

ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH

VI. God's Righteousness Transferred: Practical Sanctification, Romans 6:1-8:39

C. The Mosaic Law And Sanctification, Romans 7:1-14

2. Vindicating The Law And Condemning Our Sin Nature (Romans 7:7-14)

I. Introduction

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim that one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live a godly life by faith.
- C. After teaching that believers should not sin, Paul addressed the believer's relation to the Mosaic Law.
- D. Where Romans 7:1-6 with Colossians 2:16 revealed that believers in Christ are not under the jurisdiction of any part of the Mosaic Law, Romans 7:7-14 handled questions about what was creating sin in a believer's life – whether it was the Mosaic Law or something else! This issue looms very big in current evangelicalism because many believers think they can live the Christian life by means of disciplining themselves to do so, not by a life of faith in God, and that is a big problem! We thus view the passage for our insight and edification:

II. Vindicating The Law And Condemning Our Sin Nature, Romans 7:7-14.

- A. Handling the question of whether the Mosaic Law is sin, Romans 7:7-12:
 1. "The involvement of the Mosaic Law in the discussion of a believer's identification with Christ and death to sin" that we covered in Romans 6:1-7:6 "raises a question about the Law's relationship to sin," Ibid., p. 466. Paul thus rhetorically asked, "Is the law sin?" to which he replied, "Certainly not!" (Romans 7:7a)
 2. Paul then explained that the purpose of the Law was to define sin to be sin, for the absence of the Law produces an ignorance as to the definition of sin, Romans 7:7b-8. Before he knew the Law, Paul was ignorant of his sin where the presence of the Law exposed sin in him by defining it to be sin, Romans 7:9.
 3. Accordingly, though the commandment of God's Law is righteous, its definition of sin in Paul showed him that he was a sinner, condemning him although the Law is righteous and good Romans 7:10-12.
- B. Handling the question of whether the Law is the cause of death, Romans 7:13-14:
 1. Since Paul had concluded that the Mosaic Law of God was good, since it defined sin in him to be sin, and sin in turn produces death, he rhetorically asked, "Did [the Law] which is good, then, become death to me?" (Romans 7:13a NIV) Paul's answer again was "By no means!" (Romans 7:13b; Ibid., p. 467)
 2. He explained that sin, not the Law itself, becomes death to an individual, for "sin uses the commandment" in God's Law, "the good thing, as an agent or instrument to keep on producing death in a person and thereby sin is seen as utterly sinful," Romans 7:13b NIV; Ibid.
 3. Paul concluded that the Mosaic Law of God, having come from a perfectly righteous God, is spiritual and righteous, so the problem of sin in the believer's experience is not the fault of God's Law, but the fault of a sin **nature** within the believer *himself* that produces acts of sin in his experience, Romans 7:14.

Lesson: *The presence of sin in the experience of a believer in Christ is NOT the fault of God's Law, for God's Law is not evil, but it only defines sin to be sin, and God's Law does not cause man to die since it is the sin in man that causes death. Thus, a believer must realize that sin in his experience arises from a sin nature within himself, the same sin nature that he had before his salvation and that still exists in him and can lead him to commit acts of sin!*

Application: *(1) May we realize that nothing in God's Law is itself evil nor that God's Law is the cause of death, but that God provided the Mosaic Law to expose to us humans that the problem we face with sin is a sin nature that still resides in us even as believers in Christ. (2) Accordingly, since Christ has POSITIONALLY saved us from sin and its eternal consequences, the EXPERIENTIAL separation or "sanctification" we need from sin in our lives is something that must logically ALSO come from the LORD, NOT from OURSELVES, and that we should then CEASE trying to "sanctify" ourselves in our own efforts of "self-discipline." (3) The world's false religions hold to a self-justification by works, what we have learned is a false doctrine of salvation, but it is EQUALLY true that many well-meaning believers in Christ TRY to ACHIEVE righteous living by trying to eradicate the experience of sin in their lives by means of self-discipline – a futile effort! (4) Instead, we MUST cleave to the LORD'S solution to handle our OWN SIN NATURES or we will neither please God nor enjoy His spiritual power in our Christian walk! (Galatians 2:20)*