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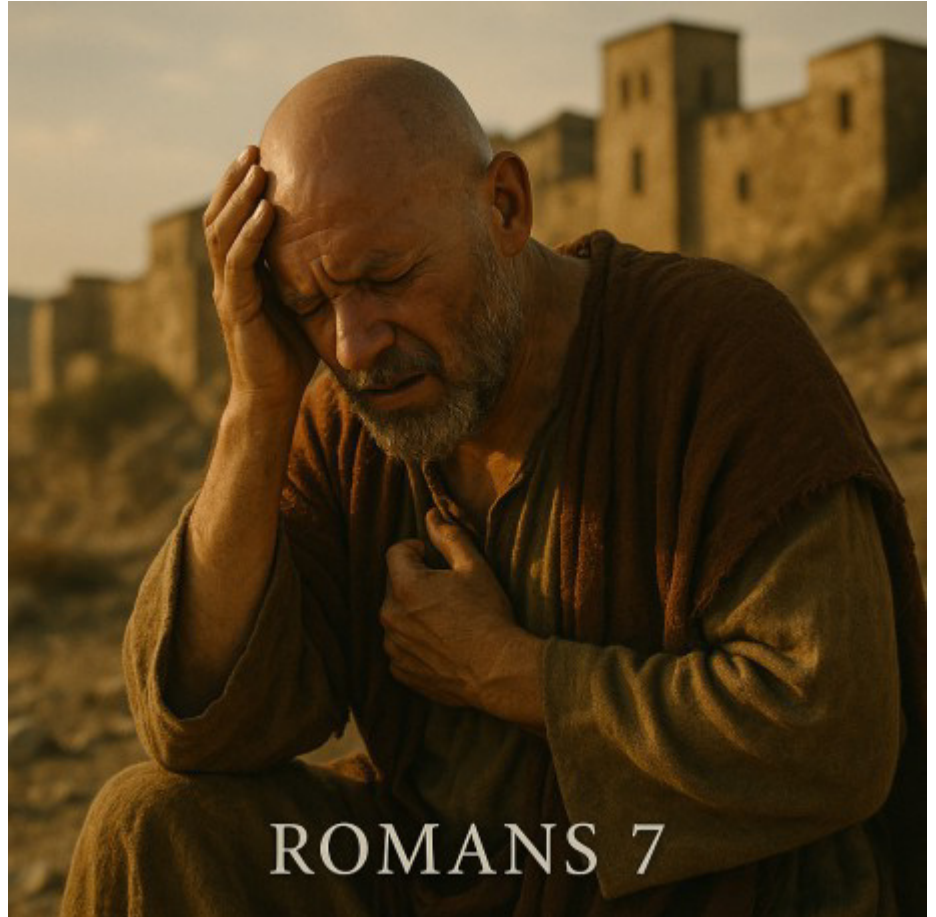
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By Dan Maines

## **Romans 7**

### **Romans 7:1**

Or do you not know, brothers and sisters (for I am speaking to those who know the Law), that the Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

† Paul addresses those familiar with the Law, showing its authority applies only while a person is alive. This sets up his argument that death with Christ ends the Law's jurisdiction.

† The covenant order is clear. The Law bound Israel until its purpose was fulfilled. Jesus said in Matthew 5:18 that not one letter would pass until all was accomplished. Paul is declaring that fulfillment has now come.

† Josephus (Antiquities 3.12.1) described how Israel lived under the Law's continual jurisdiction. Paul's point is radical, that jurisdiction ends with death in Christ.

### **Romans 7:2-3**

For the married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is alive she gives herself to another man, she will be called an adulteress, but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress if she gives herself to another man.

† Marriage is used as an analogy. Death ends the legal bond. Likewise, death with Christ ends the binding authority of the Law.

† Jeremiah 31:32 portrays Israel as a wife who broke covenant with her husband. Paul shows that the old marriage covenant has ended, releasing believers to belong to Christ.

† The Mishnah (Gittin 9:10) details how marriage bonds were legally broken only by death or divorce. Paul applies this same legal understanding to the Law itself.

### **Romans 7:4**

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

† Through Christ's death, believers died to the Law. They are now joined to the risen Christ. Covenant fruit comes not from

the Law but from union with Him.

† Isaiah 54:5 declared, "Your husband is your Maker." Paul applies this to Christ, showing the church's covenant marriage to Him.

† Origen taught that belonging to Christ fulfills the Law's purpose, moving from written code to Spirit-filled life.

### **Romans 7:5-6**

For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

† The Law exposed sin and produced fruit for death. In Christ, believers are released to serve in the Spirit.

† Ezekiel 36:26-27 promised a new Spirit to enable obedience. Paul declares this is now reality.

† Philo contrasted the written letter with the living Spirit, saying the Spirit gave vitality. Paul shows the New Covenant has replaced the old letter completely.

### **Romans 7:7**

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Far from it! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law, for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

† Paul defends the Law. It is not sin, but it reveals sin. The tenth commandment shows the Law exposed inward desires as sinful, not only outward acts.

† Josephus (Antiquities 3.5.5) observed that the Law restrained visible actions. Paul shows it also condemned the heart.

### **Romans 7:8-9**

But sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind, for apart from the Law sin is dead. I was once alive apart from the Law, but when the commandment came, sin came to life and I died.

† The Law, meant for life, stirred sin. Sin exploited the commandment to produce greater rebellion.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QH Thanksgiving Hymns) describe the overwhelming power of sin in human flesh. Paul echoes this by showing how the Law intensified sin's presence.

### **Romans 7:10-11**

and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me, for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it, killed me.

† Leviticus 18:5 said the one who obeys will live, but no one kept the Law perfectly. Instead of life, the Law brought death, because sin used it as a weapon.

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### **Romans 7:12**

So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

† The Law itself was good. The problem was not the Law but sin in human flesh.

† The early church fathers consistently defended the Law as holy while affirming it was fulfilled in Christ.

### **Romans 7:13**

Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? Far from it! On the contrary, it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by bringing about my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

† Sin is revealed in its fullness by exploiting what is good. The Law was good, but sin turned it into the occasion for death.

### **Romans 7:14**

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin.

† The Law is spiritual, reflecting God's holiness. The problem is human flesh enslaved to sin.

† The Qumran community (1QS 3.18-21) admitted the weakness of flesh in obeying the Law. Paul aligns with this reality.

### **Romans 7:15-16**

For I do not understand what I am doing, for I am not practicing what I want to do, but I do the very thing I hate. However, if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, that the Law is good.

† This describes the frustration of one under the Law. The will to do good exists, but the power to carry it out does not.

† This is the universal Jewish struggle before Christ, confirming that the Law is good but powerless to deliver.

### **Romans 7:17-18**

But now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh, for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

† Sin indwells the flesh, overpowering the will. This shows why the Law cannot justify.

† Philo often spoke of sin as an inner tyrant. Paul agrees but shows deliverance is only in Christ.

### **Romans 7:19-20**

For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me.

† Paul repeats the dilemma, highlighting the depth of sin's power. Human will cannot overcome flesh.

### **Romans 7:21-23**

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully agree with the Law of God in the inner person, but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, the law which is in my body's parts.

† The inner person desires God's law, but sin in the flesh wars against it. This is the covenant struggle, a mind delighting in God yet bound by the body of death.

† Tacitus (Histories 5.13) observed that Jews boasted in the Law yet often failed to live by it. Paul confirms that the Law alone cannot produce obedience.

### **Romans 7:24-25**

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of

this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the Law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

† The cry of despair highlights the futility of life under the Law. Deliverance comes only through Christ.

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### **How it applies to us today**

† The Law exposes sin but cannot free from it. Only Christ delivers.

† Legalism today repeats the same error, seeking righteousness through rules. Paul shows this path only leads to despair.

† True freedom is found in Christ, not in human effort. We serve God in the Spirit, not in the old letter.

† The struggle in Romans 7 reminds us that without Christ, sin rules. With Him, deliverance and life are secured.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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† Mishnah, Gittin 9:10 – Marriage bonds ended only by death or divorce

† Isaiah 54:5 – God as Israel's husband

† Ezekiel 36:26-27 – New Spirit replacing the old letter

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