

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Second Quarter 2014: *Christ and His Law***  
**Lesson 6 “Christ’s Death *and the Law*”**

**Read for this week’s study**

Rom. 7:1–6; 8:5–8; Rom. 7:7–13; Rom. 4:15; Acts 13:38, 39; Gal. 3:10.

**Memory Text**

“In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God” (Romans 7:4, NRSV).

**Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. Dead to the Law
- III. The Law of Sin and Death
- IV. The Power of the Law
- V. The Impotent Law
- VI. The Curse of the Law
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Moderator: Daniel Duda**

1. “A woman who was way over the speed limit wonders how much the ticket is going to be; she also worries about how she will be able to pay it. A few minutes later the policeman comes back and says, ‘OK, Miss, what we are going to do, so that you don’t have to face the penalty of the law again, is abolish the law. You no longer have to worry about the speed limit.’ As ludicrous as that story is, it’s no more so than the theology that teaches that after Jesus died, the law, the Ten Commandments, was abolished.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Do you know anyone who believes today that the Ten Commandments were abolished? What arguments are currently used to propose that the fourth commandment is no longer binding on God’s people, those who are part of the New Covenant? Building a “straw man” case against that is not going to help people face the reality once they encounter it!
3. “Carefully examine Romans 7:1–6 and summarize as well as you can what Paul is saying. [...] What Paul is saying is that because law binds every living person, God’s

law must also govern the new union. However, the fact that the believer is now married to Christ means that the law is no longer an instrument of condemnation; the believer in Jesus is free from the condemnation of the law because he is covered in the righteousness of Jesus.”

“Paul is not stating that the Ten Commandments, which define sin, are now abolished; that would be contrary to so much of the Bible, his own writings included. Instead, he is talking about a new relationship one has to the law through faith in Jesus. The law still is binding; it’s just that for the believer in Jesus, the one who died to self and to sin, the law no longer holds him or her in the grip of condemnation because they now ‘belong to another,’ Jesus.” (Sunday’s lesson)

4. Why is it that “the law” can “sometimes be described as ‘holy and righteous and good’ (Romans 7:12, NASB), or as the ‘law of sin and of death’ (Romans 8:2, NASB)”? (Monday’s lesson) In what way is it true that “the function of the law depends on the person with whom it is associated”?
5. “However, in the same way that God’s retributive vengeance does not stop Him from being a God of love, the law’s function as an agent of sin and death does not make it sinful.” (Monday’s lesson) Do you find this a valid comparison?
6. “Paul emphasizes that it is impossible for the “mind set on the flesh” to submit to God’s law, or even to please Him (Romans 8:7, 8, NASB). This is obviously not a reference to the struggling individual of Romans 7:13–25, since that person serves the law of God ‘with my mind’ (Romans 7:25, NASB).” (Monday’s lesson) So what *is* the function of the law for the struggling individual of Romans 7?
7. “Had it not been for God’s law, there would be no absolute method of knowing what actions were acceptable or unacceptable to Him. [...] Had it not been for the law, there would be no death because it would be impossible to define sin.” (Tuesday’s lesson) The law is one part of God’s revelation. Therefore it plays a positive revelatory function. Where does its “power” come from?
8. Wednesday’s lesson deals with “The Impotent Law.” “Though in one sense, as we saw, the law “empowers” sin, in another real way the law is terribly impotent. How can the same object be both powerful and impotent at the same time?” (Wednesday’s lesson) The law was never given to be the means of dealing with sin! What *is* the right way of dealing with sin? How is the Pelagian-Augustinian controversy helpful in this regard?
9. “Some people believe that strict adherence to the law will grant salvation, but this is not a biblical teaching. The law [...] is able to convict the sinner of sins but cannot make the sinner righteous.” (Wednesday’s lesson) How does an insufficient/shallow definition of sin provide for insufficient/shallow understandings of salvation? What is the meaning of the “total depravity”?
10. “The fact that Jesus died in our place reveals that obedience to the law could not save us. We needed something much more drastic.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Why does it take drastic measures to deal with the problem of sin? How can we keep the

objective and subjective part of atonement together; distinguishing between them but not separating them?

11. Thursday's lesson deals with the "Curse of the Law." "With the exception of Christ, all human beings have a common experience in that all have been infected by Adam's sin. Consequently, no natural person can ever claim to be fully righteous, [...] none has been able to live completely blameless. Indeed, it is with this reality in mind that Paul declares: 'For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law"' (Galatians 3:10, NRSV)." (Thursday's lesson) What are the implications of this for our understanding of the curse? Did Adam give us just "a bad example" which we all voluntarily follow or is sin a state into which we are born and we need a Saviour who not only saves us from our sinful deeds and thoughts, but also from our sinful state?
12. "Many religions teach that at the end of a person's life God balances the persons' good deeds against the bad deeds before determining whether that person will be rewarded in the afterlife. What is so terribly wrong with this kind of thinking?" (Friday's lesson – Discussion Questions)
13. "In summary, the death of Jesus powerfully demonstrated the permanence of God's law. When our first parents sinned, God could have abolished His laws and taken away the penalties for violation. However, this would have meant a miserable existence in a lawless society for the earth's inhabitants. Instead, God chose to send His Son as a Substitute for us, in that He received the just penalty for sin as required by the law on behalf of all people. Through Jesus' death, the entire race stands in a new relationship to God. This means that any one of us, through faith in Jesus, can have our sins forgiven and stand perfect in God's sight." (Friday's lesson) What is the difference if the balancing act is done at the end of a person's life, or on the cross of Calvary? Is something terribly wrong with this model as well?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

I don't think I've ever gone through a week of prayer but what someone has said; maybe they've been believers for a long, long time, "I get so discouraged because the good I would do I don't do." That seems to be the common lot of believers. And the more eager they are to do what's right, the more sensitive they are to frequent failure. And this chapter, I feel, is the best basis for a discussion of that problem, and the most encouraging. Though one should never stop at the end of seven, but always add the first verse of eight. You see, there is no condemnation to the struggling saint. He's not condemned, for we don't deal with a legalistic God, but a gracious God, and He knows all about this struggle. He knows we have this old man of sin, He knows he can't be eliminated with a snap of the fingers, and that any moment of carelessness will let him bestir himself and get out of his coffin and trouble us again. Now

there's no excuse, we're told, for sin, it's true. But John says, "If we do sin, inexcusably, we still have an advocate with the Father." There we're back to that verse at the beginning.

See, God is for us. Satan is the one who keeps bringing these things up to discourage us. Now God is disappointed when we keep sinning, it makes our dilemma all the more serious; it increases the scar tissue, so hard to deal with. See, even though we're forgiven, we're never quite the same whenever we sin, for sin happens in people not in books. This is what's so dangerous about sinning. And God would like us to stop sinning completely. But when we do sin we still deal with an infinitely gracious God who wants to heal us. So I've found that this seventh chapter is probably the most understanding group of verses in the Bible about this struggle. And I've met very few people who don't admit that they have been engaged in this struggle rather recently. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 7, recorded November, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Now looking back over this, in chapter 7 Paul is speaking of his inability to do what he wants to do. "Oh, the good that I would do I don't do." And even the other way around. "The evil that I don't want to do is what I do. Who will deliver me? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Dropping right down to verse 3: "For God has done" He's accomplished, He's succeeded, in doing what the law could not do. All the law did was either irritate Paul or present a standard that simply made him more aware of his failures. But God has accomplished what the law weakened by the flesh could not do.

Now is that a fault of the law? Is it a fault of the law that the law does not make saints out of us? Does the speed limit in California automatically make us all obedient to the speed limit? Well, you know how that goes; it just says what the speed limit is, that's all. And because it's there these folk in the black and white cars can stop and say, "You were not obeying the law." And I say, "Well, don't blame me, blame the law." Can't do that, there's nothing wrong; well now, we might argue with the law, mightn't we, a human law? But when it comes to God's law, the law of love, and life, and peace, and freedom, Paul says, "I don't argue with God's law. I delight in it. I agree that there's nothing wrong with the law. The law of the Lord is perfect." As a law that is, but it's weakened by the flesh. I'm the one that's weak, not the law. The law tells me what to do and in my weakness I can't do it. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 8, recorded November, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/15MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/16MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

I was listing all the things that law represents contrasted with grace. Law, for example, is demanding, exacting, exposing, accusing, unforgiving, provoking, irritating, unyielding, impersonal, and it leads to rebellion, but is that the fault of the law? No, the law is perfect. The trouble is that we're rebels, we're sinners. But, sinners that we are, when we see God as He is, infinitely gracious, grace is giving, forgiving, covering, persuading, very personal, and it wins us to repentance and faith. And God says, "Please in my dealings with you, don't see me as a legalistic tyrant, see me as your infinitely gracious Father who longs to win you back."

And so, Paul, who's full of this good news and proud of it, says, "Take note in our relationship with God right now, we're not under law, we're under grace." Of course that worried some of his hearers; they said, "You're doing away with the law!" Paul says, "I'm not even through yet with telling you about that. A little later I'm going to tell you Christ is the end of law as a way of being saved." And you know what's happened to that verse. But remember Romans 3: "Does faith abolish law? God forbid. Faith establishes law by putting it in its proper perspective, and when the grace of God has won us back to repentance, and faith, and a willingness to listen and God says, 'For your best good, do this. What I mean is don't kill, don't hate, don't steal, please love, be patient, be kind. Don't you want to be free? And don't you want to be healthy; don't you want to live forever?'" {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 6, recorded November, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/11MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/12MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished." {DA 764.4}

Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." {AA 564.1}

Jesus was the majesty of heaven, the beloved commander of the angels, who delighted to do His pleasure. He was one with God, "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18), yet He thought it not a thing to be desired to be equal with God while man was lost in sin and misery. He stepped down from His throne, He left His crown and royal scepter, and clothed His divinity with

humanity. He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, that man might be exalted to a seat with Him upon His throne. In Him we have a complete offering, an infinite sacrifice, a mighty Saviour, who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. In love He comes to reveal the Father, to reconcile man to God, to make him a new creature renewed after the image of Him who created him. {1SM 321.3}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

God has given us His holy precepts, because He loves mankind. To shield us from the results of transgression, He reveals the principles of righteousness. The law is an expression of the thought of God; when received in Christ, it becomes our thought. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin. God desires us to be happy, and He gave us the precepts of the law that in obeying them we might have joy. When at Jesus' birth the angels sang,—

“Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14),

they were declaring the principles of the law which He had come to magnify and make honorable. {DA 308.1}

The law is an expression of God's idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin (MS 23a, 1896). {6BC 1110.6}