



ROMANS Part 57

Chapter 7:1-4

Or are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law), that the law is lording it over a man for as much time as he is living? 2 For a woman in wedlock is bound to a living man by law. Yet if the man should be dying, she is exempt from the law of the man. 3 Consequently, then, while the man is living, she will be styled an adulteress if she should be becoming another man's, yet, if the man should be dying, she is free from the law, being no adulteress on becoming another man's. 4 So that, my brethren, you also were put to death to the law through the body of Christ, for you to become Another's, Who is roused from among the dead, that we should be bearing fruit to God.



Hey, I'm a Gentile. May I be excused?

Paul now gives an example of how, if everything is lost in one area of life, one can freely go off to another area. People are sometimes happy when they are fired from a job because they deep down hated that job. Now that the hated job is over, they are free to enjoin other pursuits. It's the same with the death of the old humanity. Now that God is no longer accounting the sins of the old humanity to one's account (He killed it), one may then enjoy all sorts of new possibilities—assuming one to be faithful enough and brave enough to walk into these opportunities. One is now free from the concern that eternal destiny depends on behavior. Finally liberated from oneself, one is free to pursue another, namely Christ.

Paul uses an example from the law concerning marriage. Big deal. So it's an example from the law concerning marriage. Don't overreact—or react at all. The last thing you want to do is let this simple example sidetrack you into imagining that Paul is writing Romans chiefly to the Jews and that Gentiles are now subject to Mosaic dictates. Paul was a Jew—what other examples would you expect him to come up with? There are some people with an agenda who want to prove that Paul's early letters are not written to the body of Christ. I have no idea what possible good this agenda serves. On the other hand it does much harm, creating confusion and division where none exist. It not only potentially draws Gentiles into law, it robs members of the body of Christ of much body-specific truth contained in Paul's early epistles—as though there were already not enough division in the body of Christ. These "uber-dividers" divide Paul's letters into "pre-prison" and "post-prison" epistles, claiming that Paul wrote his pre-prison epistles chiefly to Israelites (reflecting Israel truth), whereas he wrote his post-prison epistles to the nations, finally getting around to truth exclusive to the body of Christ. This is a false division popularized by Charles Welch and can be summed up in the following two propositions:

1) Prior to Acts 28, the ministry of Paul and the apostles consisted solely of kingdom and Abraham-covenant doctrine spoken to and concerning Israel by all the prophets.

2) After Acts 28, Paul writes exclusively of the secret information that was not known before.

OVERTHINKING, OVERDOING

This uber, artificial division of Paul's letters—which letters we already separate from the Circumcision epistles—is a classic case of over-thinking. It is a classic example of too much of a good thing. The philosophy goes that, if dividing Paul's letters from those to the Circumcision leads to such profit, then let's get even more profit by dividing Paul's letters themselves. There is no reason to do this, and many reasons to eschew it. It is true that Israel's resurgence at the beginning of the book of Acts had sputtered and ground to a halt by Acts 28:28, including the offer of the kingdom promised to Abraham, the presentation of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, the Pentecostal signs



and powers, water baptism for the remission of sins, and the God-created wall between Jew and Gentile. However, it does not follow that just because something ends in Acts 28:28, that something completely new has to begin with Paul. On the contrary, Paul had been teaching his evangel since at least Acts chapter 13, and probably earlier. If the Charles Welch people are right, then we should not find any reference to Paul's distinct administration before the prison epistles and the much-ballyhooed Acts 28:28 line. In the following section, however, I, Martin Zender, list 16 points proving that Paul revealed many aspects of his secret administration prior to Acts 28, before writing his prison epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

ARTIFICIAL DIVISION

Artificially dividing Paul's letters between pre-prison and post-prison letters, then claiming this false division to be a line between Israel truths and body-of-Christ-truths, not only confuses both sets of saints, but robs body-of-Christ members of many secrets revealed by Paul prior to Acts chapter 28. Yet we find many exclusive body-of-Christ truths in Paul's early letters, including:

- ▶ righteousness without law (Romans 3:21)
- ▶ justification by faith without works (Romans 4:5; Galatians 2:16)
- ▶ the secret of the blindness of Israel (Romans 11:25)
- ▶ deliverance of body saints from the wrath of God (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10)
- ▶ The conciliation of the world (2 Corinthians 5:19)
- ▶ the "new creature," that is, the Body of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:5)
- ▶ the death of the old humanity (Romans 6:6)
- ▶ neither Jew nor Greek (Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13)
- ▶ the present possession of the conciliation (Romans 5:11)
- ▶ one baptism into the body of Christ (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:13)
- ▶ the absence of water baptism in this dispensation of grace (1 Corinthians 1:17)
- ▶ our celestial position (1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 5:1-2)
- ▶ our snatching away to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16)
- ▶ the secret of the gospel revealed (1 Corinthians 2:7-8; Romans 16:25; Galatians 2:7; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2)
- ▶ a new administration revealed (1 Corinthians 9:17)
- ▶ the distinct apostleship of Paul (Romans 11:13; Galatians 11-12; Galatians 2:7-9)

NARCISSIS IS A JEW? *INTERESTING.*

Paul opens Romans chapter 7 with a Jewish example from the law. This proves that Romans is written to Jews! This proves that Gentiles are supposed to do law! This proves that nothing in Romans (or other early letters) is un-Jewish! Unfortunately, this is the careless way many people interpret Scripture. They clamp springs to their shoes and jump to irrational conclusions. This is a fallacy of logic known as *non sequitur*. Non sequitur is a Latin term meaning, "does not follow" and refers to any conclusion illogically aligned with previous premises or evidence. A statement that is labeled as "non sequitur, therefore, is not logical. ("She drives a BMW, therefore, she must be rich.") What the opening of

Romans chapter seven *does* prove is that Paul is a Jew and is loaded with Jewish examples. Paul is writing to both Jews and Greeks, but he is primarily the apostle of the gentiles. In this very letter, Paul says concerning himself in Romans 11:13-14—

Now to you am I saying, to the nations, in as much as, indeed, then, I am the apostle of the nations, I am glorifying my dispensation, if somehow I should be provoking those of my flesh to jealousy and should be saving some of them.

If anyone still thinks that Paul is writing primarily to Jews, I would ask them to please read the list of the saints at the end of this letter, in chapter 16. These are the recipients of Paul's writing. I am hard pressed to find a Jewish name among them. Instead I read of Epanetus, Andronicus, Junias, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Aristobulus, Narcissus, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologos, Nereus and Olympas. Weird names for Jews.

IT'S NOT THAT HARD

“Or are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law), that the law is lording it over a man for as much time as he is living?” (Romans 7:1)

By his own testimony, Paul speaks specifically here to those who know law. As Paul addresses this letter primarily to Gentiles (Romans 11:13), it makes sense that he would point out that the following examples will be appreciated specifically by those descendants of Abraham who know the law, and that the rest of Paul's audience can simply ignore it if they wish—go have a smoke until Paul is finished with this example to a minority of his audience. I would love to ignore this passage myself (my smoking article of choice would be a cigar and I would share it with Tryphena and Tryphosa, my two favorite members of the Roman ecclesia), but I'm writing a series on the book of Romans, so not only am I not allowed to ignore it, I have to explain it. Fortunately, it's not that hard.

“For a woman in wedlock is bound to a living man by law. Yet if the man should be dying, she is exempt from the law of the man” (Romans 7:2).

How simple can you get? It feels kind of dumb and unnecessary to comment on it, but I will because I am Martin Zender and this is what I do. No job is too small for me. While a woman is married to a living man, she is bound to



that man. But if the man dies, she is no longer bound to him. That's right. This is shocking new truth, I know. I hope you are paying attention. If you aren't, then allow me to elaborate: If this woman's husband dies, she is no longer required to engage in polite dinner conversation with him, load his pipe, wash his clothes (he will no longer dirty them much), or consider his sexual needs (his hormone levels will be much diminished from this time forward). In short, if her husband dies, the wife is free from him. And to think that I am providing you with this interpretation free of charge—I could make a fortune explaining this highly technical material to you, for I am an unlocker of hidden mysteries.

“Consequently, then, while the man is living, she will be styled an adulteress if she should be becoming another man's, yet, if the man should be dying, she is free from the law, being no adulteress on becoming another man's” (Romans 7:3).

Paul didn't stand much of a chance relaying his special gospel of grace to believing Jews in Israel. Paul recognized that these people belonged to Peter. There were tens of thousands among the Jews who had believed in Jesus, but who were still zealous for the law (Acts 21:20). These people generally hated Paul. There were many other Jews, however, who were not so zealous for the law (lazy Jews, thank God), who were probably on the edge of belief in Jesus, and to whom God gave ears to hear Paul's message. These people, though not as hot for the law as their foaming brethren, would at least have known of it. With these people, Paul has a chance. The dilemma of these Jews would be, *how can we leave the religion of our forefathers to embrace this radical new teaching? It would be unconscionable.* (I am assuming that the

Jews would know these big words.) Paul would have had that problem himself, except the glorified Christ apprehended him by dramatic means on the Damascus road. For these other Jews, Paul uses an example from the law of how someone legally bound to another could be free: the person to whom the other party is legally bound would have to die. A wife and her husband are one flesh (Genesis 2:24), just as Israel was considered to be “one flesh” with the law and the promises that God made to Abraham concerning Earth. Any Israelite would feel adulterous to abandon the fleshly, earthly, law-promises for a message of pure grace. Unless, of course, there was a death.

“So that, my brethren, you also were put to death to the law through the body of Christ, for you to become Another’s, Who is roused from among the dead, that we should be bearing fruit to God” (Romans 7:4).

In case Paul’s teaching of the death of the old humanity of chapter 6 did not hit home with the Jews in his audience, he draws from an example of the law that the Jews would have known well. During the life of a woman’s husband, she would be disallowed from having relations with any other man. After his death, however, she is not only delivered from her responsibilities to this man, but is just as securely and legally bound to any new party to whom she would attach herself. In this case, the new party is Jesus Christ in glory.

Those Jews united or supposed to be united with the Jewish Messiah under law, died with Him to the law. In chapter six, Paul has already hashed out the details of identity with the death, entombment, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He had related this to the old humanity. Now he specifically relates it to the law. Union with Christ in this new humanity is a new relationship beyond the sphere of the law. For a Gentile, this would be an easy transformation, as Gentiles were never under law in the first place (Romans 2:14). So really, what transformation could be spoken of for a Gentile? For a Gentile, everything would be new. For a Jew, however, there would be the added step of leaving the old religion to embrace the new truth. For these beloved of Paul’s own flesh, he offers special helps via comparisons and analogies from the law of Moses. This he does continually in chapter 7, as we shall see. —MZ

Produced by Martin Zender/www.martinzender.com
© 2015 by Martin Zender/Published by Starke & Hartmann, Inc.
email: mzender@martinzender.com



DON'T GO!

On June 12-14, 2015, the Northeast Ohio Conference is scheduled to convene in Cortland, Ohio, hosted by Ted McDivitt. This was the first conference I spoke at in 1994. I ended up hosting it for 13 years in Willard, OH. Take it from me, THIS WOULD BE A TERRIBLE CONFERENCE TO ATTEND. You would go expecting spiritual enlightenment and fellowship, only to be attacked with the seduction of human philosophy. Rick Farwell is a featured speaker. I know this man. His teachings are poison. I am warning you because it is my duty to expose evil. Rick is a proponent of a philosophy called "Open Theism," which states that God is not the Creator of evil, that God does not order the details of the universe ahead of time, that the universe is up to chance, and that, in fact, God Himself must wait to see what is going to happen. This is nothing less than human free will. Rick also denies the death of Christ, as he believes Jesus Christ and God to be the same being. I am saying nothing to disparage Mr. Farwell's character, but only his teaching. He attends these conferences, chiefly, to promote Open Theism.

My good friend Aaron Welch has brilliantly critiqued a free-will promoting article written by Mr. Farwell called "IF GOD MAKES YOU DO IT, THEN YOU'RE NOT SINNING." See how Aaron Welch destroys this God-dethroning philosophy here:

<http://thathappyexpectation.blogspot.com.br/search?updated-max=2015-04-18T16:03:00-07:00&max-results=7>