



Lesson 11

Sin & The Law Part 1

Romans 6.15-7.6

“But now we have been released from **the Law**, having died to that which we were bound...”

Romans 7.6

Paul had concluded his Adam - Christ contrast by placing the Law in the sphere of Adam, belonging to the epoch of sin and death, “The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,” (5.20). This was perhaps Paul’s most shocking declaration regarding the Law up to this point, leading to the questions that he addressed in chapter 6. Paul either anticipated the objections found in chapter 6, or he had already heard things similar (recall the rumors being circulated about Paul in Jerusalem, cf. Acts 21.21). The crux of the matter was if the Law increased sin, what did that mean for moral behavior?

The first question, “Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?” was answered by appealing to the baptism each Christian experiences. By being buried with Christ in baptism we have died to the epoch of Adam, sin and death. As a Christian is raised out of baptism, He is raised to life. He now belongs firmly in the epoch of Christ, righteousness and life. Any Christian that recognizes what has happened by being buried with Christ in baptism will respond accordingly; he/she will present themselves as alive to God, fit for his use. No, we cannot continue in sin so that grace will increase. Rather, those who have experienced His grace recognize that they have died to sin!

But what about the Law? Paul had earlier charged that the Law came in so that grace would increase (5.20) and now in chapter 6 he says, “sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace,” (vs. 14). Paul has again put the Law firmly on the side of sin. What does this mean for moral behavior? Is sin permissible since we are no longer under Law, but under grace? (vs. 15)

Christians Are Now Slaves To God (6.15-23)

Romans 6:15–23 (NASB95)

15What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

16Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

17But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

18and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

20For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

22But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

23For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. It is interesting that in responding to a question about Law, Paul doesn't mention the Law again until chapter 7. Rather, Paul addresses sin, the product of man's violation of Law. Remember that Paul had placed the Law under the epoch of Adam because it resulted in increased transgressions. Paul was NOT criticizing the Law for as he will explain in 7.7-13, the Law is holy and good. The fault lay with man who keeps violating the Law.
2. An interesting comparison of this passage can be made to 1.18-32. You will recall that the reason why the world was under the wrath of God was that it had left its Creator (1.21) to follow after their own lusts and desires, to which God "gave them over." The tragedy was that ridding itself of God's yoke, the world had become enslaved to sin. In Christ we have died to sin and should no longer be enslaved to it. However, we are still enslaved to a Power greater than ourselves. We have returned to being in submission to our Creator; we are enslaved to God.
3. Vs. 17 makes an interesting point, particularly given that Paul was answering objections to his criticism of the Law. While it is true that we are not under the Law (vs. 14), you will note that living in grace involves the following:
 - Being obedient from the heart
 - Having a "form of teaching" that was delivered to us, i.e. doctrine.
 - A typical Jew would have thought of the Law in similar terms: it was the teaching that was delivered, and it should be obeyed. So, while Paul has declared that we are free from the Law, this new epoch of grace still involves learning the will of God and following it.
4. Vss. 20-23 should be a sobering thought to all. What did we gain when we rejected God's yoke? Were we free? Not at all, we were enslaved to sin! And enslavement to sin can only result in death! In Christ we are to return to the state of things as God originally intended, where He assumes His rightful position as Creator and we remember our place as His creation. Be enslaved to God, present your members as slaves to righteousness and you will receive what God always intended for His creation: sanctification and eternal life!

Christians Are Dead To The Law (7.1-6)

Romans 7:1–6 (NASB95)

1Or 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?

2For 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.

3So 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.

4Therefore, 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.

5For 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.

6But 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. Now, Paul returns to what all of this means for the Law. Given that the Law falls within the epoch of Adam, sin and death, we cannot be under the Law and under grace at the same time (6.14). Paul has already established that we died to sin (6.1-7), but what about the Law? Paul's point in this text is that we have also died to the Law.
2. Paul makes an analogy between living under the Law and marriage. A Jew would have been under the Law's jurisdiction so long as he lived, just like a woman was bound to her husband so long as he lived. To live with another man while her husband lived would have been adultery, but if her husband died she would be free to marry again.
3. Paul doesn't carry the analogy out in the way we would initially think. He does not say the Law (in the role of the husband) died, but rather we have died. Paul clearly has in mind the death, burial and resurrection of baptism that he detailed in 6.1-11. Dying with Christ in baptism frees one from sin, death and the Law which aroused sinful passions. Now we are raised to walk in life, joined to Christ to serve in the newness of the Spirit (which will be addressed further in chapter 8).
4. While the primary purpose of this passage is not about marriage, it does emphasize some truths found throughout the Scriptures:
 - The permanency of marriage is emphasized, as we see that a woman was bound to her husband as long as he lived.
 - The sinfulness of being joined to another outside of one's marriage is emphasized. A woman joined to another man who is not her husband is an "adulteress." This describes an ongoing state, not simply an action.