

The Law of Sin and Death

Lesson Eight; Romans 7

A Difficult Analogy

The Married Woman of Romans 7:1-6

Romans 7:1 Or do you not know, brothers--for I am speaking to those who know the law--that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives?

² For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage.

³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

⁴ Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

⁵ For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

⁶ But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. (Rom 7:1-6 ESV)

The Argument in Romans 6

If the Gentile believers are not "under the Torah," why shouldn't Gentiles continue in sin that grace may abound?

Dead to Sin (Romans 6:2-14)
 Baptized into Messiah's death
 Raised up in his resurrection
 Slave to Righteousness (Romans 6:15-23)
 Used to be a slave to sin
 Now a slave to righteousness

Slave Analogy

Slave = Gentile
First Master = Sin
Labor = lawlessness and impurity
Wages = death
Second Master = Obedience
Labor = righteousness
Wages = eternal life

Comparing the two Analogies

Slave = Woman
First Master = First Husband
Second Master = Second Husband
Wages = Fruit (Offspring)

The Argument in Romans 7

Jewish believers also have a new relationship to the Torah.

No longer under the law of sin and death
 There is no condemnation for those in Messiah

The Law of Sin and Death:

- The wages of sin is death. (Rom 6:23)
- Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. (Rom 5:12)
- Sin ... leads to death. (Rom 6:16)

Dead to the Law; Released from the Law

Provocative language addressed to Jews and Proselytes in the midst of his argument about whether or not God-fearing Gentiles need to become "under the law."

The Married Woman

Or do you not know, brothers—for I am *[now]* speaking *[directly]* to those who know the law *[that is Jews and Proselytes]*—that the law *[of marriage, halachically speaking]* is binding on a person only as long as he lives?

² For *[example,]* a married woman is bound by law to *[remain married to]* her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage *[and considered unmarried]*.

³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law [regarding marriage], and if she marries another man [after his death] she is not an adulteress.

⁴ Likewise, my *[Jewish]* brothers, you also have died *[according]* to the law *[regarding your marriage to the flesh]* through *[being identified with]* the body of Christ, so that you may belong *[and be married]* to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit *[i.e. offspring in the form of righteous deeds]* for God.

⁵ For while we were living in *[in our marriage to]* the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law *[of our marriage to the flesh]*, were at work in our members to bear fruit *[i.e. offspring in the form of sinful acts]* for death.

⁶ But now we are released from the law *[that binds us to the flesh]*, having died to that *[legal marital constraint]* which held us captive *[to the flesh]*, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit *[of God which writes the Torah on our hearts]* and not in the old way of the ~~written code~~ writing *[i.e., the ketubah which prevented us from escaping our marriage to the flesh]*.

The Married Woman Analogy:

Woman = Jewish person

First Husband = the flesh

First Marriage = Old Covenant, Sin begets death

Second Husband = Messiah

Second Marriage = New Covenant, Bearing Fruit (righteousness) for God

Don't Get Me Wrong

⁷ What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means!

Adam's Bane

Yet if it had not been for the law, I [Adam] would not have known sin [in the garden of Eden]. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

⁸ But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the [definitions of righteousness created by the] law, sin lies dead.

⁹ I [Adam] was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment [forbidding sin] came, sin came alive [in me] and I died [because I sinned].

¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.

¹¹ For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it [sin used the law and] killed me.

Don't Get Me Wrong (Again)

¹² So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

¹³ Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? [Did the Torah kill me?] By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good [i.e. the revelation of God], in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the [revelation that comes through the] commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

The Real Problem

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh [a human being in a human body], sold under sin.

¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want [which is righteousness defined in the Torah], but I do the very thing I hate [which is sin].

¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good [and what I want].

¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh [my human body]. For I have the [spiritual] desire to do what is right, but not the [physical] ability to carry it out.

¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I [in my inner spiritual person] who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

The Law of Sin

²¹ So I find it to be a [different] law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand [cf. Genesis 4:7].

²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner [spiritual] being,

²³ but I see in my [physical] members another law waging war against the [Torah] law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my [physical] members.

²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord [through whom I will rise in the resurrection]! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Law of the Spirit of Life

^{8:1} There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Law of the Spirit of Life: And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezekiel 36:27)