

1. **Introduction:** To earn righteousness, the Law of Moses requires perfect obedience. No human can do that. The necessity of full-time perfection means that obedience to the Law has never an option by which anyone could achieve salvation.
  - What, then is the value of the Law of Moses? It reveals sin (3:20), condemns sinners (3:19), identifies transgressing the Law as sin (4:15), brings wrath for disobedience (4:15), increases awareness of trespass (5:20), but it does not and cannot bring about righteousness.
  - The Law is not defective, but fallen humans are. They are unable to perfectly obey.
  - Because of fallen human-defects, the Law cannot enable anyone to become righteous. God graciously provided an alternative, a righteousness apart from the Law.
  - As seen later, the provision of the “righteousness apart from the Law” did not violate the Law of Moses. Actions, to make righteousness apart from the Law possible, were done in a manner consistent with the Law of Moses. God keeps His own Law.
  - Righteousness Apart From the Law: God made “righteousness apart from the Law” possible through the atoning life and death of the incarnate God-Man, Jesus.
  - Jesus is the God-approved legal substitute for all who will believe in Him. As their legal substitute, Jesus vicariously earned righteousness by perfectly obeying the Law during His incarnate life. Jesus’ earned righteousness is credited to those who believe.
  - The righteousness, earned by Jesus and credited to each one who believes, was “apart from the Law” in the sense that recipients were not personally required to perfectly obey the Law. Jesus perfectly obeyed the Law on their behalf, and they gained positional righteousness.
  - Believer’s do not bypass or violate the Law of Moses. Jesus vicariously satisfied every nuance of the Law on behalf of those who, in faith, would believe.
  - Jesus’ vicarious death on the cross paid the death penalty due the sins of those who believe. So, through Jesus’ vicarious life and death, believers receive positional righteousness plus pardon from the penalty due their sins, apart from the requirement that they satisfy the Law’s demands.
  - Jesus satisfies the Law’s demands for all who believe, giving them positional righteousness and pardon from the death penalty due sin.
2. **Does the Law Apply to Believers:** Paul follows up his “*not under law but under grace*” statement by answering the question, “Does God’s Law apply to believers, and if so, how?”
  - He begins with an analogy to marriage. It is not perfect, but it makes the point that though formerly “married” to the Law, believers were freed by Jesus’ death from that marriage..

- In 7:1, Paul cites the legal principle that the Law is binding on a person only in mortal life. In 7:2-3, he gives the illustration that a marriage contract is valid only as long as both parties live, since the death of one party invalidates the marriage contract.
  - In 7:4, he speaks of the Law, pointing out that it is only binds the living. In 7:5-6, he draws an important conclusion when he says, believers, being now spiritually “in Christ,” were released from the Law by His death.
  - In chapter 6, Paul defended “grace” against the claim that free grace implies a person can sin without penalty. In chapter 7, he defends the Law from the claim that, since believers are dead to the Law (7:4), and under grace not Law (6:4), the Law is of no value and should be ignored.
3. **Romans 7:1-6:** *Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? <sup>2</sup> For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. <sup>3</sup> Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress. <sup>4</sup> Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup> For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup> But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.*
- “In Adam,” all people were physically present as his future progeny. All believers are spiritually present “in Christ” through spiritual union. Spiritual union with Christ is not time-limited. Thus, they were spiritually present in Christ as He died on the cross.
  - In the death of Christ, believers (in “union with Christ”) died to their obligations to the Law making it possible for them to be slaves to righteousness through the Holy Spirit.
  - Being spiritually present in Christ, during the vicarious death of Jesus’ human nature, ended believers’ obligation of perfect obedience to the old way of the written Law. Jesus’ incarnate life and death provided a new way to obtain righteousness, a way that was “apart from the law.”
4. **Paul’s Defense Against the Claim “the Law is Useless to Believers:”** The claim is that, since believers are dead to the Law (7:4), and not under the Law but under grace (6:4), the Law is of no value to believers and should be ignored. This notion ignores the truth that God’s moral law is an expression of His eternal character. The Law of Moses is but a portion of the eternal moral law.

- Portions of God's eternal moral law are revealed in God's interactions with people (like dealing with Adam and Eve's sin, or with the wicked before Noah's flood, or with Pharaoh through Moses, or with David after his sin with Bathsheba, etc.)
  - After God brought Israel from Egyptian slavery, He gave them the Law through Moses. The Law given through Moses was more complete than anything previously revealed but remains a limited expression of God's eternal moral law.
  - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus surprised His listeners by giving a more complete meaning to various parts of the Law of Moses. A full expression of God's moral Law would involve and require revealing all God's infinite moral character.
  - Paul's defense of the Law of Moses has two objectives: (1.) To show that critics are wrong. (2.) To show that the Law continues to have a proper place in a believer's life.
  - When Paul says believers died to the Law, he means, that "in Christ" they died to the requirement of perfect obedience to the Law to obtain legal righteousness. He does not mean a believer is no longer required to obey God's moral law.
  - Human inability (not deficiencies in the Law) made it impossible for people to achieve salvation through perfect obedience to the Law. For that reason, at the right time, God provided a way to achieve righteousness apart from perfectly obeying the Law.
  - God's new way for people to obtain righteousness shifts the burden of perfect obedience from everyone to the one person, Jesus of Nazareth, the God-Man. As the God-Man, He could accomplish what no mere man could do. He made it possible to gain righteousness apart from perfect obedience of the Law of Moses.
5. **One Person but Two Natures:** A being, who is "one person," has a single "I" that controls and utilizes one or more natures. Humans have one nature controlled and utilized by one "I."
- The one person, Jesus, the God-Man, has two natures, one human the other divine, both controlled and utilized by His divine "I." What are the implications of that truth?
  - His "I" controls a nature (one at a time) so that the impetus for what is thought, said, or done originates in His "I" and is accomplished by one of His natures.
  - Jesus' two natures were distinct, did not conflict or mix. Since both were controlled by the one divine "I," He could switch between His human and His divine nature as seen in several episodes recorded in Scripture. For example: Once in a boat, He was asleep in His human nature. A violent storm arose and frightened the disciples who feared they were about to sink. They woke Jesus from His human-nature sleep. Hearing the problem, Jesus used His divine nature to calm the storm. He said to the storm, "*peace be still*" and the wind and water became still and quiet.

- Using His human nature, Jesus sympathized with Mary and Martha. Then using His divine nature, He, in the presence of many people, raised their brother, Lazarus, from the dead by calling him from the grave with the command “**Lazarus, come out!**”
  - Jesus, as God-Man, did everything necessary for people to be redeemed.
6. **The Law and Believers:** In 6:14, Paul says believers are “*not under the law, but under grace.*” In 7:4, he says believers “*have died to the law,*” and in 7:6 that believers are “*released from the Law.*” Do these statements mean believers are free from obedience to God’s moral Law? No! Then what do the statements mean?
- God’s Law was given through Moses for the purpose of revealing and controlling the bad effects of people’s sin nature. How, then, does the Law apply to regenerated, justified believers who, though they continue to have a sin-nature, have been given a new spiritual nature, and are being sanctified?
  - Paul says the Law is holy, righteous, and good. When the Law was given to Israel, it consisted of three categories – civil, ceremonial, and moral. The first two categories applied to physical Israel and are not applicable to believers.
  - Every believer is required to obey the moral Law, not because salvation depends on it, but in cooperation with the Holy Spirit’s work of sanctification (transforming believers into an image of God’s holy, righteous moral nature.
  - A believer’s “sin-nature” and their “redeemed spiritual nature” constantly battle for supremacy within the believer.
7. **Next:** Begin with Romans 7:7.