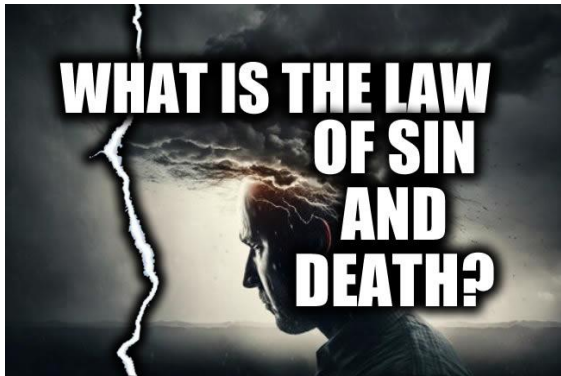


WHAT IS THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH?

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*Romans 8:2 ...'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from **the law of sin and death.**'*

Many people today believe that in saying "*the law of sin and death,*" the apostle Paul was referring to the law of God. Sadly, this is one of the many **gross errors** in the professed Christian world today. So what was Paul referring to with this statement? First, let us look at the verse in context:

*Romans 8:1-4 ...'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For **the law of the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus hath made me free from **the law of sin and death.** For what **the law** could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of **the law** might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'*

There are 3 laws mentioned above. (1) The law of the Spirit of life. (2) The law of sin and death. (3) the law.

Now because people see the word "*law*" they automatically apply it to God's law, and because Paul goes on to speak about God's law in verse 3, then they assume Paul was also speaking of God's law in verse 2 - "***the law of sin and death.***" But this isn't the case, as we will clearly see.

Have a think about something first. Psalm 40:7-8 is speaking of Christ, and in verse 8 Christ says ... "*I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, **thy law is within my heart.***" Jesus also confirmed in John 15:10 that He kept the Father's commandments and abided in His love. So Jesus connects **abiding in the Father's love with keeping God's commandments (the law)**, and Psalm 40:8 said that the law of God was within Christ's heart. So if the law of God is the law of sin and death, then that means Jesus had sin and death in His heart, and that the love of the Father is connected with sin and death. This is the natural outcome of the gross error believed by many today!

So let us unpack the verses in Romans 8 and see the clear truth of the matter. Paul introduces two options in the first verse - (1) walk after the flesh and (2) walk after the Spirit. Paul

connects being "in" Christ with walking after the Spirit, and that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, who walk after the Spirit. Paul then starts verse 2 with "For", or "This is because ..., the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." So the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ" in verse 2 is connected with "walking in the Spirit" in verse 1. Therefore, "the law of sin and death" in verse 2 must be connected with "walking after the flesh" in verse 1, and we will show this clearly as we go on.

Now let me ask. Is the **law** of the Spirit of life a set of commandments? No. So why should the **law** of sin and death be pointing to a set of commandments? When the apostle Paul says the word "law," he is not always pointing to a set of commandments as you will see in verses further on. Just as the "law" of the Spirit of life is not a simple set of commandments, but a principle, ie., a new life in the Spirit through faith in Christ. So too is the "law" of sin a death not a set of commandments, but a principle, ie., life in this fallen flesh of ours. We are all born into fallen flesh that desires to **SIN**, and as God's Word confirms, sin brings **DEATH** (Romans 6:23). **THIS** is the "law" of sin and death which is in every human until the rebirth in the Spirit. It is the law of our sinful nature, which brings death. So too is the law of the Spirit. It is the **NEW NATURE** that Christ changes us into, which sets us free from the bondage of sin.

There are 3 laws in Romans 8:1-4. The law of the Spirit. The law of sin and death (our sinful nature), and the law of God.

We can see that Paul does go on to speak of the law of God in verse 3 of Romans 8, saying that "the law" was "weak through the flesh." The law in verse 3 is not the law of sin and death, because in verse 3 Paul just calls it "the law." This is the same law in verse 4 which will be **fulfilled** in those who walk in the Spirit - the law of God. Again, notice Paul confirming that the issue is with sinful flesh, NOT the law of God. But are we to suppose that the Spirit of life in Christ sets us **FREE** from keeping the commandments of God, only for Paul to then say in verse 4 that the same Spirit of life in Christ causes us to **KEEP** the commandments of God? This is confusion and is NOT what Paul is saying. Paul is saying that the Spirit of life in Christ sets us free from the natural body of sin and death and leads us into keeping the "righteousness of the law" of God. Let us look at some Bible verses to clearly confirm which "law" Paul is speaking of as the "law of sin and death":

*Romans 7:20-25 ...'Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but **sin that dwelleth in me. I find then A LAW**, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see **ANOTHER LAW in my members**, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me **into captivity to the LAW OF SIN which is in my members**. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from **the body of this DEATH**? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but WITH THE FLESH THE LAW OF SIN.**'*

These are the verses that directly precede Romans 8:1-4, and there can be **NO DOUBT** what Paul means by the "the law of sin and death." It is clearly the law that "dwells in our members," ie., the natural law of sin in our fallen state, NOT the law of God. Because Paul even says that he serves the law of God with his mind, but **with the flesh, the law of sin, which brings death**. This brings clarity to Romans 8:1-4 for anyone who is willing to see the truth.

*Romans 7:14 ...'I am carnal, **sold under sin.**'*

*1 Corinthians 15:22 ...'For as in Adam all **die.**'*

*Romans 8:13 ...'For if ye live **after the flesh**, ye shall **die.**'*

Can you see the law of sin and death? It's what is in our flesh. A controlling power that urges us to sin which results in death.

*Romans 7:12-14 ...'Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. **Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin**, that it might appear sin, **working death in me** by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: **but I am carnal, sold under sin.**'*

Anyone with an open heart will be able to see clearly what Paul is saying. Yes, Christ sets us free from the **condemnation** of God's law, due to our sin against it. But the law of sin and death is not God's law, it is clearly the law that is within our members - the fallen nature, which causes us to sin against God's "*holy, just and good*" law. There are many in this world who want to crucify the law of God, but take a look at the following verses showing clearly what is to be "*crucified*" and "*die*" in our lives:

*Galatians 5:24 ...'And they that are Christ's have **crucified the flesh** with the affections and lusts.'*

*Ephesians 4:22 ...'That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation **the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.'*

*Luke 9:23 ...'And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him **deny himself, and take up his cross** daily, and follow me.'*

*Romans 6:6 ...'Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin.'*

*Colossians 3:5 ...'**Mortify therefore your members** which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.'*

*Romans 8:13 ...'For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do **mortify the deeds of the body**, ye shall live.'*

Do you see what needs to be put away, crucified, dead? Our sinful nature, the old man. Nowhere in the Bible will you find that we need to put away the law of God. God forbid! It is the body of sin, which is subject to the "*law of sin and death*" that needs to be put away and crucified, so that we can then live under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, whereby He will bring about the righteous KEEPING of the law of God in us (Romans 8:3).

Galatians 3:21 ...'Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid.'

The law of God is not against the promises of God, therefore it must work in UNISON with the promises. But what DOES work against the promises of God?

*Galatians 5:17 ...'For **the flesh** lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are **contrary** the one to the other.'*

It is the FLESH that is against the Spirit and promises of God. This carnal, fallen, sinful nature of ours which we inherited from Adam after his fall is the problem, NOT the law of God. The law of sin and death is the law within our members which we are born with. This is what needs to be crucified and buried. This is what the new birth by the law of the Spirit of Christ sets us free from. THEN we will be led **INTO** perfect obedience to the law of God (Romans 8:4) and it will be said of us ... "*Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they that **keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus***" (Revelation 14:12).