

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## ROMANS LESSON 4 (Chapters 7-8)

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1). Welcome to our study of the Book of Romans. Chapters 7 and 8 teach us that the Law of Moses is now dead, and that Christians must be wed to Christ. They must be married to Christ in a spiritual sense in order to be right and to have the blessings that God wants them to have. As you begin to think about Romans 7, one of the things that is first off the page, and one of the first principles that Paul wants to get out, is that the Law of Moses is now dead to Christians, and that Christians cannot be wed to the Law of Moses any more. In Romans 7:1-4 Paul uses an illustration of marriage to show how that, when one mate dies, the other mate is free to marry again. But his whole illustration is about being dead to the Law of Moses so that we can now be married to Christ.

“Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”

If ever there was a passage which teaches that the Law of Moses is not for Christians, this is it. When two people are married, that marriage is “until death do you part.” Romans 7 teaches that, as does Genesis 2:18-24. Marriage is for life. But if that marriage is ended by death because one of the mates dies, then the mate who is still alive is free to marry another person without being called an adulteress. If a woman were to remarry while her husband was alive, she would be an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is freed from the marriage contract and may be married to another. The point is that we are married to Christ. Because the Old Law has died, God has freed us from that. Thus, we can now—without being adulterers in God’s sight—be a part of the New Covenant and be a New Testament Christian. It is clear from Scripture that we are no longer under the Old Law. In Jeremiah 31:31 we are told, “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant’...” The Old Testament was never designed to last forever. Its sacrificial system was not designed to last forever, and its codes were never designed to last forever. The Bible teaches that Jesus nailed the Old Law to the cross. We learn from Ephesians 2:14-15 that Christ nailed the Old Law to the cross. We are no longer to follow that law. In Hebrews 8:13 (which quotes Jeremiah 31:31) we are told, “In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” When you think of obsolete, perhaps you think of the first computer you ever had. Do you remember what that computer was like? Do you remember how antiquated it was and how obsolete it now is? How would you like to use that kind

of technology today? That old computer is no longer in use because it is obsolete and outdated. It cannot do the things we need it to do, and it cannot achieve what we want it to achieve. The same is true of the Old Law. "In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away." In John 12:48 the Scripture says that all people are going to be judged, not by the Law of Moses, but by the Gospel (the words of Jesus Christ).

As you think about this, what are some of the ramifications of saying that we are dead to the Law of Moses, and that it is dead to us? Here are some things we need to consider. What Law of Moses, specifically, is Paul talking about? It is the totality of the Law, but notice specifically in verse 7 that it is the same law that said, "Thou shalt not covet." What law said, "Thou shalt not covet"? The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20) is where that is found. That statement is used by Paul as representative of the whole law. The New Testament, however, teaches that we no longer are under the Ten Commandments today. Did Jesus bring nine of the Ten Commandments back into the New Law? Yes, He did. He talked about honoring father and mother, not worshiping idols, not committing adultery and murder, etc. Nine out of the Ten Commandments are brought into the New Law. But here is another ramification. When we say that the Old Law is dead, it means that we are to no longer remember the Sabbath. How do we know that? In Colossians 2:16 Paul said, "Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths." Christians cannot be condemned because they no longer observed laws pertaining to the Sabbath. Could they be condemned under the Old Law? Yes, they could. They could be stoned for not remembering the Sabbath. But the Sabbath is not for us today.

Another ramification is that since the Law of Moses is dead to us, we are not under the Old Testament sacrificial system. This is why we do not go to Jerusalem to worship. This is why we no longer animal sacrifices or grain offerings. We do not live under that sacrificial system. God be thanked that we do not! How would you like it if every time you sinned you had to go the field, get a lamb, heifer, or bull that was spotless, cut its throat, spill its blood on the alter, skin in, burn part of it, and sacrifice it to God? Can you imagine what it would have been like to have lived under that bloody system? The Bible says in Hebrews 10:12, "This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God." Jesus is our once-for-all sacrifice.

But here is another implication. Since the Old Testament is no longer for Christians, we need to realize that what people under the Old Law did in their worship is not what we are to do in worship today. They offered incense, but we do not read anything in the New Testament about that in the church. People under the Old Law offered animal sacrifices. We are not to do that. They used instrumental music in worship (2 Chr. 29), but we do not do that today because we do not worship like they did. John 4:24 tells us that "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Although there may be valuable principles in the Old Testament about God, life, salvation, and worship, the Old Testament is no longer what we are to follow because today we look to the New Testament. Are we saying that the Old Law was not a good law, or that a good God made a bad law? Not at all! In Romans 7:12 we read, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good." Paul wants these people to realize that God did not give them a bad law. It was a good law, but it was temporary. It was never intended to last forever. To say that the Old Law was faulty (which some people do) is maligning the character of God. A good, omnipotent, omnibenevolent God could not make a bad law. God is the Giver of the law. Therefore, it was holy, just, and good. But it was temporary in nature. Its purpose was to point us to Christ. That is what the Law of Moses, ordinances, and commandments were doing. They were preparing people and pointing them to Jesus. Jesus Himself said, "Do not think

that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Mt. 5:17-18). Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Law. And when He fulfilled it, that law (as a system for people to follow) became obsolete.

In Romans 7:13-25 we learn that it is only through the law of Christ that man can overcome sin. Paul talks about how there are certain things that he wants to do, but that he does not do. He also talks about how there are things that he does not want to do, but that he does. He is talking about a life of sin. The Old Law could not help people overcome sin. It pointed out what sin was. Galatians 2:15-20 teaches that the purpose of the Old Law was to identify sin. It showed people what sin was, but it did not help them overcome sin. The New Law is where we find help to eternally overcome sin. We can overcome it in the here and now. In Matthew 4:4-11 we learn that Jesus overcame sin by looking to the Word of God. He said to Satan, "It is written..." "It is written..." "It is written..." But the only hope for overcoming sin in this life (from an eternal perspective) is to be found in the New Covenant. In 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 we are told that death has been defeated by Jesus. Thanks be to God Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! That is how we overcome a life of sin. Jesus, through His death (not through the Law of Moses or through animal sacrifices) overcame him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

As we turn our attention to Romans 8, we learn that once we obey the Law of Christ, there is "no condemnation" to Christians—those who live faithfully before Jesus. In Romans 8:1 we are told, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." One of the great benefits and blessings of being a child of God, and of being a part of the system of faith, is that if we live faithfully, we will not be condemned on the last day. We know that on that last day God is going to say to certain people, "Depart from Me!" The gavel is going to come down, and God is going to say, "Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity, into everlasting punishment—into a place prepared for the devil and his angels." But for Christians who live faithfully, there will be no condemnation. Because Jesus defeated death (1 Cor. 15:55), because He arose from the grave (Jn. 11:25-26), and because we, too, will one day come out of the grave and live forever (Jn. 5:28-29), we are not going to stand condemned before God. Am I suggesting that we should live a haughty life? Not at all! But we desperately need to realize that Christianity is a life of hope. We should not walk around, wondering if we are lost, if God really loves us, or if He really wants us to go to Heaven. If we are living like we ought to live, then we need to have the knowledge that we are saved and that God does want us to go to Heaven. In 1 John 3:1 we are told, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" We are God's children. As a loving Father, God wants us to live forever with Him. We do not have to suffer the consequences of those who have lived a life of sin. Instead, we have the hope of Heaven.

But to achieve Heaven, we must not be carnally minded. Rather, we must be spiritually minded. For a child of God to remain faithful, he must realize that this world can no longer be his allure. In Romans 8:6-7 Paul said, "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." To be carnally minded means that we are worldly minded. We want the fleshly lusts of this life. We want to "have our cake and eat it, too," in the here and now. But we need to realize that Christians cannot be worldly minded. The Bible says so much about how we must not get caught up in this old world. When you think about people in the Bible who did, Balaam comes to mind. He could have been a great man of God. In Numbers 22:18 Balaam said, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." He wanted to do only what God said. Yet about ten chap-

ters later he dies in battle against the people of God as he tempts them to do wrong. He was a very greedy man. Think about Demas, of whom Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:10, "Demas has forsaken us, having loved this present world." How about Judas, who sold out the Lord for 30 measly pieces of silver? Worldliness will cause a lot of people to be lost. James 4:4 tells us how God feels about it: "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." John said,

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2: 15-17).

When we get caught up in money, fleshly desires, or human pride, we need to realize that this old world is not going to be here long. In God's plan of things, it may be here for a few more years. But we must realize that this old world is not permanent. It is temporary. In 2 Peter 3:10-12 we are told that the Earth and everything in it will one day be "burned up with a fervent heat." Peter then asks, "What manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Mt. 24:35). We must not get caught up in this world. To be carnally minded brings death. If we live a world life, we can rest assured that the end result will be spiritual death. To be spiritually minded is to have the hope of eternal life. We can have real joy if we set our minds on the right things. That is the heart of the matter. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt. 6:21). "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). The things on which we focus, and on which we set our goals, usually indicate where we end up going. The same is true with spirituality. If we set our minds on spiritual things, and if we want to go to Heaven more than anything else, it will be difficult for us to be distracted from that goal. Paul said, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Col. 3:1). We are to "seek first the kingdom of God" (Mt. 6:33). We are to keep our gaze focused on Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2). May we never be carnally minded, but instead always be spiritually minded and think in spiritual terms.

Part of being a faithful child of God means that we not only are spiritual minded, but that we also are led by the Spirit of God rather than the letter of the law. In Romans 8:14 Paul said, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." There are some people who take passages like these and venture off into places and ideas that God never intended. To be "led by the Spirit" is not talking to Christians today about something miraculous, or about the Spirit leading us to do something that, without His help, we would never have known about. It is not talking about that. How are Christians today "led by the Spirit"? In John 16:13 Jesus promised, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." The Holy Spirit guided the apostles to write down God's Word in what we now know as the Bible. If we are going to be "led by the Spirit," then we need to be led by the Word of God. That is why we are to study God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15). That is why we are to "search the Scriptures daily" (Acts 17:1). That is why God's Word is "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path" (Ps. 119:105). We can know today that the Spirit leads us through God's Word because in 2 Peter 1:19-21 we are told that it was the Spirit Who led holy men of God to write down what we have in the Bible. If He led them to write down the Word, then we must follow that Word. By whom are we being led? The Spirit of God. We need to let the Spirit of God lead us in the proper way—which is through the Scriptures. Without the Bible, how can we **know** that we are right with God? If a man does something that he thinks is right, or that is he something being "moved"

to do, he may not be sure about that as a result of merely his own feelings. In 1 John 4:1 we are told to “test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” The only way we can know that we are right is by knowing the truth. In John 8:32 Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” That is the only way we can know we are right in God’s sight. When we are living a faithful Christian life, and when we are doing what we ought to be doing, we receive a great blessing from the God of the Bible in the form of His providential care. In Romans 8:18ff. we are told that God takes care of His own, and that if we are faithful Christians, we do not have to worry about what might happen tomorrow because God is going to provide for us. Let me direct your attention specifically to Romans 8:28, where Paul says, “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” If “all things work together for good,” that does not mean that everything **initially** will look good to us. But all things will “work together.” The end result will be that when it comes to our salvation, God will do His part to help us get to Heaven. We may not understand His reasoning. And from the outset it may not look like it is the right way. But we must remember that God **does** care. He **wants** to help us go to Heaven, and has promised to do everything possible. His care is **always** available to us. In 1 Peter 5:7 we are told, “Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” We also know that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17). The Bible teaches us that if we put the kingdom first (Mt. 6:33), God will take care of things that we need such as food, shelter, and clothing. In Philippians 4:19 Paul said, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” In Psalm 37:25 King David said, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.” All things do indeed “work together for good to those who love the Lord.” If we put our trust in God, if we obey the Gospel, and if we live faithfully before Jesus, then we can be assured that ultimately everything will work out well so that we can go to Heaven.

In the last part of Romans 8 we learn that not only does God work out all things for good for His people, but we also learn that nothing external can separate us from the love of God. Previously in Romans 8:35 Paul had asked, “What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Then in Romans 8:37-39 he wrote,

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. “

Paul was discussing external things (such as death) that cannot separate us from God. Things like principalities, powers, governments, and rulers cannot separate us from God. Neither can external circumstances. Nothing external can separate us from the love of God. God loves us at all times. And here is the point that Paul wants to get across. If people obeyed the Gospel, they could be sure that they would endure persecution. Rome might be the cause of it. Or Judaizing teachers might be its cause. But some Christians **were** going to suffer! We are promised today that we, too, will have to endure persecution (2 Tim. 1:12-13). Paul wants Christians to realize that although we may suffer, and that although things might happen in our lives that do not always look good, nothing can separate us from the eternal love of God. Ultimately, God will take care of His own, even if they die.

As I study the Scriptures, I am impressed by the fact that although nothing external can separate us from God, we must understand that we can choose to separate ourselves from God. In this life, we cannot be **made** to do anything that we do not **want** to do. Nothing can separate us from the love of God because that love is too powerful. But we can choose to separate ourselves from the love of God. Simon did. In Acts 8:20ff., Simon tried to buy the gift of God with money. He had just obeyed the Gospel and had just become a Christian. Peter told him,

“Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity” (Acts 8:20-24).

Nothing external separated Simon from God. Rather, Simon made a decision that separated him from God. Think of the example found in Galatians 5:4, where Paul said of certain Christians, “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” In 2 Peter 1:10 Peter said, “Make your call and election sure.” Do not forget the warning of 1 Corinthians 10:12—“Take heed, lest you fall.” It is true that God’s love is too powerful for anything external to separate it from us. But it also is true that we can make the decision to separate ourselves from the love of God. God does not want anyone to be lost, which is the whole point of the Book of Romans. The Gospel is God’s power to save, and throughout history God has done everything possible to bring about salvation.

That salvation is available here and now for you. God loves all men, and wants them to be saved—including you (1 Tim. 2:4). God loves you so much that He sent His only begotten Son to Earth so that we could have the hope of eternal life (Jn. 3:16). Jesus came to this world, did not have a place to call His own, and went around doing good. Yet people still accused Him of having the spirit of Beelzebub. They ran Him out of town, and eventually crucified Him. Over and over He faced persecution. Yet Jesus continually did the will of God, and made Himself a sacrifice for us. Have you taken advantage of the love of God? God loves us so much, and wants us to go to Heaven. If you have never become a Christian, then I would like to kindly ask you today, “Why are you waiting? Why not accept the Gospel and become a child of God?” It’s a very simple plan. In Acts 2:37, when the Jews realized that they had crucified their Savior, they cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” The answer was, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). If you have never obeyed the Gospel, you need to hear the Word of God and the message of salvation. God wants you to be saved, and His Son is the only way by which you can do that. Once you’ve heard the Gospel message, you need to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Having believed in Him, you then must change your life. We learn from Acts 3:19 that we are to “turn again.” Repentance is a 180-degree turn **from sin to** God. Having repented, you then must confess that Jesus is God’s Son. Then the Bible teaches that you must be baptized into Christ to access the blood of Jesus. It is stated this way in Galatians 3:27—“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Here is why that is important. In 2 Timothy 2:11-12 we are told that salvation is found “in Christ.” How do we obtain the salvation that is “in Christ”? How does a person get “in Christ”? Paul commented, “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Have you obeyed the Gospel? Are you a Christian? Do you have the hope that when you die, there will be “no condemnation” for you? If not, take advantage of the Gospel today. Life is too short. Obey the Gospel before it is everlastingly too late.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR ROMANS LESSON 4 (CHAPTERS 7-8)

1. What is the main thrust of the teaching found in Romans 7?
2. What analogy did Paul use in Romans 7 to get across his main point?
3. What did the prophet Jeremiah predict in Jeremiah 31:31?
4. According to Hebrews 8:13, what did Jesus do that fulfilled Jeremiah's prediction (from Jeremiah 31:31)?
5. What does Ephesians 2:14-15 tell us that Christ did?
6. According to John 12:48, by what will all people be judged?
7. According to Colossians 2:16, which one of the Ten Commandments are we not required to obey today?
8. According to Hebrews 10:12, what did Jesus do for us?
9. According to Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus did **not** come to destroy the Old Law. What, according to that same passage, **did** Christ come to do?
10. When, in Matthew 4:4-11, Christ was tempted by Satan, how did He respond?
11. According to 1 Corinthians 15:55-57, what did Jesus do in regard to "death"?
12. In Romans 8:1, what did Paul say that faithful Christians did not need to fear?
13. According to Paul's comments in Romans 8:6-7, what does being carnally minded bring us?
14. What is the central message of James 4:4?
15. What is the central message of Matthew 6:21?
16. According to Colossians 3:1, what are Christians to seek?
17. In 1 John 2:15, what did John tell us **not** to love?
18. In Matthew 6:33, what did Jesus instruct us to do?
19. What does Romans 8:28 have to say about how things work out for faithful children of God?
20. What is the central message of Philippians 4:19?
21. What is the central message of Proverbs 23:7?
22. According to Romans 8:37-39, what can separate Christians from God's love?