

"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS" (Chapter Seven)

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To understand the Jewish Christian's relationship to the Law of Moses
- 2) To comprehend the dilemma one faces without Jesus Christ

SUMMARY

Paul has just completed discussing how being baptized into Christ makes us dead to sin and free to present our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. For the benefit of his Jewish readers (those who know the Law), he now carries the concept of death and freedom one step further: the Jewish believers become dead to the Law that they might be joined to Christ. He illustrates his point by referring to the marital relationship. The result of being freed from the Law is that they might "serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." (1-6)

Lest his Jewish readers think he is implying that the Law was sinful, Paul is quick to dispel that notion. The Law, he says, is "holy and just and good." The problem is that the Law only makes known that which is sinful, but sin took opportunity by the commandment to produce evil desire and deceived him, resulting in death (7-12).

To further illustrate his point, Paul pictures himself as man under the Law who finds himself in a terrible dilemma. With his mind he knows that which good and wants to do it. He also knows that which is evil and wants to avoid that. But he finds a "law" (or principle) in his flesh which wins over the desire of the mind (13-23). As a prisoner he cries out for freedom. Is there no hope? Yes! God provides the solution through His Son Jesus Christ, upon which Paul will elaborate in chapter eight (24-25).

OUTLINE

I. JEWISH BELIEVERS AND THE LAW (1-6)

A. A PARALLEL TO BEING RELEASED FROM MARRIAGE (1-3)

1. Law has dominion over those who live under it (1)
2. As illustrated by a woman who is married to a man (2-3)

B. THEY HAVE DIED TO THE LAW (4-6)

1. So they can be married to Christ (4)
2. So they can serve in newness of the Spirit, far superior to serving in the oldness of the letter (5-6)

II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7-25)

A. THE LAW IS HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD (7-12)

1. The Law is not sin, but rather makes known sin (7)
2. But sin takes occasion by the commandment to lead one to death (8-12)

B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (13-25)

1. The problem is not law, but sin (13)

2. The Law is spiritual, but man is carnal and sold under sin (14)
3. Though one may desire good and hate evil, one is still enslaved by sin (15-23)
4. Deliverance comes only from God, through Jesus Christ (24-25)

KEY TERMS:

in the flesh - "to be in the flesh is to be under the flesh; and to be under it is to be controlled by its propensities, evil inclinations, and desires" (Moses Lard)

The Law - the Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments (v.7)

law of my mind - that inner desire, which in the context of this chapter, is the desire of one to do that which is good and right

law of sin in my members - "The law which I see 'in my members' is the constant tendency which I notice in them to sin, whenever excited by sinful objects" (Moses Lard)

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER

1) List the main points of this chapter

- Jewish Believers And The Law (1-6)
- Limitations Of The Law (7-25)

2) Who is Paul speaking to in this chapter? (1)

- Those who know the law (Jewish Christians)

3) What example is given to show their relationship to the Law? (2-3)

- How a woman whose husband dies is free to be married to another without being guilty of adultery

4) What is their relationship to the Law when joined to the body of Christ? (4-6)

- Dead to the law, delivered from the law

5) How do we know the Law referred to is the Ten Commandments? (7)

- To illustrate his point, Paul mentions "You shall not covet", one of the Ten Commandments

6) Was the Law responsible for death? If not, what was? (13)

- No! It was "sin" that produced death

7) What dilemma does one face in trying to keep the Law? (15-21)

- The DESIRE to do good and avoid evil may be there, but the ABILITY is found lacking

8) What is the end result of this dilemma? (23)

- CAPTIVITY to the law (or principle) of sin in one's members

9) Where can one find freedom from this dilemma? (24-25)

- From God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!