

BOOK OF ROMANS
WHAT THE LAW DOES-PT 1
BEFORE SALVATION
ROMANS 7:7-13

Introduction

So far in this **BOOK**, we first learned in *chapters 1-3* the **TRUTH** that **ALL MEN** came into this world as **SINNERS** before the **LORD** and needing a **SAVIOUR!** Then we learned in *chapters 3-5* that **TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS**, and **SALVATION** come only by **GRACE** through **FAITH in GOD'S SON, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

Then in the last few messages, we saw in *chapter 6* and the first six verses of *chapter 7* how that in **JESUS CHRIST, BELIEVERS** are **DEAD** to both **SIN** and the **LAW** by our **DEATH** with **CHRIST** on the **CROSS!** Accordingly, we are no longer **MARRIED TO THE LAW**, but are **MARRIED TO JESUS** and are **FREE FROM THE LAW.** These are some **BLESSED TRUTHS!**

Now, in the verses before us this evening, **PAUL** illustrates his teachings about the **LAW OF GOD** by sharing with us an intimate look at his own life. In these verses, and through to the end of the chapter, **PAUL** gives us somewhat of what we might call his **SPIRITUAL** autobiography!

In these verses, **PAUL** reveals a side of himself that most of us try to keep deeply buried. *Verses 7-13* tell us of the days in **PAUL'S** life before he came to know **JESUS.** He takes us back to a time in his life when the **LAW** ruled everything he was and did. He shares with us what he has learned about the **LAW OF GOD!** It isn't pretty, but it is teaching that every one of us needs to hear!

So, we begin here where **PAUL** tells about his **RELATIONSHIP** to the **LAW BEFORE** he was **TRANSFORMED** from **DARKNESS** into **LIGHT** and from a **SELF-RIGHTEOUS PHARISEE** to **GOD** conscious **SAINT!**

I. WE SEE THAT THE LAW REVEALS SIN! (Vs 7)

PAUL begins here with a question: *"Is the law sin?"* Of course not! The **LAW** came from the **LORD** and therefore cannot be **EVIL.** However, while the **LAW** is **GOOD**, it is also vital to a proper understanding of the **NATURE OF SIN.**

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Understand that before coming to the **LORD**, when **PAUL** was known as **SAUL**, he was **SCHOOLED** in the **LAW!**

PAUL, speaking to a crowd in JERUSALEM that was in an uproar over his doctrine said of himself:

Acts 22:3—"I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."

In our text, **PAUL** states the **TRUTH** that it was the **HOLY LAW OF GOD** that taught him what he came to know about **SIN.** He mentions here the **SIN** of **LUST** and says that had the **LAW** not said, *"Thou shalt not covet"*, he would have never known what **LUST** was.

He isn't blaming his **SIN** on the **LAW**, he is merely pointing out the **TRUTH** that the **LAW** made plain exactly what **SIN** really was. The **LAW IDENTIFIES SIN!**

Now **PAUL** had lived his life trying to keep the **LETTER** of the **LAW** so precisely, that he missed the whole **SPIRIT** of the **LAW.** He had been trained to believe that **SIN** was something a person did in the physical realm, but through the ministry of the **SPIRIT**, **PAUL** learned that **SIN** was something that began in the **HEART!**

That is precisely what **JESUS TAUGHT** in *Matthew 15:18-19!*
Matthew 15:18-19— 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:"

Yet, the **NATURAL MAN** or **LOST MAN** can never see this **TRUTH** until it is revealed to him by the **SPIRIT OF GOD** which uses the **LAW OF GOD** to bring about **CONVICTION OF SIN** in the **HEART OF MAN!**

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WE SEE THAT THE LAW REVEALS SIN...

II. WE SEE THAT THE LAW REVIVES SIN! (Vs 8)
PAUL tells us that **SIN** takes the **LAW** as an **OPPORTUNITY** to **TEMPT** us to **EVIL**. The word "**OCCASION**" literally means "**OPPORTUNITY**".

SIN sees the **LAW** as its **OPPORTUNITY** to create within us a **STRONG DESIRE FOR SIN!** (*"concupiscence" means to desire greatly; a strong desire or lust; a deep longing; an inordinate desire.*) So, **PAUL** is telling us that **SIN** (i.e. **HIS SIN NATURE**) caused him to have a **STRONG LUST** because the **LAW** had forbidden **COVETOUSNESS!** It stirred up that **GREAT DESIRE** within him!

We see this same **TRUTH** around us and in us all the time. For instance, when we see a sign that says "**Keep Off The Grass**", there is a part of us that wants to step on it. (*Right?*)

When we see a sign that says "**Speed Limit 55mph**" we want to push the limits and do at least 60mph and maybe even up to 64mph depending how daring we are, just to see if we can get away with it. (**We reason...** "*Well if they really wanted me to do 55 they should have made the speed limit 45!*")

The **LAW** always reveals an **ATTITUDE** within the **SINNER** that wants to try to **GET AWAY** with **BREAKING IT**.

We can see exactly that it was that same process that brought **SIN** into the world to begin with. **GOD** made man in **HIS IMAGE** and placed him in a perfect environment. **GOD** gave man access to everything in creation, with the exception of one tree. (*Genesis 2:17*)

Yet, when that one **LAW** was given, there arose an **OPPORTUNITY** for **SIN** to initially enter **MANKIND!** That one **LAW** proved to be the springboard that the **SERPENT** used to **ENTICE MANKIND** into **SIN!** (*Genesis 3:1-7*)

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Now understand that the last part of **verse 8** of our text is **NOT** teaching that before the **LAW** there was no **SIN**. From reading the **BIBLE** we can clearly see that **SIN** was as rampant then as it is now!

What this means is that where the **LAW** does not exist, the full knowledge of what is wrong does not exist either. When the line is drawn by the **LAW**, the **REBELLIOUS SPIRIT** within man wants to immediately step over that line! (The meaning of "**trespass**" and "**transgression**" in **SCRIPTURE** is to go beyond the legal bounds; to step over the line.)

1 Timothy 1:9-10—"9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, **but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;**"

III. WE SEE THAT THE LAW RUINS SINNERS! (Vs 9-11)

In these verses, the **APOSTLE** tells us that there was a time in his life when he felt alive. When he was following the **LAW** and keeping it externally, he was doing so because he thought that it was the means to his **SALVATION**. (i.e. **HE** kept the **LAW** in an effort to gain **ETERNAL LIFE**. And, he thought he was doing quite well!) *Philippians 3:4-6.*

However, when the **HOLY SPIRIT** opened his eyes to the fact that the **LAW** could be broken just as easily in the **HEART** as it could in the **FLESH**, **PAUL DIED!** He came to realize that all of his effort, all of his righteousness and all of his hopes and dreams were just so much dust in the wind.

PAUL learned the harsh reality of *Isaiah 64:6* first hand.

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Isaiah 64:6—“*But we are all as an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; And we all do fade as a leaf; And our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*”

When the lost, through **HOLY SPIRIT** conviction by the **SCRIPTURE**, come to see themselves as they really are, through the eyes of **GOD** and through the eyes of the **LAW OF GOD**, it has a way of shattering their self-image. In fact, the knowledge of the **REALITY OF SIN** is overwhelming! However, it is the first, essential step to **SALVATION** in **CHRIST**! Before one can ever be **SAVED**, they must first become **LOST**!

In *Verse 10*, **PAUL** is saying that at one time he had trusted the **LAW** to give him **ETERNAL LIFE**, but in the end, all the **LAW** could deliver was **CONDEMNATION, DEATH**, and an **ETERNITY** in **HELL**!

When he looked at the **LAW** and at the **REALITY** that he **WAS NOT KEEPING** it and **COULD NOT KEEP** it, he saw that the **LAW** could not **SAVE** him! It could only **CONDEMN** him!

The **LAW** can be the instrument **GOD** uses to **BRING US TO LIFE**, but the **LAW** itself can **NEVER GIVE LIFE**!

Sadly, this is a **LESSON** that so many in our day need to learn but have yet to learn! Many folks are like **PAUL** was before his **CONVERSION**! They are **TRUSTING IN** some **RELIGIOUS WORK** or **ACTIVITY** to get them to **GOD**. But, that will **FAIL**! Nothing can **SAVE** one’s soul but **JESUS**! *Acts 4:12; Eph. 2:8-9*

In *Verse 11*, **PAUL** says that **SIN** had taken the **OPPORTUNITY** the **LAW** had given it in the life of **PAUL** and had lulled him into **BELIEVING** that a life lived **KEEPING THE LAW** was a life that would be **SAVED**. **PAUL** came to realize that a life lived under the demands of the **LAW** was going to bring him **DEATH, NOT LIFE**!

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When **PAUL** saw the **TRUTH** of his situation, he threw off his **DEPENDENCE** upon the **LAW** and embraced **JESUS** as the only means of his soul's **SALVATION**! (*Philippians 3:7-11*)

The **HOLY SPIRIT** had been **PRICKING PAUL’S HEART** of the **REALITY OF HIS GUILT** and the **REALITY OF THE TRUTH OF WHO JESUS IS**! (*Acts 9:5*—“*...I am JESUS whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*”)

That was a proverbial expression for “*unavailing resistance to superior power.*”

PAUL had to abandon his stubborn attachment to **VAIN LAW KEEPING** that only further solidified his **GUILT AS A SINNER**! He had to replace **LAW KEEPING** with the **ONLY ONE WHO** ever **KEPT THE LAW—THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO DIED SO THAT WE MIGHT LIVE**!

WE SEE THAT THE LAW REVEALS SIN...REVIVES SIN...RUINS SINNERS...

IV. WE SEE THAT THE LAW REFLECTS SIN! (*Vs 12-13*)
PAUL’S conclusion here in *Verse 12* is that **THE LAW IS HOLY, JUST AND GOOD**! If there is a problem to be found, it is with the **OFFENDER** and **NOT** with the **LAW**!

There are many who do not like the **BIBLE** to be **PREACHED** in its entirety. They are opposed to **PREACHERS PREACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD AND CALLING SIN OUT**!

Listen, there is nothing wrong with our **BIBLE**! It is **NOT out of date**! It **STILL** needs to be **PREACHED** and **SIN** **STILL** needs to be **CALLED OUT**! The **PROBLEM** is with those who are **HEARING** the **WORD OF GOD PREACHED** and are having a **PROBLEM WITH IT**! (It is hard to “*kick against the pricks!*”)

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In *Verse 13* here, **PAUL** tells us that the **LAW** was given to **REVEAL THE TRUTH ABOUT SIN!**

SIN is so deceptive that it can take the **LAW, WHICH IS GOOD**, and twist it into an **INSTRUMENT OF DEATH**. The **BIBLE** is clear that **THE LAW WAS GIVEN TO US TO POINT US TO JESUS!**

Galatians 3:24—“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

The **LAW** was given so that mankind could see their need of a **SAVIOUR** and then turn to **JESUS CHRIST** and be **SAVED!**

It was never given as a means to righteousness or salvation!

It was given as a signpost to point us to the **ONE WHO ALONE** is **THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE!**

The **LAW** can never **SAVE THE SOUL**, but it can point us to the **ONE WHO** can! The **LAW** cannot get the job done, but it can make us so miserable in our present condition that we want to find something better. That better something is the **PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST!**

JESUS fulfilled the **LAW** and the **RIGHTEOUS DEMANDS** of the **LAW** and then **DIED** on the **CROSS FOR OUR SINS** to pay what the **LAW** demanded from us! Now, we can be **ETERNALLY SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN HIM ALONE!**

Conclusion

That is why the **BIBLE** must continue to be **PREACHED** in its **ENTIRETY** and why **SIN** must be **SHOWN** for what it is! Men need to see the **TRUTH** about themselves and their **SIN**. Until they do, they can never be **SAVED!**