

**Grace school weekly for Feb 24-March 1, 2020**

**"Relevance of the law of Moses"**

**by Gene Mitchell**



**The blue underlined Scriptures used throughout this lesson are web links that will take you to its web content. This is to enhance your study (\*\* Web links only work on PDF file; available at the bottom of the Facebook post \*\*).**

Look at what Paul said in Rom 12:1-2 — ***"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you PRESENT your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. (2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*** It's obvious that Paul is speaking of our spiritual growth in this passage and how we are to go about it. We just concluded our investigation of Paul's teaching in Rom 6, where we saw, in detail, what he said here in Rom 12 about the renewing of the mind and by presenting our bodies to God. In Rom 6, he taught on the 3 actions of "knowing", "reckoning"(12:2, "the

*renewing of the mind*") and *"presenting"* (also in Rom 12:1). Our spiritual growth is in the 2 steps of renewing our minds, which comes by knowing and reckoning, and by presenting our bodies to God as those which are dead to sin and alive to Him. I hope that you also understand that the renewing of our minds and presenting our bodies to God are not our actions that we have to muster up, but rather our responsibilities to the working of His grace in our lives. For last week's lesson or any of the other archive teachings, click [HERE](#).

This week, we will look at Paul's teaching in Rom 7. One must have a proper understanding of Rom 6 and what grace has done in his life through his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection **BEFORE** he reads chapters 7 and 8, or he'll fail to see what Paul is saying in Rom 7 (Because God is not the author of confusion, He's not a double-talker. Well, the teachings of the gospel are the same way — no DOUBLE-TALKING). So, if Paul says that we have died to sin with Christ, then we must take that understanding with us when we read Rom 7.

I want us to take another look verse-by-verse at how he concluded Chapter 6 — ***"(20) For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness."*** Let's get the image here from this verse by looking at the word *"WHEN"*. The WHEN refers to our lives before we came to Christ — when we were unbelievers — we were SLAVES of sin. The phrase *"slaves of sin"* refers to our old *"sin-nature"*, before it was reborn by God. That nature of sin controlled our thinking, our decisions, our actions. It was at that time we were free in regard to Righteousness; meaning that we had no connection to it. He says in the next verse — ***"What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death."*** If we happen to do the things that we used to do, we feel ashamed. Although, it used to not bother us at all; actually, we enjoyed it. But now, if we attempt to get the same pleasure from those things, it just doesn't happen. This is because we have a new nature, a nature of Righteousness. Because we have died to sin and have received a new Righteous nature, sin no longer *"fits"* our new lifestyle (our new lifestyle is newness of life). This is why believers who live in sin are miserable people. In that kind of *"foreign"* atmosphere, peace, joy and contentment cannot be experienced. This is why in the next verse he says —

***"But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life."*** Then we move to the last verse of Rom 6 — ***"For the wages (or 'penalty') of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** Notice what he said in the previous verse, *"you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life)"*. Since we, as believers in Christ, have everlasting (permanent) life, why would he in the next verse say that if we sin, the wage of that is death? He didn't. I showed you verses 20-25 so we could see that Paul is making a comparison of unbelievers (who we used to be) to believers (who we are now). In v.23, Paul is doing the same thing; he's making a comparison. When we were slaves of sin, we had the penalty of death. But now in Christ, we have eternal (permanent) life!

Understanding this kind of comparison between unbelievers and believers is what we take into Rom 7 and 8. So look now at Rom 7:1 — ***"Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?"*** Who is Paul addressing here in Rom 7? Paul tells us specifically that he is addressing the crowd who know the law. It's like if I need legal advice, I'm going to go to a lawyer, because he KNOWS the law. The guy went to school and took special education to become a lawyer — he knows the law. It's the same here in Rom 7, Paul is speaking specifically to his Jewish audience (You do know that Paul's letter to the Romans was addressed to both Jews and Greeks, don't you? This is the case here; he's specifically talking to those who were educated under the law). If we are not Jewish, then we'll have a hard time understanding what he says in Rom 7, because we weren't raised under the law's tutelage.

I want to give you 2 vitally important facts about the law and its relevance to us.

1) If you are not a Jew, which is most of us, then the law was never given to you (For I'm talking about the Jewish law, or the law of Moses). Paul talked about this in [Rom 2:14-15](#) and did an extended teaching of it in [Eph 2:11-18](#). The Gentiles, non-Jewish people, were never offered the law by God — they were excluded from it. This means that most of the Bible was not written to us Gentiles (Understand what I'm saying here. Of course, we can read Old

Testament Scriptures, etc., and be educated by the Spirit from them. But we must see them in the light of the finished work of Christ.) So please, don't try to interpret Paul's teaching about the law from Rom 7 to your own life. If you do, you'll be confused. Rom 7 is Paul's testimony of being a religious Pharisee before he came to Christ and his inner struggles of realizing who he really was in the light of keeping the law — a complete wretch!

2) The law was specifically given to the unrighteous person. The law was given to make people aware of sin, [Rom 5:13](#). Put another way, Paul said that it was given that sin might increase, [Rom 5:20](#). But notice what else Paul said about the law in 1 Tim 1:9-10 — ***"(9) the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (10) for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine"***. Because we are the Righteousness of God in Christ, the law is not at all relevant to us — neither to the Jewish believer, which is Paul's purpose in Rom 7, and especially not to the Gentile believers. So, not only was the law never offered to us, but because we're the Righteousness of God in Christ, it doesn't belong to us. That's why Paul, addressing Gentile believers, said this (1 Cor 6:12) — ***"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."*** Paul not only said twice in this verse that all things are lawful, but a few chapters later, he repeated this two more times, [1 Cor 10:23](#). Paul really wanted us to know that as believers in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, we are free from the law!

Getting back to Rom 7, Paul said 3 different times ([v.3](#), [4](#), [6](#)) that we have died to the law. However, that's instructed not said about us Gentile believers, but to the Jewish believer, who, at one time in his life, was under the law. Because it was not written to us Gentile believers, we shouldn't try to apply it. Rom 6 was written for all believers in Christ, but Rom 7 was written to Jewish believers only.

An interesting fact about Rom 7, which is Paul's testimony as a devout Pharisee before he came to Christ, if you count all of the *"me(s)" "I(s)"*, *"my(s)"*, between

v.7-25, you'll see that Paul uses them over 40 times. That's because the law promoted his self-effort. Why do I say that it's his testimony BEFORE he came to Christ? Despite the fact that the whole chapter is about keeping the law and how those in Christ have died to it, look at what he just said plainly in 6:14 — ***"Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace."*** Notice how he related the control of sin to the law's requirements and that, in fact, we are no longer under them. This is why people are confused when they read Rom 7 and have in their mind that Paul is talking about his struggle with the law as a Christian. We must learn to rightly divide or balance the word of truth by looking at its context.

Notice Paul's exasperating desire at the conclusion of this chapter — ***"(24) O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (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."*** Paul thought by being very religious and keeping the law, he would discover life. But he found out that the opposite was true. Paul couldn't help himself; he had to insert that phrase of praise in the middle of his conclusion — *"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!"*. Then we see the hopelessness of the Jewish man without Christ, *"So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."* He finishes his testimony in Rom 8:2 — ***"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made ME free from the law of sin and death."*** The old wretch of Rom 7 has now become a new creature in Christ by a higher law (principle) of the Spirit!

By no means, am I saying that Rom 7 is not beneficial to us; I'm just bringing its context into our focus. What has happened is that most who read this chapter, try to first apply what Paul says about the law, without understanding its context. The correct way to interpret Rom 7 is to see its context and then it can be personally applied. Paul's testimony of Rom 7 was written to let the Jewish audience know that, in Christ, they have died to the law through the body of Christ that they can bear fruit for God. What can Gentiles glean from this chapter? We can see from Rom 7 what we were like before we came to Christ; how we used to live. Because Gentiles, like I said earlier, had our own standard

for living, that we strived to live up to; our own set of morals (most morals are from customs and family traditions). Even today, we set up standards to live by. One obvious custom that people make are New Year's Resolutions. How many of us make these kinds of standards, only to fail at them later? The Jews had 613 laws they had to live by, but how many *"laws"* do Gentiles make? This is what Paul is talking about in Rom 7 — we all have died to the laws of human effort through the body of Christ. It's only by living by the new law of the Spirit inside of us that we bear fruit to God. Next time, we will take a great look at Rom 8. Please stay tuned.