

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

From Heaven, or of Men?

Romans 8:1-4: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Last week, 2 of the 3 laws referred to in Romans 8:1-4 were discussed: "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" and "the law of sin and death." Today, let's look at the third law, which is introduced thus: "For what the law could not do..." After closely reading Romans 7, it is clear this phrase refers to the "law of Moses." There are two reasons it is vital to understand these three laws. One reason is that many religious people go back to the "law of Moses" to justify teachings and practices they want to hold to. A few examples are: keeping the Sabbath day; using instrumental music in worship; "holy days," etc. But, those who want to hold to parts of the old law are obligated to keep the whole law – animal sacrifices, going to Jerusalem 3 times a year, etc. Romans 8:1-4 lets us know the "law of Moses" cannot free us from the "law of sin and death."

Now, let's go to Hebrews 10:1,4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect...For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." In contrast, by the sacrifice of Jesus, sins will be remembered no more, if one obeys God's commands for salvation. Believers are told, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38); "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins..." (Acts 22:16). God adds the saved to the church, "...And the Lord added to the church daily those that were saved" (Acts 2:47,ASV). The "law of Moses," limited to the Israelite people, and in force for a limited time, served the purpose of a schoolmaster, "to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:23, 24). Truly, the "good news" is that the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" makes us free from the "law of sin and death"! A special graphic has been prepared to clearly illustrate these three laws. For your free copy, write to the Chapel Hill church of Christ at 234 Chapel Dr., Gallipolis OH 45631.