

Introduction to Romans 7

(Rom 7:1-25)

- Remember that Rom ch 6-7 are a kind of parenthesis where Paul turns aside for a moment to answer possible objection to the doctrine he had thus far proven
- Rom 7 is a famous chapter for dispute, where people spend all their time trying to decide at what point in time Paul meant this of himself

I. Mechanics

A) Rom 6:1-7:25- Parenthesis to answer possible objections (can include 8:1-4)

1. Rom 6- Objection of the antinomian (“sin doesn’t matter”)
2. Rom 7- Objection of the legalist (“you’re ruining God’s Law”)
 - i. Rom 7:1-6- Relationship of the believer to the law
 - a) Necessity of a change of relationship to law not only for justification, but for sanctification as well
 - 1) V.4- “bringing forth fruit” = sanctification (impossible “under law”)
 - 2) The only way to bring forth fruit unto God is to be married to Him
 - ii. Rom 7:7-12- Defense of the law (law is neither bad nor sin)
 - a) It’s not the law that is impotent/barren, but man due to sin
 - 1) Rom 8:3- Summary statement
 - iii. Rom 7:13-25- Exposition and example of this doctrine
 - a) Paul shows what our position would be if the Christian “remarried” under the law

II. General observations

A) Rom 6:21-23- Notice how Paul transitions to his next rebuttal on “fruit-bearing”

1. Rom ch 7 works out Rom 5:10 fully, and then repeats it in 7:24-25
 - i. All of this is again brought on by the contrast of “In Adam” vs “In Christ”
 - a) Adam/Law= fruit unto death
 - b) Christ/Grace= Fruit unto God

B) Rom 5:20-21- Great statement about “grace,” but also about the place of the “law”

1. The law “came in alongside” is Paul’s statement, and one very liable to be misunderstood, and rejected by the legalist
 - i. Rom 6:14- This would only add fuel to the fire
 - a) Jew (legalist)- “The law is the key to the Godly life, and you are tossing it aside as an afterthought”

- ii. Thus in Rom ch 7, Paul deals with this objection, and sets the law in its proper place and details its function to the Christian
 - a) Rom 3:19-20- Cannot be justified by the law
 - b) Rom ch 7- Cannot be sanctified by the law
 - 1) This was the problem they were having in Galatia
 - 2) Paul shows the futility of the law to sanctify, and in fact shows it is a hindrance to sanctification when applied that way
 - (a) “Not only can a man not sanctify himself by observance of the law, the law becomes even an obstacle to his sanctification”- MLJ
- C) Rom ch 7- Greatest analysis of sin and its true workings to be found in the entire bible
 - 1. Paul shows the true evil power of sin in its ability to use the law in its service
 - 2. Paul also shows how the sin of Adam has rendered every man completely impotent and unable to bring forth a single act of righteousness acceptable to God
 - i. God’s first command to “bring forth fruit” corrupted by a single act of sin
- D) Rom ch 7- Reinforces and describes the nature of the believer’s “marriage/union in Christ”
 - 1. The reconciled condition becomes once again the “fruitful condition”
 - 2. But it is Christ (as it was Adam) that has done and continues to do the work that brings forth fruit, as He alone has the power to enable us
 - i. We, as the bride, receive seed and keep it and nurture it
 - a) Conceive- “to catch and hold”
 - b) As in marriage vows: “Forsaking all others, to keep thee and thee only, so long as we both shall live”
- E) A wrong understanding of Rom ch 7 and the law in general leads many to confusion and to damnable heresy
 - 1. Some are led to a life of lawlessness, and say “well if Paul couldn’t do, we certainly can’t”
 - 2. Some are led back to a form of legalism and then are caused to doubt their salvation when they fall into sin
 - i. Each time they sin, not understanding the relationship of the believer to the law, they place themselves back “under the law” and are condemned again in their mind
 - a) Rom 8:1- But the believer can never be “under the law”, that relationship is gone forever “in Christ”

- ii. Others see the standard or life of other Christians, and then when they do not “measure up” they are condemned in their mind and wonder if they’ve ever really been Christians
 - a) But the believer has “died under the law” and can never return to that relationship
 - 1) To do so, would be to depart the 2nd husband and return to the 1st
 - (a) Paul’s whole point is this is impossible for a dead man to do