

The Coming of the Law

(Rom 7:9)

- Remember Paul is now making a defense of the Law in anticipation of the objection raised by his previous and seemingly derogatory remarks about the Law
- I. “For”- Continues the explanation of why the Law is not bad/sin
 - A) This is due to his previous teaching in Rom 7:1-6
 - B) Rom 7:7- Paul begins his defense of the Law:
 - 1. By saying he had not known about the sin of lust without the Law
 - 2. By saying that the Law actually draws out sin’s true character by its actually using the law as a fulcrum to move man to more sins
 - 3. That he had not “died” if it had not been for the law
- II. Rom 7:8b-9- “The Law’s coming” in Paul’s own experience
 - A) Paul now uses a parallel relative argument comparing what was true of him once, and what was true of him now
 - 1. Before: sin was dead and I was alive
 - 2. After: sin was alive and I was dead
 - B) Terms
 - 1. “Without the Law”- In the absence of, apart from
 - i. Paul must be speaking relatively, for there was never a time he was without the law
 - a) Phil 3:5- “Circumcised the 8th day”
 - b) Acts 23:6- “The son of a Pharisee”
 - ii. Neither can it be said of any human being that they were literally “without the law”
 - a) Rom 5:12-13- Paul has already proven this
 - 1) Meaning must always be worked out by context:
 - (a) 1st -by the statement itself and the immediate context
 - (b) 2nd- by the doctrine/argument of the book itself
 - (c) 3rd- by the clear teaching of other scriptures
 - (d) 4th- by the teaching of the entire bible
 - (e) 5th- by the very nature of God
 - iii. So Paul is saying that there was a time when the Law was not doing its desired work on him
 - a) This then forms the time for the relative comparison
 - b) It doesn’t matter exactly when this time was, just that it was
 - 2. “When the commandment came, sin revived; I died”

- i. Paul can't be referring to the "coming" of the Law of Moses 1500 years prior, nor for God's Law 4000 years prior
 - ii. So Paul is referring to a time when the Law "came" to him personally
 - a) "It come to me", or "it hit me"
 - b) We often experience just this sort of thing with a verse or teaching
 - iii. Paul was a lifelong practicing Pharisee, but he only knew the "letter" of the Law and not the "spirit" of the Law
 - a) 2 Cor ch 3- This was the whole problem of the Jews
 - b) The Law had not come yet on Paul with understanding, enlightenment and conviction
3. "Sin was dead"
- i. Paul can't mean literally, for Rom 3 has already proven all under sin
 - ii. Paul then means relative to what it had been before this event
 - a) Sin was as it were "lying dormant"
 - 1) Luke 11:21- Strong man keeps his good in "peace"
 - 2) Sin is so powerful, it not only holds in bondage, but it also prevents its slaves from realizing their bondage
 - b) The full power of sin was always there, but Paul wasn't aware of it
 - 1) It hadn't come roaring into his understanding yet
 - 2) It hadn't been forced into powerful action against its victim
 - (a) Like a powerful engine at idle
4. "I was alive"
- i. Rom ch 1-3- Proves that none are truly alive by nature
 - a) Eph 2:1-3- All "Dead in sin" naturally
 - ii. Paul is again speaking relatively, comparing time past with a later time
 - a) Paul had felt good in God's sight, justified and righteous and powerful against sin
 - 1) Phil 3:4-7- Blameless
 - b) Rom 10:3- "Working out his own righteousness"
 - 1) Luke 18:9-12- The Pharisee and the publican
 - (a) The Pharisee asks God for nothing, he lacks nothing in his own thinking (alive)
 - 2) Matt 19:20- Rich young ruler (alive)
5. "Sin revived"
- i. Paul can't mean sin literally had left and returned or was resurrected
 - ii. Paul means sin sprang to life in his understanding by the 10th commandment
 - a) This shows the power of sin, for one would think the Law coming clear would bring sin under wraps, or at least lessen it
 - b) But this is the "exceeding sinfulness of sin"
 - 1) Compare to how resistance is used to draw out the power of a muscle

- c) John 15:22-24- “If I had not come, they had had no sin”
 - 1) The effect of Christ’s coming worked to expose the sin of the Pharisees
 - (a) We would not have known their depravity if Christ had not come
 - (b) The sin that was always in them sprang to the surface at the appearance of Christ
 - (c) Looking at the Pharisees apart from Christ, we would have thought them splendid and holy, full of good works
 - (d) But bring in true righteousness, and sin is exposed
 - 1. Christ our righteousness
 - 2. God’s holy and righteous Law correctly understood
 - (e) Look at the nature of the sin in the Pharisees: envy, hatred, lying, scheming, killing

6. “I died”

- i. Of course not literally
- ii. Paul means as compared to before, the opposite of “I was alive”
 - a) I became as a dead man, whereas I had been confident, satisfied, assertive, powerful!
 - b) Paul became as the beatitudes describe:
 - 1) Matt 5:3- “Poor in spirit” (no longer proud/haughty)
 - 2) Matt 5:4- “Mournful” (no longer boasting)
 - 3) Matt 5:5- “Meek” (no longer assertive and superior)
 - 4) Matt 5:6- “Hungering and thirsting after righteousness” (no longer satisfied and full)
 - (a) This change is one of the surest fruits of salvation

III. Doctrine

- A) Paul’s point is that just as we cannot be justified by the law, neither can we be sanctified by it either
 - 1. It would seem this experience was for Paul after justification
 - 2. Our only hope of sanctification is to be freed from “under the law”
 - i. We can no more “work out” our sanctification through the Law than we could our justification, sin is too powerful

B) Conclusions

- 1. Do not judge outward religious activities alone
- 2. Obligation does not imply ability with the Law, inability has always been its aim
- 3. Sinless perfection is an absurd (1 John 1:8)
- 4. One of the 1st signs of true life is to feel completely dead!