

HOUSE of WISDOM
P. O. Box 2765
Burleson, Texas 76097
Email: woody@dtgministries.org
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Married - to Law or the Spirit? (Romans 7:1-4)

Introduction: Often I have said that to understand the deep things of God, one must know that God teaches by forming pictures with words, referenced in the Bible as allegories, parables, types and symbols - even actual events are viewed allegorically. Once seen, the Bible can be used as a teaching tool as well as the natural world around us, in order to understand how all these things relate to the inward man.

Another key point to realize is that Bible writers may have understood some, all or none of what they wrote as to the application in their time, or in the future. Daniel, for instance, lived to see the outward meaning of the first two symbols of his visions in Daniel 2:38-39

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

and in 7:4-5,

4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

and he was told who the third kingdom would be (Dan 8:21).

And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

He was also told, But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased (Dan 12:4).

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If the book of Daniel was sealed until the time of the end, then the fact that the lion & head of gold represented Babylon is only the first and not the ultimate revelation of the symbol. Therefore, these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Cor 10:11, ASV).

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So, what is the time of the end or the ends of the ages? It is evident that the final revelation of truth was not during the Apostolic Church, therefore, it has to be the LAST generation, a time known only by the Father. The people who will know and begin to understand the deep things of God first, are mentioned as the 144,000 (Rev 7:4; 14:1),

7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

who will eventually be sent to tell the Church (Rev 11:3).

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

Many will reject the message, as it will be so different from what the churches teach, which is the same reason that most of the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Even the disciples still carried old ideas at the time of Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:6).

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

The topic of discussion is the law. When we consider modern times, we have laws pertaining to various sections and functions of our society, laws by which we are governed - outwardly. What does it mean to be governed by spiritual law - inwardly? In Romans, this idea is presented as marriage and evokes the question each must decide. Are you married to the law, or to the Spirit of Christ?

Dominion of the law: Romans 7:1: 1. Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives? How does the law have dominion (rule) over a man? Instead of dominion (2961), Paul uses a different word to explain the same idea: But before faith came, we were kept under

(5259) the law,... (Gal 3:23).

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

For the law to have dominion over a person is the same as saying the person is under law, or, governed by law (cp use of 2961 in Rom 6:9, 14).

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

This is shown figuratively in the next two verses: Romans 7:2-3: *2. For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.* The phrase hath an husband is literally under a man, or, the husband has dominion over the wife (1 Cor 11:3).

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

According to the law stated, a woman is not free from the law of that husband until he be dead.

The analogy is of a person married to their own understanding of the law. So, to do something different from what you believe is to commit spiritual adultery. Example: If I steal something, I break the eighth commandment. But how can someone steal something spiritually? Jeremiah 23:25-26, 30. *25. I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. 26. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart... 30. Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbor.* The prophets in Jeremiah's time were committing spiritual adultery against God by teaching their own opinions. They were stealing the truth from the people by what they taught. Are there false teachers stealing God's word from the people today?? Here are two or three examples: Rapture or not, day of worship, form of baptism, etc. In many cases, both sides are wrong. How can someone steal God's word from another and they do not realize it? One way is because they do not understand how to listen to the still small voice. Another way is to be so convinced that your church, or you, is right that you are not open to listen, and therefore, church doctrine overrides the feeling in their heart that something is not right. Eventually, the heart becomes so harden that it cannot change (Rom 1:28).

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Lets expand on this idea: But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law (Gal 5:18).

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Now think! If we are governed by the spirit of God, then we are not governed by law (no one can serve two masters - Mt 6:24).

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

He exhorts us not to be concerned about worldly things.

As stated above, we can conclude that if a person is not being led by the Spirit, then they are living according to their own interpretation of the law, or today, we would say - the Bible. The Bible, or law, however, is not set aside, but instead, we seek God as how to understand it as applied to the heart.

Each person is governed (ruled) by their thoughts - thoughts produce feelings, feelings lead to action, actions repeated over time become habits... In order to change our behavior, we must change our way of thinking (cf Isa 55:6-11).

6 Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

THIS is what salvation is all about (cf Rom 12:2; Eph 4:22-24).

12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

4:22 *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*
23 *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;*
24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

The Bible reveals this concept in various ways. A man is a figure of the intellect, or, a collection of knowledge and experiences, things that trigger thoughts. A woman is a symbol for the heart, which controls the actions. How a woman and a man are used in scripture will give different points of view. Example: A woman can be spoken of as virtuous, or a harlot; a man can be a king or a servant.

Spiritual marriage: The law of marriage in the Old Testament does not specifically state that a wife is to be subject to her husband. It is taken from Genesis 3:16

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

and implied in the story of Abraham (1 Pet 3:6)

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

and other places. It is, however, plainly taught in the New Testament (1 Pet 3:1; Eph 5:22-25).

3:1 *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;*

5:22 *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*
23 *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*
24 *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*
25 *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

In Romans 7, Paul uses the letter of the law allegorically to show us how the wife represents the mind-set of a person who is governed by their own, or man's opinions (husband) of the law. So, the wife - what you are believing, submits to the husband - the beliefs that possess and govern you. But, what if we are believing a lie and do not realize it?

In the parable in Luke 16, Jesus said: 11. *If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?* 12. *And if ye have*

not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? Inward riches are a figure of your knowledge (Pr 14:24, 18).

24 The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.

18 The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

The unrighteous mammon is one's own understanding of law; the true riches are a figure of Christ's understanding of law (cf Jn 14:6).

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The main point of the parable - are you faithful at whatever level of knowledge of the law as you understand it? If you are, then God can lead you out of any error into paths of righteousness (Ps 23:3).

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

God gave humanity the Bible in such a format that man could, and have, interpreted what it teaches in many ways. A point of truth that can be gleaned just by reading it is that we are all sinners (Rom 3:23)

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

and we need to recognize and change what we are doing (Acts 3:19).

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

However, without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6).

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Faith is a whole new study, but in a nutshell - it is Christ's understanding that we must have, and we only obtain it by having spiritual ears to hear. After we receive Christ's understanding (faith), we are no longer governed by the law (Gal 3:25),

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

that is, a man's understanding of the law, but we are governed by graciousness (Rom 6:14).

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under

grace.

This is why the law is not for the righteous, but for the wicked (1 Tim 1:9).

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

To be governed by Christ's faith, we must die to self and to our own ideas and opinions of the law. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it says to them who are under the law (Rom 3:19)...

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Every Christian starts off, and is taught to do what the letter of the law (Bible) says. A person with a correct understanding of the law listens to what the Spirit says (cf Eze 1:3; 2:1-2):

3 The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him.

His vision of four living creatures.

2:1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

Revelation 2:11: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches...* It is having "spiritual ears" to which Jesus referred in His parables (Mt 13:9; Mr 4:9). For he that hath (spiritual ears to hear), to him shall be given: and he that hath not (spiritual ears to hear), from him shall be taken even that which he hath (Mk 4:25).

For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

Summary: Rom 7:4: *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* It takes time and effort to come out of the confusion about God that everyone carries. Spiritual understanding is required in order to die to the law and become the bride of the risen Savior. To be married to Christ is to be led by the Spirit. The verse also mentions HOW it is accomplished - by the body of Christ.

The body of Christ is defined as an assemble of ones called out: 1Corinthians 12:27: *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* God's church (Greek ekklesia - 1577) are those scattered around the world, whether a member of a religious organization, or not. It is the sincere body of believers, each living according to their own conscience (cp Rom 2:14-15).

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Now, members of the body are not all at the same level of understanding. Notice how Paul uses the body parts to describe this relationship: 1Co 12:20-26: 20 *But now are they many members, yet but one body.* 21 *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.* 22 *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:* 23 *And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.* 24 *For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked:* 25 *That there should be no schism (or, division) in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.* 26 *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

Only God knows who are His people, individuals from every sort of background, having different levels of understanding and come from every walk of life. Because of this, there will be members, who we consider less honorable (verse 23), yet God considers them necessary (verse 22), having given to them, more abundant honor (verse 24). We need this diversity! Think about it. I know there are times that I have felt offended by the sincere actions of a brother or sister. And even recently, I have offended others by my remarks, for which I sincerely regret. WE ALL must come into the unity of the faith, and into the stature and fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13).

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Our devotion, our love, our subjection as the bride of Christ must be without reservation. Then can we be a part of the body - And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and he who is hearing - let him say, Come; and he who is thirsting - let him come; and he who is willing - let him take the water of life freely. (Rev 22:17 - Young's).

And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and he who is hearing--let him say, Come; and he who is thirsting--let him come; and he who is willing--let him take the water of life freely. (YLT)

Truth will come from another person. God will confirm or deny the accuracy of it by impressing your heart. Listen! Amen.