

## THE GOSPEL IN THE COURT OF LAW

**Rom 7:9** *For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

**Rom 7:10** *And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*

**Rom 7:11** *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

In the beginning, Adam did not have the Law of God because he knew no sin. When he sinned, however, humans had to live by the Law. The Law of God represents the righteousness and holiness of God. Just as the laws of a country cannot be changed to accommodate any individual or group, the Law of God does not change for anyone. The Law shows no mercy – it was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, even if it was your last tooth. It is this law, which is blind, exacting and merciless which was given on Mount Sinai to Moses. “And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” (Exodus 19:18). With the Law came lawyers, trials and judgement. What used to be ignored before, was now judged according to the Law. There was a man who was in the habit of gathering sticks every day. “And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation” (Numbers 15:33). Sadly, this habit led to his death because the Law showed no favor or mercy. “And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses” (Numbers 15:36). No wonder Paul calls the Law the “ministration of death”.

**2Cor 3:7** *But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:*

Once we have understood the seriousness of the Law, we must next understand that the Law desperately points to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For 1500 years the Law arrested, tried, condemned and killed people. No one was able to keep the entire Law – there was always one or two or more commands broken, and to break one command is to be guilty of breaking all. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). One day, thank God, the Word was made flesh. The Law was born on Sinai with fear and trembling, but the Word was made flesh in Bethlehem in love, peace and mercy. There was no thunder and lightning at Bethlehem – only angels singing, shepherds and wise men worshipping. What a contrast between Sinai and Bethlehem! Interestingly, the

Law rejoiced at the birth of the Word made flesh because only he could atone and appease the demands of the Law. “ And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). For the Law to finish its mission, it must somehow accuse Jesus, arrest him and condemn him to death. This was the only way for mercy to enter the Law. Remember the Law never passes away, it must be fulfilled, said the Lord. “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). It is for this reason that the Law sent the Chief Priest and Pharisees to arrest Jesus.

*Mat 26:59* Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

*Act 23:14* And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

Both in the case of the Lord and the apostle Paul the Law sent Jews to arrest the Gospel. Thank God for the day the Law arrests and condemns the Gospel because that is the day the curse of the Law is nailed to the Cross of Jesus. As long as the Law accuses, arrests and condemns individuals, there is no escaping but the moment the Law turns its attention to the Gospel, we will be delivered. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).

A third party in all of this is the world which was represented by the Romans. Note that both in the case of the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul, the Romans were the reluctant third party. See how uncomfortable Pilate was; see how hesitant and Festus were! “Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man” (Luke 23:4). “But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him” (Acts 25:25). It is a good thing the Law did not and will not allow the world to let the Gospel escape: the Gospel must be brought to trial and then it will receive the judgement of the Law on our behalf so we can be set free. Yes, Jesus has done no wrong, none could lay a sin at his foot and yet he accepted the sentence of death for us. The Gospel in the court is a very powerful thing: it needs no lawyers. Who wants to arrest the Gospel and sit to judge it? Ask Pilate and Festus! They were glad the trial was over quickly. Pilate, Festus, Felix, Agrippa – never forgot the day they tried the Gospel in court. They ended up being the ones tried. “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time;

when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). But that was what it took for the Law to help us – bring the Gospel to the court of trial.

Every day the Gospel is in a courtroom somewhere in the world. You and I may be taken to court for the Gospel. And what is the crime of the Gospel? Disturbing the peace, you say? Which peace? We are disturbing the world so that it can have peace with Jesus. A peace without the Gospel is enmity with God. If we think to relax and ignore the souls of people, the Law will send people to arrest us. The Law will find some Jews who will take an oath to kill us, God forbid. And when we are arrested and testify, we will satisfy the demands of the Law.

***2Co 5:18** And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

***2Co 5:19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*