

Romans 7

Chapter Seven

"The Dominion of the Law"

The apostle having, in the preceding chapter, shown the converted Gentiles the obligations they were under to live a holy life, addresses himself here to the Jews who might hesitate to embrace the Gospel; lest, by this means, they should renounce the law, which might appear to them as a renunciation of their allegiance to God. As they rested in the law, as sufficient for justification and sanctification, it was necessary to convince them of their mistake. That the law was insufficient for their justification the apostle had proved, in chapters iii., iv., and v.; that it is insufficient for their sanctification he shows in this chapter; and introduces his discourse by showing that a believing Jew is discharged from his obligations to the law, and is at liberty to come under another and much happier constitution, viz. that of the Gospel of Christ, Ro 7:1-4. In Ro 7:5 he gives a general description of the state of a Jew, in servitude to sin, considered as under mere law. In Ro 7:6 he gives a summary account of the state of a Christian, or believing Jew, and the advantages he enjoys under the Gospel—Adam Clarke.

Paul now moves from the law of sin and draws illustration from the Mosaic Law. As a man is bound to his wife so long as they both live, so does the law having binding power over a person as long as they live in the flesh. Death looses a man or wife from their spouse and so death of the flesh looses an individual from the law of sin. We cannot serve God while in the flesh for we are bound by the law of nature to sin. The flesh is the enemy of God and cannot be made subservient to Him. The only freedom from sin is to be found in death of the carnal man. When he dies then are we free to marry another.

Paul completes the chapter with a personal testimony to illustrate the same principle. This is not Paul the Apostle's testimony per se but Saul of Tarsus' testimony. He was a man that was blameless concerning the law, but yet found sin to be his master. The things he would like to do he could not, and the things that he did not want to do he did. Paul isn't presenting this as the condition of the Believer where we just have to sin a little every day. No! Paul cries out in testimony for deliverance. *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* That is he sees beyond this weak condition a promise of something better.

Adam Clarke speaks concerning this twenty-fourth verse an interesting note. "...there seems to be here an allusion to an ancient custom of certain tyrants, who bound a dead body to a living man, and obliged him to carry it about, till the contagion from the putrid mass took away his life!" Paul is painting a startling picture in order to awaken his readers to the reality of the gruesomeness of sin. This picture of a dead body bound to a man is the parallel to verse 25, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.* For so is the condition of the regenerated man however good his intentions may be.