

## Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 202 – July 21<sup>st</sup> – Romans 7:1-12

### Works frequently referenced in these notes on Romans

- Barrett, CK      *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1957.
- Dunn, JDG      *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary Vols 38A, 38B, Dallas, Word, 1988.
- Moo, Douglas, J      *Romans: The NIV Application Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000.
- Murray, John      *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 Vols, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1959 & 1965.
- Wright, NT      *The Letter to The Romans*, The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol 10, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2002.

#### Romans 7:1-8:11

"The main theme on the surface of Romans 7 – and of the first paragraph of Romans 8, which belongs closely with it – is the Jewish Law, the Torah. The conclusion is unwelcome to some, not least because it appears to make the passage irrelevant for those who have never lived 'under' the Torah. But Paul is here telling the story of Israel under one particular guise; this is the story that climaxes with the story of Jesus (8:3-4), and the way in which it does so is vital for understanding the basis of Christianity...

"The argument of the passage falls into clear paragraphs. The introduction (7:1-6) leads to the question of whether the law and sin are identical (7:7-12). This produces the second-order question, whether the good law, despite being exonerated from the first charge, is nevertheless the cause of death (7:13-20). This in turn leads to Paul's paradoxical conclusion about the law (7:21-25). Paul can then expound the divine answer (8:1-11), which also, naturally, serves as the foundation of the further exposition of life in the Spirit (8:12-30)." Wright.

#### Romans 7:1-4

Paul provides us with an illustration of the relationship between law, death and freedom. Death annuls the demands of the law on the person now deceased; for example, the law which binds a man to his wife is annulled with the death of the husband. The annulment of this law gives freedom to the wife. In this example the dead and the living cannot be one and the same, but in respect to the spiritual truth they illustrate they can be: the same person who has died with Christ to the demands of the law is freed to live with and for the risen Christ. However, the illustration should not be turned into an allegory.

#### Verse 1

Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί, γινώσκουσιν γὰρ νόμον λαλῶ, ὅτι ὁ νόμος κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῆ;

ἢ οἱ

Provides a link back to 6:14-15, "You are not under the law ... or do you not know that the law only rules over someone during their lifetime?"

ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

λαλεω speak, talk

"*nomos* refers to the Mosaic law throughout this context. his does not mean, however, that Paul addresses only Jewish Christians. Many of the Gentile Christians in Rome had probably been 'God-fearers,' that is, Gentiles sympathetic to Judaism but without becoming converts. They would have known the Mosaic law as well as Jewish Christians." Moo.

κυριεω see 6:9

ὅσος, ἢ, ὅν as much as, how far; ἐφ' ὅσον while

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζαω live, be alive

This is a general statement, of which the law regarding marriage is simply an example.

#### Verse 2

ἢ γὰρ ὕπανδρος γυνὴ τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δέδετα νόμῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ, κατήρηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός.

ὕπανδρος, ον married (of a woman)

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

ἀνιρ, ἀνδρος m man, husband

δέδετα Verb, perf pass indic, 3s δεω bind, tie

ἐὰν if

ἀποθνησκω die, face death, be mortal

κατήργηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s  
καταργεω cancel; pass be released  
from

τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός Barrett considers the two genitives to be in apposition – 'she is done with the law as she is done with her husband.'

### Verse 3

ἄρα οὖν ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρός μοιχαλὶς χρηματίζει ἐὰν γένηται ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἐλευθέρῃ ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, τοῦ μὴ εἶναι αὐτὴν μοιχαλίδα γενομένην ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ.

μοιχαλὶς, ἰδος f adulteress, unfaithful  
χρηματίζω be called  
γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι  
ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different  
ἐλευθερός, α, ον free, free person  
εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

του μη εἶναι – του + infinitive expresses consequence – "with the result that she is not ..."

### Verse 4

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρῳ, τῷ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι ἵνα καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ θεῷ.

ὥστε so that, with the result that  
ἐθανατώθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl  
θανατοῶ kill, put to death

Cf. Gal 2:19. By death, you came out from under the law's domain.

σῶμα, τος n body

"The era of the law has come to an end with the redemptive work of Christ. To be 'under the law,' then, means to be in that old era and to effectively deny that Christ, 'the end of the law,' has come." Moo.

Wright, addressing the question of who is the 'you' who has died, writes, "The whole clause appears to be a shorthand way of saying three things simultaneously: (a) the bodily death of Jesus the Messiah is the representative event through which the Messiah's people 'die with him' (6:4-11); (b) you are in the Messiah by baptism, and therefore share that death [so chapter 6]; (c) your solidarity with the Messiah can be expressed in terms of your membership in his 'body.'"

νεκρός, α, ον dead  
ἐγερθέντι Verb, aor pass ptc, m & n dat s  
ἐγειρω raise  
καρποφορεω bear fruit, be productive

To have died to the law does not mean to be free to live as one pleases. The only way of dying to the law is by dying with Christ and to die with him is also to be raised with him. That union with him that brings forgiveness is also a union designed to bear fruit (cf. 6:21-22).

### Verses 5-6

"Paul now explains v. 4 with a two-sided description of the old life and the new. This, as is widely recognised, functions as the double heading over the two sections, 7:7-25 and 8:1-11." Wright.

### Verse 5

ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ καρποφορήσαι τῷ θανάτῳ·

ὅτε conj when, at which time  
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

"The flesh' denotes physicality seen on the one hand as corruptible and on the other as rebellious; it is another way of saying 'in Adam,' of demarcating that humanity that is characterised by sin and consequently by death. To be 'in the flesh' for Paul is to be determined by 'flesh' in this sense, i.e., to live under the dominion of sin and death, and thus to be in the condition marked by the first half of the various antitheses both of 5:12-21 and of 6:16-23." Wright.

παθῆμα, τος n passion, desire  
ἁμαρτία, ας f sin  
ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

The law had no power to prevent sinful passions but rather stimulated them, cf. vv 7-12.

μελος, ους n member, bodily part  
θανάτος, ου m death

### Verse 6

νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα, ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος.

νυνὶ (originally an emphatic form of νυν)  
now  
κατηργήθημεν Verb, aor pass indic, 1 pl  
καταργεω see v.2

The AV rendering seems to imply ἀποθανοντος (so Elzevir text of 1624) for which there is no manuscript authority, but which seems to be derived from a conjecture of Beza, who, following Erasmus, misunderstood a comment of Chrysostom (so Tischendorf).

κατεχω hold fast, restrain  
 ώστε so that, with the result that  
 καινοτης, ητος f newness

'Newness of Spirit' is a reference to the Holy Spirit who is the author of new life. Paul here anticipates 8:1-11.

παλαιοτης, ητος f age, oldness  
 γραμμα, τος n letter (of alphabet), letter

Cf. 2 Cor 3:6f.; also Rom 2:29. "The point of all this for Romans 7 is to confirm that here Paul is dealing with 'the Jew,' living under the 'letter' of the Mosaic law, and contrasting this with the Spirit-given new life in Christ; and to show that throughout 7:1-8:11 we should keep in mind the discussion in chap. 2, which, demonstrating the inadequacy of the Torah to create and sustain ethnic Israel as God's people, pointed forward to the creation of a new people in whom God's will would be done, described somewhat oxymoronically as 'the uncircumcision that keeps the law' (2:26-27)... A new mode of service, then, has been opened up, a mode to which Torah pointed but which it could not bring to pass." Wright.

### Verses 7-12

The verses that follow have caused much controversy: do they speak of the unregenerate state or is Paul describing his experience as a Christian? They do not seem to describe what we know of Paul's history before his conversion. Murray argues that verses 7-12 are a description of pre-regenerate conviction, a work of the Spirit. Barrett thinks that this section does not reflect Paul's experience but follows the pattern of the story of the Fall in Gen 2 & 3. Wright argues strongly that it depicts the history of Israel as God's covenant people, a history with which Paul identifies, for it *was* his history. In answer to the question of whether the law is sin, Paul tells "the story of the law's arrival on Sinai and Israel's recapitulation of the sin of Adam."

### Verse 7

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου, τὴν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἤδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις·

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λεγω  
 γένοιτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

Paul's negative evaluation of the law in vv 1-6 leads him to anticipate a conclusion that may wrongly be drawn by his Roman readers – that the law and sin are more or less equivalent. Note the use of the adversative ἀλλά 'No, the law is not sin, although it is indeed true that the law and sin are related...' NIV translation of ἀλλά as 'indeed' is misleading.

ἔγνων Verb, aor act indic, 1 s γινωσκω

The meaning here is more than 'come to understand' sin as a concept, it is knowing what sin meant in practice – knowing its reality and power (see 8a). Cf. 3:20.

τε and; τε γαρ for also

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing, lust

ἤδειν Verb, pluperf act indic, 1 s οἶδα

ἐπιθυμew long for, desire, covet

Wright comments, "This is not about Paul himself; it is about the moment in Israel's history, and indeed (5:13-14) in the history of humankind, when the arrival of the law meant that, as at the beginning, humans were faced with a specific command, so that the miscellaneous sin that had existed 'from Adam to Moses' (5:14) would again become 'trespass,' breaking a known law.

"That explains, as will become clear in the next three verses, the fact that Paul seems here to be referring also to the 'fall' of Genesis 3 (particularly with v.11: sin 'deceived me ... and killed me,' alluding to Gen 3:13; cf. 2 Cor 11:3). We should not attempt to decide between these two (Sinai and Eden): Paul's point is precisely that what happened on Sinai recapitulated what had happened in Eden."

### Verse 8

ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν, χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά.

ἀφορμη, ης f occasion, opportunity

λαβοῦσα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s λαμβανω

ἐντολη, ης f command

κατειργάσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

κατεργαζομαι accomplish, bring about

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω

Sin is at war against man, and the law gives it opportunity for attack. Barrett points out the analogy with the way in which the serpent used the command of God given to Adam and Eve in order to lead them into sin. Moo says that Paul "Probably has in mind the power of a definite prohibition to stimulate in sinful people a rebellious reaction."

χωρις without, apart from

νεκρος, α, ον dead

**Verse 9**

ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ· ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν,

ζῶ live, be alive

ποτε once, formerly, at one time

ἐλθούσης Verb, aor act ptc, f gen s ἐρχομαι  
ἀναζῶ come to life

The law gives sin a new lease of life. To what time does this refer? Many commentators see this as a reference to Paul's childhood before he became a 'son of the commandment' and assumed responsibility before the law. But Paul has made it quite clear that he had never been 'alive' in a spiritual sense without the law because he was born a sinner, condemned because of Adam's sin (5:12-21). Murray and others see the reference not to a particular time in Paul's development but to the psychology of the fallen man and the manner of sin's working. Barrett thinks that the language reflects the story of Adam and Eve and that Paul is here identifying himself with this history. Moo also thinks that Paul is speaking here not of personal experience but of corporate experience. He says, "The best explanation ... finds Paul in these verses to be describing the experience that he and all Jews have gone through as part of the people of Israel. Jews in Paul's day had a lively sense of their involvement with the great acts in the history of Israel... It would be natural for Paul to merge his own experience relative to sin and the law with the experience of his people Israel. As he has made clear throughout Romans, the coming of the commandment (= the giving of the law of Moses) meant for Israel not 'life' but 'death.' Their sin was exposed and magnified, and greater wrath came on them (4:15; 5:20)."

**Verse 10**

ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον, καὶ εὗρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωὴν αὐτῆ εἰς θάνατον·

ἀπέθανον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death

εὗρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὕρισκω

ζωη, ης f life

Cf. Lev 18:5. "The purpose of the law in man's original estate was not to give occasion to sin but to direct and regulate man's life in the path of righteousness and therefore to guard and promote life." Murray.

θάνατος, ου m death

Wright comments, "This is, for Paul, the real irony of Torah, and it points forward to the paradoxical fulfilling of Torah's intention by the Spirit in 8:1-11."

**Verse 11**

ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐξηπάτησέν με καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν.

ἀφορμη see v.8

Sin used the law as a bridgehead for its invasion.

λαβοῦσα see v.8

ἐξαπαταῶ deceive, lead astray

There are echoes of the story of the serpent in the Garden.

ἀποκτείνω and ἀποκτενω, -ννω kill, put to death

Wright comments, "The preliminary picture is complete: (a) sin and the law are quite distinct; (b) sin has taken over the law, the law that promised life; (c) using it as a base of operations, sin has produced the opposite of that which the law promised. This is of course why 'no human being will be justified' in God's sight on the basis of Torah (3:20); it is why the Torah became 'a dispensation of death' (2 Cor 3:7-11); it is why, despite the glory of the first exodus and the first covenant, a new exodus and a renewed covenant were necessary."

**Verse 12**

ὥστε ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος, καὶ ἡ ἐντολὴ ἁγία καὶ δίκαια καὶ ἀγαθή.

ὥστε so that, with the result that

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

ἀγαθος, η, ον good

The law reflects the character of the lawgiver. Paul will now build on this positive affirmation to describe the positive role of the law in *exposing* sin.