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with faith are then led to accept his Word as described above. May we, like the Romans Christians who first received Paul’s most comprehensive articulation of the Good News (1:16), respond “from [the] heart to [the] form of teaching into which [we too] were handed over” (6:17). Then Paul would again add his own “thanks [be] to God” (6:17).

Setting the Stage: Author and Addressees

Author

“The most uncontroverted matter in the study of Romans is that the letter was written by Paul, the Christian apostle whose ministry is portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles.” 11 In fact, as far as we know, the authorship of the letter was unchallenged until the late eighteenth century. Then numerous scholars arose who eagerly pursued what they believed to be the assured results of higher criticism. In the midst of a plethora of professors with multifaceted theories regarding the authorship of biblical books, Paul’s letters came to be prominently included. But even in that turmoil of speculative theory, Romans generally remained on solid ground. It was among Baur’s famous Hauptbriefe (“chief epistles”) of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. This is because even he maintained (or grudgingly admitted) that

there has never been the slightest suspicion of unauthenticity cast on these four Epistles; on the contrary, they bear in themselves so incontestably the character of Pauline originality, that it is not possible for critical doubt to be exercised upon them with any show of reason. 12

This led most scholars to conclude that the authorship of Romans was “a closed question.” 13

Of course, there is always room for someone to open a hitherto closed door in order to make a claim that has not yet been made. In this case Bruno Baur, one of F. C. Baur’s students, proposed that none of Paul’s letters, including the four “chief epistles,” were written in the first century AD. 14 Cranfield responds with this appropriately evaluative comment:

The denial of Paul’s authorship of Romans … is now rightly relegated to a place among the curiosities of NT scholarship. Today no responsible criticism disputes its Pauline origin. 15

In the context of this discussion, however, an initially striking point should be openly acknowledged. Paul did not actually write Romans. The person who did explicitly identifies himself in the text: “I, Tertius, the one who wrote this

11 Longenecker, Introducing Romans, 3.
12 Baur, Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, 1:256.
13 Dodd, Romans, xiii.
14 See Longenecker, Introducing Romans, 4; Bruno Bauer’s three-volume work is titled Kritik der paulinischen Briefe (Berlin: G. Hempel, 1850–1852).
15 Cranfield, Romans, 1–2.
letter, greet you in [the] Lord” (ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράφως τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ, 16:22). The use of a scribe, amanuensis, or secretary like Tertius was common in Paul’s day.\textsuperscript{16} It appears that Paul regularly utilized one, writing only the closing greeting in his own hand (e.g., 1 Cor 16:21–24; Gal 6:11–18; Col 4:18). Part of this was due to, and also affected by, the cost of producing a letter of exceptional length like Romans, since a scribe could write more succinctly in a smaller hand that was also more legible. Morris cites the following statistics:

In the papyri private letters range in length from 18 words to 209. More literary letters tend to be longer, the subject matter obviously having an influence on length. Cicero’s 796 letters average 295 words with a range from 22 to 2,530, while Seneca’s 124 letters range from 149 to 4,134 words with an average length of 995 words. The New Testament letters tend to be longer, though 2 and 3 John are quite short. The 13 Pauline letters average around 1,300 words. Clearly Paul took letter writing very seriously and made it much more of a vehicle for significant teaching than did most people of the ancient world. Romans is his longest letter, with about 7,100 words. Its length as well as the profundity of its subject matter marks it out as a most unusual letter.\textsuperscript{17}

In today’s dollars, a comparable letter, like 1 Corinthians, might cost more than two thousand dollars to produce.\textsuperscript{18}

The degree to which the actual writer, Tertius, might have shaped the format, content, and wording of the text is another question. Jewett, for example, admits that his “commentary rests on the conjecture that Tertius and Phoebe were engaged in the creation, the delivery, the public reading, and the explanation of the letter.”\textsuperscript{19} But “conjecture” is clearly the appropriate word for his theory. It should be recognized that seven of Paul’s letters openly identify others as co-authors or, at least, co-senders of the letter,\textsuperscript{20} but Romans does not. This supports the more balanced approach of Capes, Reeves, and Richards:

Paul was not struggling to free himself from his coworkers’ influence. He was part of a team. Paul was, though, the dominant figure. … For Paul, the letter was not finished until he agreed with all of its content, because Paul was accountable for it. His name was on the line.\textsuperscript{21}

On the one hand, one does not need to insist that Paul must have been the sole person with authorial or editorial input. On the other hand, there is no reason to deny that Paul was the primary composer who also reviewed, approved

\textsuperscript{16} See the discussion of Capes, Reeves, and Richards, Rediscovering Paul, 68–78.

\textsuperscript{17} Morris, Romans, 1–2.

\textsuperscript{18} Capes, Reeves, and Richards, Rediscovering Paul, 78.

\textsuperscript{19} Jewett, Romans, 23.

\textsuperscript{20} In addition to Paul, other senders are listed in 1:1 of 1 Corinthians (Sosthenes), 2 Corinthians (Timothy), Philippians (Timothy), Colossians (Timothy), 1 Thessalonians (Silas and Timothy), and 2 Thessalonians (Silas and Timothy), as well as the first verse of Philemon (Timothy).

\textsuperscript{21} Capes, Reeves, and Richards, Rediscovering Paul, 73.
of, and held himself responsible for each word and all the content of his letters. The divine inspiration of the letter remains uncompromised.

So much has been written about Paul’s life and letters that it is impossible to even scratch the surface of the available resources. The primary authoritative source is the NT book of Acts, to which one may add substantial amounts of biographical and historical information gleaned from Paul’s own writings. In contemporary scholarship, an excellent, but somewhat dated, resource is Moe’s two-volume work, *The Apostle Paul*, which covers *His Life and Work* and then *His Message and Doctrine*. From Barclay, *The Mind of St. Paul* is also dated, but insightful and easily accessible. Newer monographs on Paul’s life, letters, and theology include the work cited in the bibliography by Capes, Reeves, and Richards, as well as those by Barrett, Beker, Bruce, Murphy-O’Connor, Pate, Schreiner, and Wright. Specifically in regard to Paul’s theology, Dunn’s *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* is a significant recent work. The first half of *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith* by Westerholm provides a good introduction to the current state of the most influential scholarly views.\(^\text{22}\) The *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* is also a valuable reference tool.\(^\text{23}\)

### Paul’s Setting

Despite our lack of information about the setting in Rome, we are able to identify fairly well the context from which Paul wrote the letter. On his third missionary journey, Paul left Ephesus after a riot that concluded his extended stay of more than two years (Acts 19:10, 23–41; 20:1). He then traveled through Macedonia and Achaia, revisiting many of the cities of his second journey (Acts 19:21; 20:1–3). Paul was engaged in collecting an offering from the Gentile Christians to be delivered by him, along with delegations from those congregations, to the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 20:4–5; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8–9). Acts 20:2–3 informs us:

> When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece \([ ἤλθεν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα ]\). There he spent three months \([ ποιήσας τε μῆνας τρεῖς ]\), and when a plot was made against him as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. (ESV)

Paul likely spent the majority of these three months that he was in Greece in Corinth, the capital of the province of Achaia. Acts records Paul’s intent that, after delivering the offering to Jerusalem, he would fulfill his momentous goal of visiting Rome (δεῖ με καὶ Ῥώμην ἰδεῖν, Acts 19:21).\(^\text{24}\)

This setting in Corinth, while Paul was preparing to go to Rome, correlates well with a number of references from within Romans. Rom 15:23–26 speaks


\(^{23}\) See especially, S. J. Hafemann, “Paul and His Interpreters,” *DPL*, 666–79.

\(^{24}\) The degree of influence that this setting has on the content of Romans is discussed below in “Purpose: Debating the Romans Debate.”
of the offering being gathered for the poor believers in Jerusalem and of Paul’s intention to visit Rome after this was completed:

But now, while no longer having a place in these regions, and having a desire to come to you from many years, whenever I might travel into Spain. Indeed, I hope, while passing through, to see you and to be sent forth there by you, if I might first be satisfied from a portion [of time] with you. But now I am traveling to Jerusalem while ministering to the holy ones. For Macedonia and Achaia thought it good to do some fellowship for the poor of the holy ones in Jerusalem.

Romans 16 also contains a number of specific links to Corinth. Rom 16:1 identifies the bearer of the letter as Phoebe, the deacon(ess) of the church in Cenchreae (διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς), Corinth’s eastern port. Rom 16:23 mentions an Erastus, who is given the title, ὁ ὀἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως, “the manager” or “treasurer” or “clerk of the city.” A Latin inscription found in 1929 near the theatre in Corinth mentions an Erastus who occupied the position of aedile. It reads, ERASTVS. PRO. AED. S. P. STRAVIT, which means “Erastus, during/in return for his aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense.”

The Greek and Latin titles may be equivalent. However, Bruce contends:

The aedile (“commissioner for public works”) was a responsible magistrate in a Roman city. The office of oikonomos, perhaps “clerk of works” rather than “city treasurer,” was a much humbler one (Lat. arcarius).

If so, it seems likely the same official was promoted from oikonomos to the higher position of aedile, and he paid for the pavement in appreciation. In addition, Rom 16:23 mentions Gaius. He is very likely the person baptized by Paul in Corinth (1 Cor 1:14).

There is much to be said for the identification of Gaius with Titius Justus, who extended the hospitality of his house to Paul and his hearers when they were expelled from the synagogue next door (Acts 18:7). “Gaius Titius Justus” would then be his full designation (praenomen, nomen gentile, and cognomen) as a Roman citizen.

This could also be the same Gaius from Macedonia who accompanied Paul to Ephesus according to Acts 19:29.

It is certainly possible that not all of the connections cited above are correct. Nevertheless, their cumulative evidence leads to the solid conclusion that Paul wrote Romans from Corinth on his third missionary journey.

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25 See Bruce, Romans, 266; Maier, In the Fullness of Time, 289; Moo, Romans, 935–36, including n. 21.

26 Maier, In the Fullness of Time, 290, says that the Latin title “is easily the equivalent” of the Greek one. Moo, Romans, 935, concludes that “it is not clear” whether the two titles are equivalent.

27 Bruce, Romans, 266.

28 Bruce, Romans, 265–66.
The exact date of the “three months” Paul spent in Greece (Acts 20:3) remains a matter of conjecture, but the approximate timeframe is not in question. The chronology of this portion of Paul’s ministry largely hinges upon matters connected to his earlier visit to Corinth in Acts 18.29 Paul appears at a hearing before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12) and the brother of Seneca.30 An inscription found at Delphi dates Gallio’s service in this position to AD 51–52.31 Another corroborative date is the arrival of the Jewish Christians Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth eighteen months prior to the Gallio trial, after Emperor Claudius had issued a decree that expelled Jews from Rome in AD 49 or 50 (Acts 18:2, 11).32 Working forward from these dates and postulating the amount of time between Paul’s two visits to Corinth, Romans was written somewhere in the range of AD 55–59, and almost certainly early in that time span. Barrett contends it was in the first three months of 55.33 Cranfield and Dunn both suggest the winter of either 55–56 or 56–57.34 Witherington supports the latter.35 Longenecker advocates the winter of 57–58.36 Dodd suggests as late as 59.37 This commentary’s conclusion is that Paul most likely wrote Romans during a three-month stay in Corinth in AD 55 or 56.

The Addressees in Rome

In all of Paul’s epistles, his awareness of the historical context of his addressees in large part forms the content of his writings. For a number of Paul’s letters, the historical narrative provided by Acts is of great assistance in establishing the framework of events within which to read the letter. For example, Acts 13:13–15:35 informs our reading of Galatians; Acts 17:1–15 assists with 1 and 2 Thessalonians; and Acts 18 furnishes the context for his correspondence with the Corinthians. Information from Paul’s other letters also provides insights, particularly when he writes more than one letter to a given group of believers (i.e., 1 and 2 Corinthians; 1 and 2 Thessalonians). However, Acts does not provide information about the addressees of some of Paul’s epistles (e.g., Colossians or the Pastorals). Aside from the passing reference to “visitors

29 Maier, *In the Fullness of Time*, 289, quips: “No archaeological site in the world better reflects Paul’s ministry than Corinth.”
30 Maier, *In the Fullness of Time*, 285, 288–89.
32 For the date of the decree of Claudius, see Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 73; a fifth-century Christian, Paulus Orosius, places the expulsion in the ninth year of the reign of Claudius. Orosius attributes this date to Josephus, but no reference is locatable in the extant writings of Josephus. See also Bruce, *Romans*, 16. For details of the expulsion, see “The Jewish Community” below in this section.
33 Barrett, *Romans*, 5.
34 Cranfield, *Romans*, 16; Dunn, *Romans*, xliii.
37 Dodd, *Romans*, xxvi.
from Rome” in Acts 2:10, this is certainly the case for the recipients of the letter Paul writes to Rome.

Since Acts and Paul’s other letters provide little relevant information about the addressees in Rome, scholarly attempts to identify the situation being addressed by Paul typically involve what Longenecker calls “mirror reading.”38 This term describes reading into, or behind, the content of a given letter to try to see a reflection of what is happening in the context. However, in searching to identify the setting in Rome “by using a mirror-reading methodology, interpreters appear to have arrived, at least in this case, at something of a dead end.”39 The discussion below on Paul’s purpose demonstrates that this is a valid observation, at least in scholarly circles. Longenecker then proposes to deal with questions about Paul’s Roman addressees the other way around—that is, first by giving attention to the extant, historical data outside of the NT, and then by noting how a mirror reading of Romans might support (or refute) a hypothesis (or hypotheses) developed from the historical sources and data outside of the NT.40

This methodology provides the sequence of study adopted here. However, this need not imply that one should then judge the accuracy or legitimacy of statements in Romans (or Acts) based upon what other historical sources state, even though biblical scholars have often done that. Instead, this commentary seeks to present as much of the historical background as we can reasonably establish and then to engage in a discussion of the purpose(s) and content of the letter against that backdrop. Before proceeding, one must note that this approach is based upon “the initial assumption that this letter was written by Paul to deal with a concrete situation in Rome.”41 As will be demonstrated below, this presumption is by no means uniformly accepted.

The Jewish Community

A Jewish community existed in Rome since at least 139 BC. It was in that year, according to the first-century-AD Roman historian Valerius Maximus, that the praetor (judicial magistrate) of Rome, Gnaeus Cornelius Hispalus, forced the Jews to leave the city and return to their homeland.42 Sometime afterward they were allowed to return to Rome. Their numbers were supplemented by numerous slaves brought to the city in 63 BC, when Pompey “‘laid waste’ Judea and ‘expelled’ a great number of Jews ‘to the West’ to suffer ‘harsh captivity’ in Rome.”43

38 Longenecker, Introducing Romans, 55.
39 Longenecker, Introducing Romans, 55.
40 Longenecker, Introducing Romans, 55.
41 Donfried, “False Presuppositions in the Study of Romans,” 103.
42 Valerius Maximus, Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium, 1.3.3, as referred to by Longenecker, Introducing Romans, 61. See also Linder, The Jews in Royal Imperial Legislation.
Romans 7:1–6

The Lordship of the Law:
An Illustration and Overview

Translation

7 1 Or do you not know, brothers, for I am speaking to ones knowing the Law, that the Law is lord over the person as long as he lives? 2 For the married woman has been and remains bound to her living husband by the Law. But if the husband should die, she has been released and stands free from the Law of the husband. 3 Consequently then, while the husband is living, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another man. But if the husband should die, she is free from the Law, with the result that she is not an adulteress while belonging to another man. 4 For this reason, my brothers, you, you also were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ in order that you might belong to another, to the One who was raised from [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were in [the realm of] the flesh, the passions of the sins, which [passions] were through the Law, were at work in our bodily members with the result that we produced fruit [leading] to death. 6 But now we were released from the Law, after dying [to that] by which we were being confined, so that we might serve as slaves in [the] renewal of the Spirit and not in [the] oldness of [the] letter.

Textual Notes

7:1 ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε—See the first textual note on 6:3, which begins with the same question.
ἀδελφοί—For “brothers,” see the second textual note on 1:13. See also ἀδελφοί μου, “my brothers,” in 7:4.
κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου—For κυριεύω with the genitive, “be lord over [someone],” see the fourth textual note on 6:9 and the first textual note on 6:14.
ἐφ᾿ ὅσον χρόνον ζῆ—The preposition ἐπί softens to ἐφ᾿ before a vowel with a rough breathing mark, as on ὅσον. Literally, “upon as much time [as] he should live,” this expresses “as long as he lives” (see BDAG, s.v. ὅσος, 1 b). Here and in 7:2, 3, the indicative forms of ζάω, “to live,” simply refer to the span of natural, earthly life.

7:2 ἢ … ὑπανδρός γυνή—Literally, this is “the under-a-man woman.” The nominative singular feminine adjective ὑπανδρός is a compound of ὑπό, “under,” and the stem of the third declension noun ἀνήρ, “man; husband.” Its definition, “under the power of or subject to a man” (BDAG), validates the understanding of ἀνήρ and γυνή in 7:2–3 as “husband” and “wife,” respectively. Thus with ὑπανδρός Paul refers to “the married

1 Elsewhere in the epistle ζάω usually has spiritual and eschatological dimensions. See “The Background and Meaning of ‘Life’ Words” in the commentary on 1:17.
woman.” Compare 1 Cor 11:3–15 and Eph 5:23, where he explains that the husband is the “head” (κεφαλή) of the wife.

τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δέδεται νόμῳ—The verb δέω literally means “bind, tie,” but is used figuratively to mean “constrain by law and duty” (BDAG, 1 and 3). Its perfect has both a past and a present aspect. In 1 Cor 7:27, Paul uses the perfect to speak of a husband who “has been and (now) remains bound” to his wife. Here the perfect expresses the complementary opposite about the wife (γυνή): she “has been and remains bound” (δέδεταί). The dative indirect object τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ, literally, “to her living husband,” could be paraphrased with a temporal clause, “to her husband while he lives” (ESV). The dative νόμῳ expresses means: “by the Law.”

ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνήρ—This is the first of three clauses in 7:2–3 that begin with the conditional particle εἰ (ei plus ἄν), “if,” and have a subjunctive verb. The verb here is the aorist subjunctive of ἀποθνῄσκω, “die.” These clauses are speaking in general about any and every husband and wife (not just one specific husband and wife). Probably each of these three clauses is the protasis of a third class conditional sentence, which can express “a broad range of potentialities. … what is likely to occur in the future, what could possibly occur, or even what is only hypothetical.” Yet they are not merely hypothetical, because they convey the reality of what the Law declares regarding spouses in each of the circumstances described. It is less likely that each is the protasis of a fifth class conditional sentence, which would describe a generic situation in the present time.

κατήργηται—For καταργέω, see the various meanings discussed in the fourth textual note on 3:3 and the fourth textual note on 6:6. This form is a perfect indicative passive. The two aspects (past and present) of the perfect verb are rendered as “she has been released and stands free.” The present aspect expressed by κατήργηται here is reiterated in 7:3 with a present indicative: ἐλευθέρα ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, “she is free from the Law.” See also the aorist indicative passive κατηργήθημεν, “we were released,” in 7:6.

7:3 ὥσπερ οὖν—This phrase, “consequently then,” draws forth a logical conclusion. See the second textual note on 5:18.

ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρός—This is a genitive absolute with a present active participle, “while the husband is living.”

μοιχαλίς—This nominative singular feminine noun denotes an “adulteress.” It recurs in the last clause of 7:3 and is used as an adjective in Mt 12:39; 16:4; Mk 8:38.

χρηματίσει—The verb χρηματίζω can mean to “impart a divine message” or reveal a warning from God (BDAG, 1) or “to take/bear a name/title … be called/named”

Wallace, Greek Grammar, 696.

See Wallace, Greek Grammar, 696–97. He explains that “the fifth class condition requires a present indicative in the apodosis, while the third class can take virtually any mood-tense combination, including the present indicative” (p. 696). In 7:2–3, the apodosis of the first conditional sentence has a perfect (not a present) indicative, κατήργηται. The second conditional sentence has no apodosis. The apodosis of the third conditional sentence does have a present indicative, ἐστίν, “she is” (7:3).
The Lordship of the Law: An Illustration and Overview

(BDAG, 2, which refers to the possibility of two distinct roots for the two different meanings). The form here is future indicative.

ἐὰν γένηται ἄνδρι ἔτερῳ—This is the second protasis in 7:2–3; see the third textual note on 7:2. γένηται is the aorist subjunctive of γίνομαι, “become.” This verb, followed by the dative of a person, can express “belong to someone” (BDAG, 9 b). It corresponds to the Hebrew construction הָיִה הָיִה, “to become a wife belonging to (a man).”4 The Hebrew phraseology usually refers to union in marriage (Gen 20:12; 24:67; Lev 22:12; Deut 22:19; 24:2; Ruth 4:13), but it can refer more generally to engaging in sexual intimacy or promiscuity (e.g., Hos 3:3). “If … she marries another man” (Rom 7:3 NKJV; emphasis added) and “if she lives with another man” (RSV; emphasis added) each conveys part of the meaning, but they are too specific. Not only such a marriage or cohabitation, but any extramarital sexual union constitutes adultery.

ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἄνήρ—This third protasis in 7:2–3 is a verbatim repetition of the first one; see the third textual note on 7:2.

ἐλευθέρα—For this adjective, “free,” see the second textual note on 6:20.

τοῦ μὴ εἶναι μοιχαλίδα—The articular infinitive of εἰμί in the genitive here expresses result: “with the result that she is not an adulteress.” The subject (οὐσία) is in the accusative, so οὐσία is translated as “she” (not “her”). The accusative singular μοιχαλίδα, “adulteress,” is used here as a predicate; see μοιχαλίς in the third textual note on 7:3.

γενομένην ἄνδρι ἔτερῳ—This participial phrase is translated as a temporal phrase, “while belonging to another man.” For the Hebrew idiom, see the fifth textual note on 7:3.

7:4 ὥστε … καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐθανάτωθε—This is the first occurrence in Romans of ὥστε, “for this reason, therefore” (BDAG, 1), which recurs in 7:6, 12; 13:2; 15:19. In this independent clause it introduces a conclusion or application, together with the indicative ἐθανάτωθε. The causative verb θανατόω (also in 8:13, 36) means “put to death” (BDAG, 1). The aorist indicative passive here is a divine passive, which emphasizes that this past death is God’s doing. Both “our passivity and the effectiveness of the action are clearly indicated.”5 Here θανατόω must be interpreted in light of being crucified and buried with Christ in 6:2–4.6

διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ—The meaning of this prepositional phrase can be filled out as “through [baptismal incorporation into] the body of Christ.” See 6:3–4 (cf. 1 Cor 12:13). Later Paul will state, οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σώμα ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, “we, the many, are one body in Christ” (Rom 12:5). In Romans σώμα refers to Christ’s “body” only here and in 12:5. Contrast σῶμα, “flesh,” in the first textual note on 7:5.

εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἔτερῳ—This articular infinitive clause has its subject (ὑμᾶς) in the accusative, so ὑμᾶς is translated as “we” (not “us”). With εἰς the phrase could

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4 See BDB, s.v. הָיִה, Qal, II 2 h, and HALOT, s.v. הָיִה, Qal, 7 c. See also Moo, Romans, 413, n. 23. The Hebrew construction rarely refers to a man becoming a husband belonging to his wife; see Ruth 1:11.
5 Murray, Romans, 1:243.
6 Cranfield, Romans, 336; Lenski, Romans, 448–49.
express purpose or result, but purpose seems the strongest notion. Again, γίνομαι followed by the dative of a person (here ἕτερῳ, “to another”) reflects the Hebrew idiom of “belonging to” someone; see the fifth textual note on 7:3.

τῷ ἔκ νεκρῶν ἐγείρθεντι—The aorist passive participle of ἐγείρω is a divine passive and is used substantively, “the One who was raised from [the] dead.” For ἐγείρω and ἔκ νεκρῶν in reference to Christ’s resurrection, see also 4:24; 6:4, 9; 8:11; 10:9.

ἵνα καρποφορήσωμεν—The conjunction ἵνα with the aorist subjunctive is another expression of purpose. Paul used the noun καρπός, “fruit,” in 6:21 and 6:22. The compound verb here combines the noun with the verb φορέω, “bear,” hence καρποφορέω means “to bear fruit.” Paul uses the verb in a figurative sense here (as also in Rom 7:5; Col 1:6, 10) to depict the abundant yield from daily conduct.

7:5 ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί—As in 6:20, Paul refers to the prior period of time using ὅτε and an imperfect of εἰμί, “when we were.” The preposition ἐν with the dative τῇ σαρκί means “in the sphere of the flesh” or “in the realm of the flesh,”7 which fits this context well. ἐν τῇ σαρκί, then, characterizes the time “when we were altogether under the domination of the flesh,”8 when it was our “determining condition.”9 The noun σάρξ, “flesh,” can express quite a range of meanings (see the textual note on 2:28). It is not always “unqualifiedly evil”10 or “a description of sin itself”11 since Paul sometimes uses σάρξ in a neutral manner in order to describe the believer’s physical body (e.g., 2 Cor 4:11; Gal 4:14; Col 2:1) and even Jesus’ existence in the flesh (Rom 1:3; 9:5; Col 1:22; 1 Tim 3:16).12 In the OT “man is seen from the very first in his relation to God. As creature of God he is flesh.”13 However, the fall into sin has made us subject to bodily infirmities and death (cf. σάρξ in 8:6; cf. σῶμα in 4:19; 6:12; 7:24; 8:11). Elsewhere, Paul characteristically uses σάρξ to depict human weakness (see the second textual note on 6:19; see also 8:3). He states that no good resides in his “flesh” (7:18). Moreover, “flesh” can represent open opposition to God (8:8, 9).

tὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου—In 8:18 and elsewhere in the NT πάθημα (usually plural) refers to afflictions or sufferings, even those of the sinless Christ (e.g., 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10; Heb 2:9; 1 Pet 1:11). Only here and in Gal 5:24 does παθήματα have the sense of sinful “passions.”14 The repeated neuter plural article τά expresses that τά παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, “the passions of the sins,” under

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7 See Wallace, Greek Grammar, 372. For the dative of sphere, see Wallace, Greek Grammar, 153–55.
8 Cranfield, Romans, 337.
9 Wilckens, Römer, 2:70; he uses Machtsphäre.
10 Murray, Romans, 1:245.
11 Ridderbos, Paul, 103.
12 The neutral sense is based on the frequent use of σάρξ in the LXX to translate יְוָנָן, “body, flesh,” which is generally a neutral term. The Hebrew noun appears two hundred and seventy times in the OT, and in one hundred and forty-five cases it is translated in the LXX by σάρξ. Thus σάρξ is employed nearly twice as often as any other Greek word used to render יְוָנָן. See F. Baumgärtel, “σάρξ,” TDNT 7:108.
13 E. Schweizer “σάρξ,” TDNT 7:123.
14 See Murray, Romans, 1:245, n. 9.
consideration here are further, and surprisingly, defined as τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου, “the ones [passions] [which were] through the Law.” See sin’s action διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς, “through the commandment,” in 7:8.

ἐνεργεῖτο—The subject of this verb is τὰ παθήματα, “the passions.” This imperfect form of ἐνεργέω could be passive, but it is more likely middle. In the NT the middle of ἐνεργέω always has an impersonal subject (BDAG, 2). The verb means “work, be at work, be active, operate” (BDAG, 1).

ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν—For bodily “members” (not to be) presented as servile to sin, see the second textual note on 6:13 and the fourth textual note on 6:19.

eἰς τὸ καρποφόρησαι—For “bear fruit,” see the fifth textual note on 7:4. This articular infinitive with εἰς could express purpose, result, or a merging of both (see 5:20). In light of 6:21–22 and the ὡστε clause in 7:6, result is the dominant sense.

7:6 νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου—This use of νυνὶ δὲ, “but now,” to move to the believer’s present existence is comparable to its use in 6:22, as well as that of νῦν, “now,” in 6:19. See the seventh textual note on 6:19. Like the perfect κατηργήσαται (see the fourth textual note on 7:2), the aorist κατηργήθημεν in this context has a continuing force in the present time: “but now we were released from the Law.”

ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα—The aorist adverbial participle of ἀποθνῄσκω, “die,” recalls the uses of the same verb in 7:2 and in reference to Baptism in 6:2, 7, 8. The preposition ἐν with the dative could express sphere, as in 7:5, or means, as translated, “by which.” The verb κατέχω, literally, “to hold down,” has a wide range of meanings including “hold back, restrain, arrest; possess, suppress, confine; hold fast, retain, keep in mind.”¹⁵ κατειχόμεθα is an imperfect passive. The phrase assumes another pronoun that would refer to “the Law”: “after dying [to that, to the Law,] by which we were being confined.”

ὡστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς—Here ὡστε clearly conveys result¹⁶ (cf. the first textual note on 7:4). It is followed by the infinitive δουλεύειν (see the sixth textual note on 6:6) with its subject (ἡμᾶς) in the accusative, “so that we might serve as slaves.”

ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος—In the NT the abstract noun καινότης, “newness,” is used only here and in the similar construction in 6:4; see the sixth textual note on 6:4. Here πνεῦμα is almost assuredly a reference to the Holy Spirit (as in 1:4; 2:29; 5:5) and not merely the human spirit (see 1:9). For the contrasts set up here, see 2:29; 6:4; and 6:6. See further the commentary.

καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος—The noun παλαιότης, meaning “age, obsolescence” (BDAG), occurs only here in the NT, where it stands as an antonym to καινότης. Its cognate adjective, παλαιός, “old,” in 6:6 modifies the ἄνθρωπος, “man,” which was crucified with Christ. When Paul uses γράμμα, “letter,” in Romans (2:27, 29; 7:6), he “is always thinking of the legal authority,”¹⁷ that is, the requirements which the Law

¹⁵ Dunn, Romans, 365.
¹⁶ Cranfield, Romans, 339; Lenski, Romans, 454–55.
¹⁷ G. Schrenk, “γράμμα,” TDNT 1:768.
Romans 7:1–6

imposes on all those who are under it (6:14–15; see the fourth textual note and the commentary on 2:27).

Commentary

The Lordship of the Law: “Till Death Us Do Part” (7:1–4)

While a number of previous passages have provoked the discussion of Romans 7 (see “Romans 7: The Law” before this pericope), Paul returns most directly to his statement in 6:14 as he begins: “Or do you not know, brothers, for I am speaking to ones knowing the Law, that the Law is lord over the person as long as he lives?” (7:1). For the first time since 1:13, Paul addresses his hearers as “brothers” (ἀδελφοί, also in 7:4). This may signal the critical nature of what follows. He further identifies them as “ones knowing the Law” (γινώσκουσιν … νόμον). This phrase should not be viewed as “in any way restrictive” regarding the ethnicity of his audience in Rome. Paul presumes all his hearers “have experienced at least something of the effects of the law for themselves,” an assumption which supports the notion “that the bulk of the gentile converts had previously been adherents to the Jewish synagogues.”

Paul previously asserted the universal reign/lordship of sin and death (βασιλεύω in 5:14, 17, 21; κυριεύω in 6:9, 14). Now he adds: “The Law is lord over [ὁ νόμος κυριεύει] the person as long as he lives” (7:1). Albeit briefly, Paul has also established a connection between the Law and sin (e.g., 3:20; 5:20; 6:14; cf. 4:15; 5:13), and he now turns to spell out the relationship which exists between them.

Paul proceeds by presenting this illustration (7:2–3):

For the married woman has been and remains bound to her living husband by the Law. But if the husband should die, she has been released and stands free from the Law of the husband. Consequently then, while the husband is living, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another man.

Legal pronouncements similar to these could certainly have been drawn from other systems of law or even “the idea of law in general.” Yet Paul’s authoritative source is clearly the Mosaic Torah. Particularly in contrast to Roman law, Paul does not include any possibility that the woman could divorce her husband, and he envisions the woman being freed immediately upon the death of her hus-

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18 This section is adapted from Middendorf, The “I” in the Storm, 61–71.
19 Murray, Romans, 1:240.
20 Dunn, Romans, 372.
21 Dunn, Romans, 359. This buttresses the picture of the letter’s recipients drawn in this commentary’s introduction; see “Setting the Stage: Author and Addressees.”
22 Robinson, Wrestling with Romans, 80, concludes that Paul “can postpone a thorough reckoning with the law and its status no longer.”
23 Newman and Nida, A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Romans, 128. Sanday and Headlam, Romans, 172, attribute this to law in general since what follows is based upon “an obvious axiom of political justice—that death clears all scores.”
band.²⁴ Paul’s scenario agrees with Deut 24:1–4, which only speaks of a man divorcing his wife (not vice versa), and she is freed from her subsequent remarriage as soon as the husband dies (Deut 24:3).²⁵ Paul writes similarly elsewhere: “A woman is bound as long as her husband is alive. But if the husband should fall asleep, she is free to marry whomever she wants, only in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39).²⁶

The propriety of Paul’s analogy has been much assailed.²⁷ “But all these difficulties fall away as soon as one gives up the thought of an allegorical connection between 7:2–3 and 7:4.”²⁸ If the verses are read like an illustration or parable with one tertium comparationis (point of comparison), Paul’s point is readily understood: “the occurrence of a death effects a decisive change in respect of relationship to the law.”²⁹ Job makes a comparable point about death liberating prisoners and slaves from the dominion of their current human overlords: in the grave “the prisoners are at ease together; they do not hear the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the slave is free from his master” (Job 3:18–19). In Paul’s comparison, the Law is like a husband in exercising a lordship (Rom 7:1), but he in no way implies that the Law has died. Such a thought would surely have been incomprehensible to Paul and is refuted by Jesus (Mt 5:17–19).³⁰ Instead, Paul’s addressees, who stand analogous to the wife, have died.

The application Paul makes from his statement in 7:1, as illustrated in 7:2–3, is this: “for this reason, my brothers, you, you also were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ in order that you might belong to another, to the One who was raised from [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God”

²⁴ According to Roman law, either partner could end the marriage. In addition, when a husband died, the wife was obligated to mourn and remain unmarried for twelve months or forfeit anything which was supposed to come to her from her deceased husband. See Corbett, _The Roman Law of Marriage_, 249, cited by Dunn, _Romans_, 359–60; see also Barrett, _Romans_, 135–36.

²⁵ However, Deut 24:1–4 does not command, encourage, or condone divorce. Deut 24:1–4 is a long conditional clause (“when …”) in which God foresees that divorce will take place (sadly, even among his people), but the intent of the passage is to limit the damage done to the divorced woman. The only command is the prohibition against the former husband remarrying her (Deut 24:4). See the explanation of Deut 24:1–4 in the context of the exposition of Mt 19:7–9 in Gibbs, _Matthew 11:2–20:34_, 951–53.

²⁶ For this translation and for the provision of remarriage “in the Lord” in 1 Cor 7:39, see Lockwood, _1 Corinthians_, 265–67. For Paul’s general prohibition against divorce in 1 Cor 7:10–11, see Lockwood, _1 Corinthians_, 237–39. For the apostle’s treatment of mixed marriages and desertion in 1 Cor 7:12–16, see Lockwood, _1 Corinthians_, 240–44.

²⁷ Little, “Paul’s Use of Analogy: A Structural Analysis of Romans 7:1–6,” 87, concludes that “viewed as analogy or allegory, this section, if not a failure, certainly limps very badly”; see also Dodd, _Romans_, 100–3.

²⁸ Kümmel, _Römer 7_, 41.

²⁹ Cranfield, _Romans_, 335; he believes that this “is confirmed by the fact that v. 4 is introduced by ὥστε [‘for this reason’].”

³⁰ Nygren, _Romans_, 272, notes: “To Paul there can be no thought of the law dying.” For the eternal truth of the Law, see, for example, Deut 12:28; Pss 19:9 (MT 19:10); 119:44, 142, 160. See also Paul’s affirmations in Rom 3:31; 7:12.
(7:4). To those who had been under the lordship of the Law (7:1), which confirmed and sealed their bondage to sin, Paul states, “You, you also were put to death” (ὑμεῖς ἐθανατώθητε). The aorist passive verb is a divine passive which emphasizes that the past death of the Christian is God’s doing. Rather than a reference to physical death, which serves in the illustration of 7:3, “put to death” in 7:4 must be interpreted in line with the baptized believer’s death to sin with Christ referred to eight times in 6:2–8. Just as “there is a death which liberates from the lordship of sin (6:9–10, 18); so there is a death which liberates from the lordship of the law.”

The manner in which Paul draws his conclusion in 7:4 points “unmistakably” to Baptism. Paul states that the baptized have died “through the body of Christ” (διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 7:4; see 6:3–4). This is comparable to the language of incorporation into Christ’s body, which the Spirit accomplishes in Baptism (1 Cor 12:13). Those who have been baptized into Christ Jesus are members of his body (Rom 12:4–5; Eph 4:4–5). Here “through the body of Christ” clearly means through baptismal union with Christ “in his bodily crucifixion.”

Similarly, other passages emphasize the redemption accomplished for us by Christ’s death in his “body” (σῶμα, e.g., Col 1:22; Heb 10:5, 10; 1 Pet 2:24). Our baptismal death “through the body of Christ” (Rom 7:4) is the same as being crucified and buried with Christ in 6:4 and 6:6. In Rom 6:1–11 our Baptism into Christ ends sin’s rule over us; now in 7:1–6 the same baptismal death with Christ overcomes the Law’s lordship over us.

What does our resulting freedom from the Law entail? It is certainly not the abrogation of the Law (3:31; cf. 7:12). Neither does Paul say the Law has died; rather, it is the Christian who has died with Christ in Baptism. As a result, those who were baptized are free from the Law’s dominion and demands (see Rom 3:19–20; 4:15; 6:6; Gal 3:10). Furthermore, this freedom is directed toward a positive end: “that we might bear fruit to God” (Rom 7:4), just as Paul stated in chapter 6 with “fruit for sanctification” (6:22). In sum, the interrelationship between the first four verses of chapter 7 is clear: The law binds a person only so long as he or she lives (7:1), so a married woman is bound to her husband only so long as he lives (7:2–3). Likewise, the Christian who has been put to death with Christ and raised to belong to him is freed from the Law’s confinement and ownership (7:4).

32 Käsemann, Romans, 188. See further the excursus “Baptism in Paul” after the commentary on 6:1–11.
33 Dunn, Romans, 369; he adds that the phrase is linked with “the exposition two or three paragraphs earlier (6:3–6).”
The Believer and the Law: “Before” and “After” (7:5–6)

In light of 7:4, both 7:5 and 7:6 proceed to contrast the “before” and the “after,” respectively, of the believer (cf. 6:17–22).

First, Paul depicts our condition “before”: “for when we were in [the realm of] the flesh, the passions of the sins, which [passions] were through the Law, were at work in our bodily members with the result that we produced fruit [leading] to death” (7:5). Before “you” were put to death to the Law (7:4), Paul describes “we” as “in the flesh” (σάρξ, 7:5). Paul’s use of “flesh” covers quite a range of meanings (see the textual note). A more negative tone is evident already in 2:28; 3:20; and 6:19. The instance here in 7:5 “is the first occasion in this epistle in which the word ‘flesh’ is used in its full depreciatory ethical sense.”

“In the flesh” describes the Christians’ past in terms of “having the basic direction of their lives determined and controlled by their fallen nature.”

At that time, “the passions of the sins” (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν) were active “in our bodily members” (ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν), which were exploited for the purpose of evil. In some passages “bodily members” (μέλη) are neutral in that they can be harnessed for either good or wickedness (6:13, 19), but here, as in 7:23, they are instruments of iniquity. The noun rendered as “passions” (παθήματα) typically refers to sufferings, but here it is explicitly linked with “sins.” As Dunn concludes: “A life ruled by or lived chiefly on the level of the παθήματα [‘passions’] is almost certain to be a tool manipulated by sin.”

The portrayal of the sinful passions as those which were through the Law (τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου) and “were at work in our bodily members” (ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν) indicates that the Law has an integral connection with the passions of sins and a life lived in the flesh. Such a statement would have shocked those who view their performance of “works of the Law” (ἔργα νόμου, 3:20, 28) as grounds for boasting (e.g., 2:17, 23; 3:27–28; 9:30–10:5). In contrast to their view of the Law’s purpose and function, Paul has already stated that the Law is able to be manipulated in service to sin, wrath, and death (2:12; 3:20; 4:15; 5:13, 20). He has charged those who “rely upon the Law and … boast in God” (2:17) with transgressing the divine Law (2:12–19; cf. 5:20), which elicits its wrath from God (4:15).

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35 Paul switches between the first and the second person plural, as also in 6:14–16; 8:11–16; 13:11–14.
36 Murray, Romans, 1:244. See “flesh” (σάρξ) in this same sense later in 7:18, 25; 8:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13; 13:14.
37 Cranfield, Romans, 337.
38 See the second textual note on 7:5.
39 Dunn, Romans, 364. In its discussion of original sin, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession cites 1 Cor 2:14 and Rom 7:5, which “mentions lust at work in our members and bringing forth evil fruit,” in order to conclude that “the wise reader will easily be able to see that when the fear of God and faith are lacking, this is not merely actual guilt but an abiding deficiency in an unrenewed human nature” (Ap II 30–31).
For Paul, “boasting in the Law” (2:23) and relying on “circumcision … in flesh” (ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομῆ, 2:28) are to be characterized as existing “in [the realm of] the flesh” (ἐν τῇ σαρκί, 7:5; see also Gal 6:13; Phil 3:3–4). Theodoret explains:

Paul teaches us that before grace came, while we were still under the law, we suffered ever more serious attacks of sin because, although the law showed us what it was we should be doing, it did not give us any help in doing it.

Paul draws the same conclusion that he did in 6:21 regarding the outcome of such a life: “we produced fruit [leading] to death” (7:5). “Death is personified and viewed as a master to whom we bring forth fruit, that is to say, to whom we render service” as long as we are “in [the realm of] the flesh” (7:5). Furthermore, death itself also becomes the resulting fruit or outcome (see 6:21, 23). As in 5:20–21, Paul has now assembled three entities together which he contends interact with one another: passions of sins energized by the Law result in death. A fuller explanation follows in 7:7–13.

But first, 7:6 provides a description of the tremendous liberation from the Law which comes through the Holy Spirit’s work in Baptism: “but now we were released from the Law, after dying [to that] by which we were being confined” (7:6). As in 6:22, “but now” (νυνὶ δέ) moves from the prior existence “before” to the baptized believer’s “after” (cf. 3:21). Paul reaffirms that “we were released from the Law” by a “dying” (ἀποθανόντες) to the Law (cf. “you were put to death to the Law” in 7:4). This is the point of comparison with the marriage illustration in 7:2–3. The Law is lord of us (7:1) and, like sin and death, confines us in bondage until our own death with Christ takes place in Baptism (6:2–4; see also Gal 3:23–29; Col 2:11–13).

“So that” (ὥστε, Rom 7:6) introduces the “actual and assured result” of this baptismal death. It is “so that we might serve as slaves in [the] renewal of the Spirit and not in [the] oldness of [the] letter” (7:6). Our release from the confinement of the Law “is not into an anarchic or self-chosen freedom, but into a different kind of slavery and service—to God.”²⁴ The verb (δουλεύειν) rendered as “serve as slaves” continues the slavery metaphor of Romans 6 and initially expresses the positive side already articulated with the verb “enslave” (δουλίζω) in 6:18, 22 and adjective δουλος, “slavish,” in 6:19.⁴⁵ Lenski summarizes the connection with 7:6 in this way: “The fact that we are still slaying as

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⁴⁰ Theodoret of Cyrus, Interpretation of the Letter to the Romans (Bray, Romans, ACCS NT 6:179).
⁴¹ Murray, Romans, 1:245.
⁴² Matera, Romans, 171, describes this as “bearing fruit that would lead to death.” His emphasis on outcome is laudable, but the notion of “would” obscures the certain result.
⁴³ Murray, Romans, 1:246, n. 11; as also in Rom 15:19; Phil 1:13.
⁴⁴ Dunn, Romans, 366.
⁴⁵ See the commentary on 6:18, 19, and 22. See also Paul’s self-designation as “a slave of Christ Jesus” (δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ) in 1:1.
slaves we have seen in 6:16–22, also that this is a voluntary slavery of emancipated slaves in expectation, not of death, but of life everlasting, thus a joyous, blessed slavery.\footnote{46}

Serving “in [the] renewal of the Spirit” (ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος, 7:6) is the opposite of slavery “in [the realm of] the flesh” in 7:5. Paul’s only other use of “newness, renewal” (καινότης) is in 6:4. The sense of life’s “renewal” through Baptism discussed in the commentary on 6:4 is now explicitly linked with the “Spirit.” Here πνεύμα refers to “the Holy Spirit of God, who originates and penetrates the Christian life”\footnote{47} (as in Rom 5:5; 8:9–15; Gal 3:1–14). The presence of πνεύμα here also refutes the assertion that the Spirit is completely absent from Romans 7.\footnote{48}

Another phrase that is the opposite of “in [the] renewal of the Spirit” expresses the negative side of our slavery “before”: it was “in [the] oldness of [the] letter” (παλαιότητι γράμματος, 7:6). This phrase is certainly “a reference to the law. … But not the law as such.”\footnote{49} The noun “oldness” (παλαιότης) occurs only here in the NT, but it is undoubtedly linked with its related adjective in 6:6, where “our old person/man” (ὁ παλαιός ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος) denotes our old sinful self who was crucified with Christ in Baptism. It seems, then, that “[the] oldness of [the] letter” denotes the lordship of the Law (7:1) and the prescriptive authority it exerts over those who strive to live outwardly by the letter of the Law and apart from the Spirit. This is the same contrast set up in regard to circumcision in 2:27–29, where Paul spoke of the “circumcision” that is “of [the] heart, in Spirit not in written letter” (περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, 2:29; see the commentary on 2:27–29).

**The Relationship of Romans 7:1–6 to Romans 7:7–25 and Romans 8:1–11**

The remainder of Romans 7 “is nearly always regarded as an excursus.”\footnote{50} Yet such an evaluation fails to grasp how 7:7–25 flows directly out of the preceding context. In 7:1–6, Paul describes how those who used to live under the lordship of the Law (7:1) and in the realm of the flesh (7:5) “were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ” (7:4). In so doing, he explicitly associates the Law with “the passions of the sins” (7:5). He immediately proceeds to elaborate on that startling thought in 7:7 and does so throughout 7:7–25.

Furthermore 7:5–6, at least in some manner, provides the framework for the discussion to follow. One view is that “verse 5 describes the pre-Christian

\footnotesize{46} Lenski, *Romans*, 455.


\footnotesize{48} As charged by Robinson, *The Body*, 84; Leenhardt, *Romans*, 194.

\footnotesize{49} Dunn, *Romans*, 373.

experience, and has its parallel in 7.7–25; verse 6 describes the present life of faith under the leadership of God’s Spirit, and has its parallel in 8.1–11.”

The other view proposes that 7:5 combines with 7:7–13 to describe “what the Christian was before”; 7:6 and 7:14–25 then depict “what the Christian is now.” Which of these two options provides the best understanding of Romans 7 will be considered as Paul progresses.

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51 Newman and Nida, A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Romans, 130; similarly, Leenhardt, Romans, 179; Lambrecht, The Wretched “I” and Its Liberation, 34; Bornkamm, Early Christian Experience, 88; Bultmann, The Old and New Man in the Letters of Paul, 41–42; even Dunn, Romans, 358, who supports the view that 7:14–25 is a description of the Christian life, asserts that “7:5 in effect traces the course of the discussion in 7:7–25: 7:5a (vv 14–25), 7:5b (vv 7–13), 7:5c (vv 10–11, 13, 24). Likewise 7:6 foreshadows the course of chap. 8: 7:6a (8:1–3); 7:6b (8:4 ff.).”

52 Nygren, Romans, 275–76; so also Espy, “Paul’s ‘Robust Conscience’ Re-examined,” 167.