

## Central Study Hour – Sabbath School Lesson Notes

### *“The book of Romans”*: Lesson 8, “Who Is the Man of Romans 7?”

#### SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read the first two sentences of the narrative. Let’s take a quick look at three of those verses.

**Read Romans 7:14, 19, + 24.** *Do these verses describe a Christian experience? Why did Paul write of himself in the present tense? “Bible students differ on whether Romans 7 was Paul’s experience before or after his conversion.”* This is probably the wrong question. Paul is actually making an illustration using himself so as not to point his finger at others (likely remembering his own past). He’s writing in the present for people in the present.

To really understand Romans 7, it must be read in the context of Romans 6 and 8. Reading Romans 7 in isolation misses the contrast with Romans 6 or 8.

**Read Rom. 7:14 and Rom. 8:6.** In the 7:14, he is “**carnal sold under sin,**” but in 8:6 it says “**to be carnally minded is death.**” That contrast is enough to show that Romans 7 is the opposite of a salvation experience. We’ll deal more with Romans 8 in next week’s lesson.

**Read Rom. 6:1-2.** In Romans 7 he is “**sold under sin,**” but in 6:1-2 he is “**dead to sin**” instead of continuing in sin.

**Read Rom. 6:6-7.** Being crucified with Christ is putting to death the “**body of sin**” so that “**we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.**” That’s why the Romans 6 experience in **verse 14** says “**sin shall not have dominion over you.**” It’s all about context. Romans 7 is a contrast with both Romans 6 and 8.

#### SUNDAY: “DEAD TO THE LAW”

**Reread Romans 7:14.** Romans 7 is about trying to keep the law without being dead to self and sin. It’s relying on self while still being a slave to sin. It just doesn’t work. It brings the condemnation under the law.

**Read Romans 3:19-20.** Being “under the law” means being guilty of breaking the law.

**Read Romans 7:1.** *Who is Paul writing to in Romans 7?* To those who are focused on the law. The law here includes all the instructions of Moses; the covenant, the 10 commandments, the health code, the sanctuary and ceremonies, including the feast days and circumcision. So, Paul is writing to Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians who are trying to follow the whole Mosaic system and putting their trust in that for righteousness.

**Read Romans 7:2-3.** *In this illustration, when can a woman marry a second husband?* Only after the first husband is dead.

**Read Romans 7:4-5.** 1.) *Who is represented by the woman?* The people Paul is writing to and us.  
2.) *Who is the second husband?* **Verse 4** shows that he is Christ.  
3.) *Then, who or what is represented by the first husband?* **Verse 5** says “**when we were in the flesh the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.**” So, the first husband represents being in sin; trying to keep all the Mosaic law as a means of righteousness yet being controlled by the flesh. When a person was changed by Christ (the second husband), they became dead to the first husband, sin, and dead to the old legalism.

**Read Romans 7:6.** *How do we know that being “delivered from the law” doesn’t mean getting rid of the law?* Paul himself already asked about that in **Romans 3:31**. **“Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”** This will come out more in Rom. 7. *So, what does it mean to be delivered from the law?* **Romans 6:14** has the answer. **“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”** Remember being **“under the law”** means condemned and guilty as a law breaker according to **Romans 3:19**. So, being delivered from the law means to be delivered from its condemnation.

\*\*\* Here’s an insightful comment on **Romans 7:1-6** by E.J. Waggoner. “We wish to be free from sin....but sin will not consent. In spite of all we do, it still clings to us. We are ‘one flesh’ and it is a union for life since it is a union of our life to sin. There is no divorce in that marriage. There is no hope of effecting a separation from sin by any ordinary means. No matter how much we may desire to be united to Christ, it can not be done while we are joined to sin....If we could only get sin to die, we would be free, but it will not die. There is only one way for us to be free from the hateful union, and that is for us to die. If we wish freedom so much that we are willing [for self] to be crucified, then it may be done. In death the separation is effected....We are crucified with Him. The body of sin is also crucified. But while the body of sin is destroyed, we have a resurrection in Christ. The same thing that frees us from the first husband, unites us to the second.” *Waggoner on Romans*, pgs. 135-136.

#### SUNDAY: “SIN AND THE LAW”

**Read Romans 7:7.** *What specific part of the law of Moses did Paul hold up as essential and good?* The 10 commandments. Paul upholds the commandments. Sin is the real problem.

Waggoner again explains. **Romans 6:8** says, **“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him”**....It is our death with Christ that frees us from the union with the monster sin, and unites us in marriage to Christ....In the first seven verses of the seventh chapter of Romans we have had the relation which we by nature sustain to sin, and which by grace we afterwards sustain to Christ, represented under the figure of marriage to a first and second husband. The union with the second husband can not take place while the first husband is living....we must needs die with sin, before we can be separated from it. But we die in Christ, and as He lives, although He was dead, we also live with Him....Thus in death we are separated from the first husband, sin, and united to the second husband, Christ.” *WOR*, pgs. 137-138.

**Read Romans 7:8-11.** *If the law was ordained to life, how does sin take advantage of the law to deceive and bring death?* Waggoner gives this helpful comment.

“Sin is simply the law transgressed, **‘for sin is the transgression of the law.’ 1 John 3:4**....The law witnesses to sin and will not grant us any escape, simply because it can not bear false witness. **‘The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.’** The law of God is the life of God. **‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ Matt. 5:48**...The design of the law is life....when the law is transgressed, it is death to the transgressor. **“For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.”** It is not the law that is the enemy, but the enemy is sin. Sin does the killing, for **‘the sting**

**of death is sin.** Sin has the poison of death in it. Sin deceived us so that for a time we thought that it was our friend, and we embraced it and delighted in the union. But when the law enlightened us, we found that sin's embrace was the embrace of death." WOR, pgs. 139-140.

Read from the middle of Monday's page. "Where the revealed will is unknown, there is no awareness of sin. When that revealed will is made known to a person, he or she comes to recognize that he or she is a sinner and is under condemnation and death. In this sense, the person dies." Paul was trying to show the Jews "that the law was necessary but that its function was limited. The law was meant to show the need of salvation; it never was meant to be the means of obtaining that salvation."

Read the EGW comment at the bottom of the page.

Ask the 1<sup>st</sup> question from the bottom box. Share about your or another's pre-conversion burden of guilt. Ask the 2<sup>nd</sup> question. He gave freedom and new life!

#### TUESDAY: "THE LAW IS HOLY"

**Read Romans 7:12.** *How do we understand this text in the context of what Paul has been discussing?* Paul's making it clear that the law of God is not at fault. The commandments are not the problem. "The law is good for what it does", but it can't bring salvation. That is a deadly misunderstanding. "Only Jesus and His righteousness, which comes to us by faith, can."

**Read Romans 7:12-13.** *What does Paul blame for the condition of death?* He says that "**sin worked death in me.**" *What does Paul exonerate in these two verses?* The law of God, he said, was good and not to blame. Again, Waggoner has helpful insights.

"The law pointed out the fact that sin was killing us. **"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good."** We have no more reason to rail at the law than we have to hate the man who tells us that the substance which we are eating, thinking it to be food, is poison. He is our friend. He would not be our friend if he did not show us our danger. The fact that he is not able to heal the illness that the poison already eaten has caused does not make him any the less our friend. He has warned us of our danger, and we can now get help from the physician. And so, after all, the law itself was not death to us, but its office was **'that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.'**" WOR 140.

**Read Romans 7:14-15.** *Why was sin so successful in showing Paul to be a terrible sinner?* **Verse 14** says he was **"carnal, sold under sin."** Carnal means of the flesh. One who is sold is a slave. Only slaves do what they do not want to do, and are continually prevented from doing what they wish to do as in **verse 15.** He was a slave to sin. Paul wants the Jews to see their need of a Messiah that saves from the slavery of sin. In **6:14** he already pointed out that victory is only possible **"under grace."** Living **"under the law"** means enslavement to sin, a merciless master. Discuss the questions in the box at the bottom.

#### WEDNESDAY: "THE MAN OF ROMANS 7"

**Read Romans 7:16-17.** *What struggle is presented here?* The battle between conscience and the inner desires and passions. There's conviction but not full conversion.

**Read Romans 7:18-20.** *What does Paul repeat here for emphasis? More on the battle and failure; yielding to sin. Living a life of frustration and defeat.*

Read the quotation from *Patriarchs and Prophets* pgs. 371-372 in the middle of the page.

*Why would someone want to believe that Romans 7 is the real Christian experience?*

Read the bottom paragraph for a powerful insight to answer the above question.

Ask the questions in the bottom box for thoughtful consideration.

#### THURSDAY: "SAVED FROM DEATH"

**Read Romans 7:21-23.** *How have you experienced this same struggle in your own life, even as a Christian? We can all relate to the struggle. It could simply be the battle with overeating, whether with the main meal or dessert. It could be a battle with lusts of the flesh in sexual temptation. It could be the struggle not to complain or gossip. "'With the flesh,' Paul says, he served 'the law of sin.' (Rom. 7:25). But serving sin and obeying its law means death (see Rom. 7:10, 11, 13)."*

Read the second paragraph in the top half of the page. *How can we be rescued from this difficult situation in which we find ourselves?*

**Read Romans 7:24-25.** It is only through Jesus that we can be delivered from the slavery to sin.

Read the quotation at the top of Friday's page from Selected Messages, book 1, p. 213.

#### Conclusion:

The way 7:25 ends can be a bit confusing. Paul is simply concluding Romans 7 by restating the fact that as long as he relies on his own ability to relate to God on the basis of the law, he could have right desires, but he could not do the right things. Until believers are transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ, this is their experience. The only way a believer can live in victory over the sin nature is to rely exclusively on his union with Christ through death and resurrection in Christ (Romans 6) and on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8) which will be the theme of next week's lesson.

In between Romans 6 and 8, Romans 7 describes the struggles of the believer who relies on his own abilities or on the law of Moses in an attempt to resist temptation. No matter how sincere we may be or how self-disciplined we may try to be, no one can successfully resist all temptations by sheer will power or by vowing allegiance to the law. We can successfully resist temptation only when we rely on our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6) and only when we allow the Spirit of God to lead us (Romans 8).