The principle that Paul is talking about is the struggle of not wanting to do bad and yet doing it because of the indwelling of sin.

# For I joyfully concur with the Law of God in the inner man,

* 1. Paul delights in the truth of the Law written upon his heart and that he has learned through studying the word of God.
  2. This condition of his mind to concur with the Law is not something unbelievers can do. They can only give lip service to it.
  3. They do not delight in the truth of the Law of God within them because they submit to the Law of sin.

# but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the Law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the Law of sin which is in my members.

* 1. The word 'law' occurs three times in this verse.
  2. The first Law refers to the inward principle of the struggle with the members of his flesh, his body.
     1. Our sin operates as though it has a set of laws that it works from.
     2. It seems to flow from within our members, even though from within we want to do good.
  3. The second Law deals with what he knows. He knows that the Law instructs us to not sin.
     1. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds.
        1. Rom. 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
        2. Eph. 4:23, "and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
     2. Paul describes the two basic principles: the Law in the flesh the Law in the mind. The Law in the flesh is sinful. The Law in the mind is holy.
  4. The third Law speaks of the effect of the first Law, bondage.
     1. Our flesh brings us into bondage because within it the Law of sin is alive and well.

# Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

* 1. The body of death is the principle of sin that lives in him
  2. But it is also a reference to a manner of execution where prisoners would be chained to a decaying body in a jail cell, and the filth of that death would grow upon the living person.

# Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the Law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the Law of sin.

* 1. The one who delivers us from the body of our death is Jesus Christ.
  2. It was Jesus who died on the cross and set us free.
  3. Yet, though we are free, we must acknowledge that we still struggle.
  4. But in the next chapter, Paul speaks more about our deliverance from bondage.