

ROMANS CHAPTER 7

Torah, the Flesh, the Inner Man, and the Deliverance Found in Messiah

Romans Chapter 7 is one of the most debated and frequently misunderstood passages in all of Sha'ul's writings. Much confusion has developed because this chapter has often been read through a framework that separates Torah from righteousness, or favor from obedience. However, when Romans 7 is read within the larger argument Sha'ul has been building, a very different picture emerges. Romans 5 revealed the contrast between Adam and Messiah. Romans 6 revealed that those who belong to Messiah have died to the dominion of sin and have been raised into a new life of righteousness.

Romans 7 now addresses the tension between two realities: The Torah of YaHuWaH is righteous and good. The human flesh, corrupted by sin, struggles against that righteousness. The problem is not YaHuWaH's instruction. The problem is the fallen human condition.

Romans 7 is not a chapter about Torah being abolished. It is a chapter revealing mankind's inability to produce righteousness apart from the transforming work of YaHuWaH through His Spirit.

The Historical and Covenant Setting of Romans 7

To understand Romans 7, we must remember the audience Sha'ul is addressing. The assembly in Rome included people from among Yisra'El and people from among the nations who had been brought near through Messiah. Questions concerning Torah were central. Was Torah sinful? Was Torah the cause of death? Was Torah replaced? Was the problem with the covenant instructions given through Mosheh? Sha'ul answers these questions by defending Torah while exposing the weakness of mankind. This follows the pattern established throughout Scripture. YaHuWaH gives what is good. Mankind corrupts what is good. The solution is not removing the good gift. The solution is transforming the heart.

The Torah Has Authority Over a Person While They Live

Sha'ul begins:

"Or do you not know, brothers—for I speak to those knowing Torah—that the Torah rules over a man as long as he lives?" - Romiyim (Romans) 7:1

Sha'ul begins by speaking to those who know Torah. This indicates that his argument is built upon covenant understanding.

He uses an illustration from marriage:

"For the married woman has been bound by Torah to the living husband. But if the husband dies, she is released from the Torah concerning her husband." - Romiyim (Romans) 7:2

The purpose of this illustration is not to declare Torah dead. Rather, Sha'ul is explaining a change in relationship. Death changes legal obligations. The principle is simple: A covenant relationship has defined responsibilities. When circumstances change, the relationship is understood differently.

Dying to the Former Master

Sha'ul applies the illustration:

"So then, my brothers, you also were put to death to the Torah through the body of Messiah, to become another's—the One who was raised from the dead—so that we should bear fruit to Elohim." - Romiyim (Romans) 7:4

This verse requires careful attention. Sha'ul is not saying believers died to YaHuWaH's instruction. He is explaining that believers died to the former relationship with sin and condemnation. The phrase "through the body of Messiah" points to identification with Yahusha's death. The old identity, the identity enslaved to sin, has died. The purpose is clearly stated: **"So that we should bear fruit to Elohim."** The goal is not freedom from righteousness. The goal is fruitfulness.

The Torah Is Not Sin

Sha'ul asks:

"What shall we say then? Is the Torah sin? Let it not be!" - Romiyim (Romans) 7:7

This question reveals that some were misunderstanding his teaching. If sin produces death and Torah reveals sin, does that mean Torah is the problem? Sha'ul answers: Absolutely not.

Then he says:

"On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through Torah." - Romiyim (Romans) 7:7

This is one of the strongest statements Sha'ul makes about the purpose of Torah. Torah reveals. Torah exposes. Torah identifies what is contrary to YaHuWaH's character. The Hebrew concept of Torah is **instruction** or **teaching**. The root **arah** (ירה) means to point, direct, or instruct. Torah is not merely a legal code designed to restrict mankind. It is divine instruction showing the path of life.

The Tenth Commandment and the Exposure of the Heart

Sha'ul specifically mentions:

"For I would not have known coveting if the Torah had not said, 'You shall not covet.'" - Romiyim (Romans) 7:7

Notice the command Sha'ul chooses. He does not choose murder. He does not choose theft. He chooses coveting. Why? Because coveting reveals the heart. A person can outwardly appear righteous while inwardly desiring what belongs to another. This connects directly to Yahusha's teaching. He revealed that righteousness is not merely external behavior. The heart matters. YaHuWaH's Torah reaches inward.

Sin Uses What Is Good for Destruction

Sha'ul writes:

"So that the Torah truly is set-apart, and the command set-apart, and righteous, and good." - Romiyim (Romans) 7:12

This is one of the clearest statements Sha'ul makes concerning Torah. Torah is: Set-apart. Righteous. Good. The problem is not Torah. The problem is sin. Sha'ul explains that sin uses the commandment as an opportunity to produce rebellion. This follows the pattern of Gan Eden. YaHuWaH gave a command. The adversary used that command to tempt mankind. The command was not evil. The rebellion was evil.

The Struggle Within Mankind

Sha'ul writes:

"For we know that the Torah is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold under sin." - Romiyim (Romans) 7:14

Here Sha'ul introduces the conflict between flesh and spirit. The Hebrew understanding of flesh, **basar** (בשר), can represent human weakness and mortality. Flesh itself is not evil. Mankind was created with physical bodies. The problem is the **corrupted inclination** (*the internal bend of one's heart*) of mankind after the fall.

The Hebrew Scriptures describe this struggle:

"The inclination of the heart of man is evil from his youth." - Bereshith (Genesis) 8:21

The problem is not the body. The problem is the heart affected by sin.

The Inner Man Desires Torah

Sha'ul says:

"For I delight in the Torah of Elohim according to the inward man." - Romiyim (Romans) 7:22

This verse is extremely important. Sha'ul says the inner man delights in Torah. If Torah were abolished, this statement would make no sense. The renewed person desires the ways of YaHuWaH.

This echoes Psalms:

"I delight to do Your pleasure, O my Elohim, and Your Torah is within my inward parts." - Tehillim (Psalms) 40:8

The problem is not that the righteous person hates Torah. The problem is that the flesh resists what the renewed heart desires.

The War Between Two Principles

Sha'ul describes:

"But I see another Torah in my members, battling against the Torah of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the Torah of sin which is in my members." - Romiyim (Romans) 7:23

The word "Torah" here means a governing principle or rule. Sha'ul is describing two opposing influences. The mind is renewed toward YaHuWaH's ways. The flesh is influenced by sin. This is not a conflict between Torah versus no Torah. It is a conflict between YaHuWaH's righteous instruction versus the sinful nature of mankind.

The Cry for Deliverance

Sha'ul reaches the point of desperation:

"Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" - Romiyim (Romans) 7:24

This is the cry of mankind under the weight of sin. The human being knows what is right. The human being desires what is right. Yet human strength alone cannot overcome the power of sin. This is why the promise of the renewed covenant was necessary. YaHuWaH promised not merely external instruction but internal transformation.

The Answer: Messiah Yahusha

Sha'ul immediately responds:

"Thanks to Elohim, through Yahusha Messiah our Master!" - Romiyim (Romans) 7:25

The answer is not removing Torah. The answer is Messiah. The answer is not lowering YaHuWaH's standard. The answer is transformation. Through Messiah, YaHuWaH provides what mankind lacked: A renewed heart. A restored relationship. The power to walk faithfully.

Romans 7 and the Restoration of the Whole House of Yisra'El

Romans 7 connects deeply with the prophetic restoration of Yisra'El. The prophets did not proclaim a future where YaHuWaH would eliminate His Torah. They proclaimed a future where His people would finally walk according to it.

Ezekiel declared:

"And I shall put My Spirit within you and you shall come to be, and I shall cause you to walk in My laws and guard My right-rulings and shall do them." - Yehezq'el (Ezekiel) 36:27

The problem was never that YaHuWaH's instructions were too difficult or defective. The problem was the human heart (the internal bend). The restoration promised by YaHuWaH is the circumcision of the heart.

Conclusion of Romans Chapter 7

Romans 7 reveals the true battle: The battle is not between favor and Torah. The battle is between sin and righteousness. The Torah is righteous. The commandment is good. The problem is mankind's fallen nature. The redeemed person now has a renewed desire to walk in YaHuWaH's ways, yet still experiences the struggle against the flesh. This tension prepares the way for the great declaration of Romans 8: There is no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yahusha. The answer to mankind's struggle is not abandonment of YaHuWaH's instruction. The answer is the Spirit of YaHuWaH empowering His people to become what He always intended them to be. Romans 7 brings mankind to the point where self-effort ends. Romans 8 will reveal the power of the Spirit who accomplishes restoration.

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