

We are no longer under the Law or bound to the Law, but rather we are delivered from the Law and dead to the Law.

At this point we must distinguish between Law and Grace as principles and as systems, as delineated in a separate sheet.

Since the Law has binding authority over a person only as long as he or she lives (7:1), and since we have been united to Christ and to the death to the Law which He accomplished for us (7:4), therefore in Christ we have died to the binding authority of the Law, as far as our old relationship to it is concerned.

Christ has fulfilled all of the Law's demands in our stead; therefore we are not bound to fulfill its demands ourselves!

Christ has taken upon Himself all of the Law's condemnation in our stead; therefore there is no further condemnation for us!

Paul illustrates and applies this motif in 7:1-6.

In 7:7-12 Paul gives us an autobiographical account of his coming to an understanding of his old relationship to the Law; and he draws a conclusion concerning the moral status of the Law:

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! 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."

8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

9 And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died;

10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

11 for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

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

The question, "Is the Law sin?" is suggested by what Paul said in verse 5. He said that the sinful passions were aroused by the Law to bear fruit for death. If the Law aroused the sinful passions, then is the Law not sin? Paul answers that he would not have come to know sin except through the Law.

Does Paul mean that he would not have come to know cognitively that coveting is sin unless the Law had said, "You shall not covet"? Or does he have a deeper meaning in mind?

Verse 8 helps us with this question. Paul says that sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in him coveting of every kind. The Law not only made him cognitively aware of coveting as sin; it also made him experientially aware of coveting as sin. The Law aroused Paul's sinful passions, and thus he came to know sin in both the cognitive and the experiential senses, not only objectively but also subjectively, not only outside himself but also within himself!