

OPENING SCRIPTURES:

AFTER EMPHASIZING THE PROMISES GOD MADE TO ABRAHAM AS THE BASIS BOTH FOR ISRAEL'S HOPE AND FOR OUR SALVATION, IN GALATIANS PAUL ASKS A VERY PERTINENT QUESTION: "*WHY THEN THE LAW*"? – *Galatians 3:19*. IF SALVATION IS BASED ON GRACE AND NOT ON LAW-KEEPING, "*WHY THEN THE LAW*"? *WHAT PURPOSE DOES IT SERVE?*

A FEW VERSES LATER IN GALATIANS ... PAUL ANSWERS HIS QUESTION BY SAYING:

THE SCRIPTURE HAS **CONFINED** (συγκλείω = sunkleiō) ALL THINGS UNDER SIN, SO THAT THE PROMISE BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST MIGHT BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE – *Galatians 3:22*. NOW BEFORE FAITH CAME, WE WERE **KEPT IN CUSTODY** (φρουρέω = phroureō) UNDER THE LAW, BEING **LOCKED AWAY** (συγκλείω) FROM THE FAITH WHICH WAS LATER TO BE REVEALED. **THEREFORE, THE LAW HAS BECOME OUR INSTRUCTOR TO LEAD US TO CHRIST, SO THAT WE MAY BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH** – *Galatians 3:23*.

PERTINENT TERMS

In **VERSE 22** I translated συγκλείω – sunkleiō = 'to confine.' Then at the beginning of **VERSE 23**, the prison-metaphor continues with the term φρουρέω – phroureō = 'kept in custody' (hand-cuffed). Then also in **VERSE 23**, συγκλείω occurs once again and here I translated it 'locked away,' since it describes 'being limited or restricted in some way with regard to boundaries.'

So **VERSE 22** tells us 'all things,' (πάντα– neuter plural) including 'all persons' are metaphorically 'imprisoned by sin, unable to escape it; unable to rid ourselves of it.'

- The point PAUL is making is this ... **THE MOSAIC LAW** is God's witness to the human race that **ALL HUMANITY** is under the dominion of sin – *Jew and Gentile alike*.
- Συγκλείω portrays **SIN** as a universal jailer, from whom no one is able to escape.

VERSE 23 reiterates the fact that before faith came, we were held captive – 'kept in custody' under the Law, 'awaiting a new revelation that has its focus on faith, not on law-keeping.'

- The Law did *not* liberate us – [and by 'US' I mean 'ALL OF US,' but in particular, 'ISRAEL'] – rather, the Law imprisoned us, continuously emphasizing and making us aware of **SIN**.
- But it is important to note, PAUL makes clear this imprisonment was temporary; it served a preparatory role until **MESSIAH** came with His message of **LIBERATION**.

But the question remains: 'Given that it imprisoned us under **SIN**, is the Law **EVIL**?

The answer is **NO!** The Law is **NOT EVIL**; the imprisonment was **NOT PUNITIVE**; it was **PREPARATORY**, pointing out our need for **SALVATION BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST**. Once **FAITH** comes, no longer are we under confinement; instead, we are set free by God's promise.

So **THE LAW** serves a specific purpose in God's Plan, but its existence alongside **GRACE** also raises some theological questions – and it is these questions we will examine this morning.

Now from here through the rest of the Handout, the information contained herein is supplementary and does not follow the outline of the lesson. You can study this additional information on your own.

THEOLOGICALS WHO SUPPORT ROMANS 7:14-25 AS PAUL'S STRUGGLE AS A BELIEVER (POST-CONVERSION PAUL):

- **AUGUSTINE**: Initially, Augustine believed Romans 7 described an unregenerate person, but later he changed his view, arguing that it reflects the struggle of a believer fighting

against sin. (*Perhaps he changed his opinion as he matured and began to understand and see his own nature more clearly.*)

- **JOHN CALVIN:** Held that Romans 7 portrays the ongoing battle between the believer's new nature and the remnants of the flesh (THE OLD SIN NATURE).
- **CHARLES HODGE:** Interpreted this passage as describing the normal Christian experience of struggling with sin.
- **MARTYN LLOYD-JONES:** Argued that Romans 7 illustrates Christians' inability to fully obey God's law in their own strength.
- **JOHN PIPER:** Views Romans 7 as Paul's struggle as a mature believer who deeply desires to obey God but still wrestles with sin.

THEOLOGIAN WHO SUPPORTS ROMANS 7:14-25 AS PAUL'S STRUGGLE AS AN UNBELIEVER (PRE-CONVERSION PAUL):

- **ORIGEN:** Saw this passage as Paul's depiction of an unregenerate person under the law, unable to do good.
- **PELAGIUS:** Argued that Paul could not be describing a Christian because a Christian would not be 'sold under sin' (*Romans 7:14*).
- **JOHN WESLEY:** Believed this passage refers to someone under conviction of sin but not yet regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
- **DOUGLASS MOO:** Originally supported the pre-conversion view, though he later acknowledged the complexity of the passage.
- **N. T. WRIGHT** (*NOT MY FAVORITE SOUTHERN BAPTIST*): Suggests Paul is using rhetorical storytelling to describe Israel's experience under the law rather than his personal Christian experience.

VERB SHIFTS IN ROMANS CHAPTER 7:

VERBS – VERSES 7-12

(*VS. 7*) *I would not have come to know*
(Aorist¹ Active Indicative – γινώσκω)

(*VS. 7*) *I would not have known*
(Pluperfect Active Indicative – γινώσκω)

(*VS. 8*) *Taking opportunity*
(Aorist Active Participle – λαμβάνω)

(*VS. 8*) *Produced (in me)*
(Aorist Middle Indicative – κατεργάζομαι)

(*VS. 9*) *I was (once) alive*

VERBS – VERSES 14-25

(*VS. 14*) *I am (of flesh)*
(Present² Active Indicative – γινώσκω)

(*VS. 14*) *Sold ...*
(Perfect³ Middle Participle – πιπράσκω)

(*VS. 15*) *What I am doing*
(Present Middle Indicative – κατεργάζομαι)

(*VS. 15*) *I do not understand*
(Present Active Indicative – γινώσκω)

(*VS. 15*) *I am not practicing*

¹ The Greek *Aorist Tense* is past tense, punctiliar action (action that takes place at a single point in time).

² The Greek *Present Tense* indicates linear action that is taking place in the present. It can be translated (a) 'I do' or (b) 'I am doing.'

³ Though the Greek *Perfect Tense* technically is a past tense verbal form, unlike in English, the Greek Perfect Tense carries the sense of 'punctiliar action that began in the past but the results (linear) carry forward into the future. So Paul is saying, 'I came into this world sold into sin (past tense) but that 'being sold' continues into the present in the form of his Old Sin Nature.

(Imperfect⁴ Active Indicative – ζάω)

(VS. 9) Sin became alive

(Aorist Active Indicative – ἀναζάω)

(VS. 10) Proved (to result)

(Aorist Passive Indicative – εὐρίσκω)

(VS. 11) (For sin) taking an opportunity

(Aorist Active Participle – λαμβάνω)

(VS. 11) (For sin) Deceived me

(Aorist Active Indicative – ἐξαπατάω)

(VS. 11) (Sin) Killed me

(Aorist Active Indicative – ἀποκτείνω)

(Present Active Indicative – πράσσω)

(VS. 15) I am doing (the very thing)

(Present Active Indicative – ποιέω)

(VS. 16) But if I do (the very thing)

(Present Active Indicative – ποιέω)

(VS. 16) I agree (with the law)

(Present Active Indicative – συμφημι)

(VS. 17) (No longer) Am I the one doing it

(Present Middle Indicative – κατεργάζομαι)

(VS. 17) Sin dwells in me

(Present Active Participle – ἐνοικέω)

(VS. 18) The willing (is present)

(Present Active Infinitive – θέλω)

(VS. 19) (The good) I want (to do)

(Present Active Indicative – θέλω)

(VS. 19) I do not do (or I am not doing)

(Present Active Indicative – ποιέω)

(VS. 20) (Evil) Is present (in me)

(Present Middle Indicative – παρακεῖμαι)

There are a few verbs I did not list but they either were repetitive or irrelevant to the argument. What I want you to see is the dramatic shift from ‘PAST’ to ‘PRESENT.’ PAUL is not outlining his past, pre-conversion life in JUDAISM; he is telling us about the struggle he is having in his post-conversion life. **POINT:** *Living the Christian life is not ‘a cake walk.’ It is a daily struggle – a struggle that sometimes we lose.*

THE MAKE-UP OF THE OLD SIN NATURE (OSN)



⁴ The Greek *Imperfect Tense* is past tense, linear action (action that is continuous). An example would be, ‘I was doing’ (Imperfect) as opposed to the Present tense that would be: ‘I am doing.’

THE OLD SIN NATURE (*hereinafter OSN*) is the nature of man that is imputed to the human race as a result of the Original Sin of Adam. In his role as the Federal Head of the Human Race, Adam stood as our representative in the Garden of Eden, such that when he transgressed the one commandment God had given him, we all sinned under the principle of divine imputation. This means the guilt of Adam's sin became our guilt and our sin the instant our representative disobeyed the divine commandment not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Along with this guilt came a new nature; a nature that was and is in rebellion against the Lord God. Just as the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to every descendant of Adam, so was his **OSN** – and it is something we possess and will continue to possess until we die or until the Rapture of the Church occurs when *'those who are still alive will be changed, receiving new, heavenly bodies that are redeemed and free of sin in all its forms'* (*cf. 1 Corinthians 15:50-58*).

The Key Aspects of **THE OLD SIN NATURE** are:

The **OSN** is inherent in all human beings – the only exception being **JESUS CHRIST** who though related to Adam legally, was not a descendant of Adam, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit.

The **OSN** is transferred to Adam's descendants, not biologically or genetically, but by imputation. It is the result of the Moral Fall of Adam that affected the entire human race (*with the single exception of **JESUS CHRIST***).

The Bible often contrasts *'spirituality'* with *'carnality.'*

Spirituality refers to a believer who is guided under the filling of the Holy Spirit. This believer is in fellowship with God, having *'agreed with God regarding sin and righteousness.'* He (*or she*) is not harboring unconfessed sin and is acting in obedience under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In the chart above, I have depicted the **OSN** as possessing two areas of carnality that are distinguished by the terms **AREA OF STRENGTH** and **AREA OF WEAKNESS**. *'Good works'* that emanate from **THE AREA OF STRENGTH OF THE OSN** are the same good works about which **PAUL** says are **burned up** in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15:

*Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is **BURNED UP**, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire – 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.*

The good works that remain are good works produced by the Holy Spirit through us, while **the works that are burned up** are those **originating in THE AREA OF STRENGTH OF THE OSN** and produced by human effort when the believer is out-of-fellowship because of unrepentant sins. *These are 'good works' but they are produced by THE OSN'S AREA OF STRENGTH.*

The **OSN** acts as an internal temptation and sin factory. Though both believers and unbelievers can be tempted directly by Satan and his agents, we have within ourselves the ability to be the source of our own demise. The **OSN** expresses itself through the lust of the flesh (*sometimes a synonym for the OSN*), the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These form the internal source that leads to overt sins that emanate from **THE OSN'S AREA OF WEAKNESS**.

Believers can have victory over the **OSN** by taking advantage of the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells us. The key to maximizing this victory over sin is to adhere to sound biblical doctrine, and to confess all known sins in accordance with 1 John 1:9. We are assured of this victory because we have been identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. His victory over sin and death has become our victory over sin and death because we are **IN CHRIST**.