

The Law

by Carl Manthey Zorn

*Translated by: John R. Gensmer and Craig A. Engel
(the translation begins on page 71)*

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Prof. John Brug*

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The Quality of God's Law

Disposition II. D.

When we speak concerning the "quality" of God's Law it so happens in the meaning that we want to know what the New Testament answers concerning this question: "Is the law, which God gave to the Children of Israel through Moses, truly holy and good in each and every ordinance, whether they belong to the Moral, Ceremonial or Civil law?"

We say we want to know what the New Testament says about this question and we will be satisfied with the New Testament's answer. We are not able to get into a "justification" of a single qualification of the Mosaic Law by considering reason or the Christian conscience. It moves us to the question, but the fact is that in the Mosaic Law itself we find the single determination, which reason or the so-called Christian conscience does not find completely acceptable; however, both want to cause at the least a surprising confusion.

First of all we refer to the applicable passages to the entire Mosaic Law which we quoted in chapter six of this work, which also state the summary or true meaning of it.

Matthew 22:35-40 and the parallel Mark 12:28-34: The teacher of the law asks the Lord Jesus, "Master, which is the chief commandment in the law above all others?" It is no question and we know no one who questions that the teacher of the law had the entire Mosaic Law without restrictions in mind. This certainly shows itself in that he later named "burnt offerings and all offerings" as commandments in the law. What does the Lord Jesus now answer? Mark 12:33: "This is the chief and greatest commandment. The chief commandment before all other commandments is this: You shall love God, your Lord, with your entire heart, with your entire soul and with you entire mind. This is the chief and greatest commandment. However, the others are like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The entire Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." In this way the Lord

Jesus does not nearly separate the law of love for God and the law of love for neighbors as distinct and disposed (laws) against all the others; on the contrary he says that the entire Mosaic Law, even that from which the teacher of the law took up his question, hangs on these two laws. In this way, each and every commandment of the Mosaic Law simply points out how one shows love for God and love for his neighbor.

Luke 10:25-28: Here the teacher of the law asks the Lord Jesus, "Master, what must I do in order to inherit eternal life?" He was truly a hypocrite who held completely to the letter of the Mosaic Law. He tested the Lord Jesus with this question because the Lord Jesus had even blessed his disciples because they now saw him (Luke 10:23,24). But when the Lord Jesus dealt with him through his question on the Mosaic Law, the teacher of the law himself declared the answer was love for God and for neighbor as demanded in the law. It is already obvious that the law of love is not a commandment against the others but a the summary and the synopsis of all the commandments of the law. Then the Lord Jesus said, "You have answered correctly; if you do this, then you will live."

I Timothy 1:5: In Ephesus there were several in the Christian congregation who were deviating from the apostolic teaching just like the latter popes likewise did. These people occupied themselves with myths and endless Old Testament genealogies. Through this unimportant research, they would bring out other questions and gather the people rather than do "the work of God by faith" (that is, more than that which God wants to have done in the household of faith). Timothy should resist them. What does God want done in the household of faith? Correction of life as the Old Testament law exhibits (I Timothy 1:3,4). Titus 3:9 states the sum total, the true objective of the Old Testament Law, the law is love. This is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience and from an unblemished faith (I Timothy 1:5). Some in Ephesus had mistaken this attribute of love and turned themselves around to useless babbling, wanting to be teachers and masters of the writings, namely the

Old Testament but especially the law. However, they did not understand what they said or what they assumed (I Timothy 1:6,7). Therefore this is spoken from the law of the Old Testament (I Timothy 1:8). The meaning of this is love. One may emphasize in the Mosaic Law wherever he wants, but he would correctly emphasize: love is always demanded. Is it here spoken of all the Mosaic Law in all its parts? Indeed! It is truly stated, over against that which the Mosaic Law ransacks in its smallest parts.

In Romans 13:8-10 the Apostle speaks about the behavior of Christians towards neighbors. Christians should pay off everyone and do what they find necessary; they should remain indebted to no one. Only the debt of love remains through all of life. Concerning this no one can never say, "it is now paid off". Whoever loves the other one has fulfilled the law. The love is the continuing evidence of the fulfillment of the law. Love does nothing evil to its neighbor. All the commandments which refer to the behavior towards neighbors are summed up in these words: "You shall love your neighbor just as you love yourself". Paul points out the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth commandments of the second table and adds to them: "therefore a different command is more". What does he mean? Does he mean the fourth commandment? As far as the second table is concerned, which is in question here, he has so far not only called this but he also has been able to name so quickly as he said, "therefore a different commandment is more". He means undoubtedly that it is apparent in the Law of God concerning behavior toward a neighbor. Although he quotes only the commands of the Moral Law expressly, he has his reason therein that he speaks to Christians who no longer stand under the letter of the Old Testament Law.

We refer to Galatians 5:14. The Apostle has said before that we Christians are called to freedom, to freedom which Christ has brought us (John 8:32-36), to the freedom from "the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2; 6:14,18,22), to the freedom from the curse of the godly law (Galatians 3:13), also to the freedom from Old Testament control of the divine law (with all its provisions and

ordinances) which was given through Moses to the Children of Israel (Galatians 3:23; 4:3,6; Romans 6:14). He has warned: "watch out so that you do not give room for the freedom of the flesh but through love to this one or the other." Now he says, "All the law (in Greek: *πας νομος*) is fulfilled in one expression, in the saying: "love your neighbor as yourself." Therefore all the ordinances of the Mosaic Law which determine the behavior towards your neighbor exhibit and classify how love is to be shown to the neighbor. Whether we Christians are free from the control of these single commands or from other commands, love should discern all our behavior toward our neighbor. The living and ever-present rule and regulation for this should not be this or that Mosaic ordinance but love as for ourselves, so that what we do to others is what we wish that they would do to us (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31). Compare Tobit 4:16. Indeed, "this is the Law and the Prophets", which is truly demanded in the Law of the Old Testament (Matthew 7:12).

Let us now refer to James 2:8. James says, "if you complete the royal law according to the Scriptures: 'Love your neighbor as yourself', then you are doing well." The "royal" law is the all-prevailing law, the law which rules over and governs all commands. It has dominion over all commands. It is this (as far as this behavior toward neighbors concerning which James speaks) which comes into question: "Love your neighbor as yourself." James conveys this royal law in his writing, from Leviticus 19:18. That sums up this law, differentiating it from the behavior toward neighbors, which at most belong to the Moral Law, to which the civil laws are strictly following the Moral Law (vv. 9-18; 9,10,13b). Therefore we see here that all the commands and ordinances of the Mosaic Law (which exhibit behavior toward neighbors) have love toward neighbors as their summary.

We return to Matthew 7:12 and the parallel Luke 6:31. We have already made use of these passages in the consideration of Galatians 5:14. We emphasize once more that the passages taught here regulate love toward neighbors as what "the Law and the Prophets" demand. We see in no way

how anyone can presume to prove this (i.e. "the Law and the Prophets") covers the commands of the Moral Law but not over the commands of the Ceremonial and Civil Law, inasmuch as they decide behavior toward the neighbor. This is true especially considering the following passages: Matthew 22:35-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28 and I Timothy 1:5 . These passages clearly point to the entire Mosaic Law. Such a limit is arbitrary.

We now refer to Matthew 23:23 and the parallel Luke 11:42. Here love for God and neighbor is that which is termed as "the first in the law". Love toward God and neighbor is also taught as the summary of the law (we have these in chapter six of this work, pg. 28-29), which points to and refers to what is said here. However, here with the word "law", not only the Moral Law but all the Mosaic Law is meant. This is easily seen. This was spoken of concerning tithing. This was an ordinance of the Old Testament Ceremonial Law (Leviticus 27:30). The teachers of the law and the hypocritical Pharisees set themselves right after this ordinance in excessive lengths and went beyond the sum total of the entire Mosaic Law: beyond love. This, namely love, one should do and not allow tithing. This is how our Lord Jesus speaks, in that time when he placed himself under the Old Testament.

What have we learned from all these Scripture passages? We have learned that love for God and neighbor is the entire Mosaic Law with all its ordinances without variation.

Is this, then, the situation which is the quality of the law which was given by God through Moses to the Children of Israel?

Certainly then the entire law which has been given by God through Moses to the Children of Israel, with each and every ordinance, is good.

The New Testament teaches in this way.

For this, the following expressive statements are found.

Romans 2:18: "If you approve of what is superior because you are educated about the law."

The law shows the best.

Romans 7:7: "What shall we say then? Is the law a sin? That is far off. But I do not know sin unless through the law. At that time I knew nothing about coveting if the law had not said: 'Do not covet.'"

Here it is said that the law is not sin, but on the contrary that it is holy and that it also points out coveting as sin. In this passage, is the Apostle Paul speaking about the entire Mosaic Law or only about the Moral Law? We must say that he is speaking about the entire Old Testament administration, therefore about the ruling of the entire law. For in verses one through six he points out how the law "holds us captive" for service "in the old essence of the letter (v.6) and governs (v.1) how Christians are "free from the law", but only through the death of Christ and by Christ "we should serve God in the new essence of the Spirit" (vv. 4-6).

Romans 7:12,14,16: "The law is indeed holy and the commandment holy, right and good. For we know that the law is spiritual. Therefore I agree that the law is good."

This remark stands in the context with the former remark, therefore all that has been said there applies here as well. All the Mosaic Law and every commandment itself is holy because above everything, as we have proven, love for God and neighbor is the essential demand. If Hebrews 7:16 is speaking about a "law of the fleshly command", then it states that the command takes into consideration the fleshly condition, it had to do with the fleshly, perishable commands, but in no way was that law in itself fleshly.

I Timothy 1:8: "We know, however, that the law is good if someone uses it properly." This declaration narrows itself directly to page 73ff., where we spoke of verse five. Here it is clear that it refers to the Mosaic Law with its commands and ordinances. It says that they are good. One must only use them correctly. It is described in Titus 3:9, "Rid your mind of the quarrels and disputes over

the law." Literally, "the law concerning fighting". Such are "unused and idle".

Galatians 5:23: "Against such there is no law." This passage latches onto page 74 where verse 14 was treated. Whoever does not give his flesh room, but is ruled by the Spirit and walks in love, does not have the law against him. This is the one who uses it correctly (I Timothy 1:8). Indeed we see here that the law is holy, spiritual and good just as the entire Mosaic Law .

Romans 8:4: "the righteousness demanded from the law" (in Greek: δικαιομα του νομου). The law demands righteousness and correctness, therefore it must be righteous and correct. We should not forget that the summary of the entire Mosaic Law is love for God and neighbor. The entire Mosaic Law regulates this demand of righteousness and accordingly it is righteous and correct.

Romans 10:5: "Moses correctly writes concerning the righteousness which comes from the law: whoever does this, he will live by it."

This word puts God at the head of the commands of the Moral Law which was given through Moses (Leviticus 18:5). Who wants to deny that God meant all the commands which were given through Moses? Therefore the Apostle Paul quotes this word (Galatians 3:12), by which he plainly speaks about the entire Mosaic Law. He speaks of circumcision and food in chapter two, strikes a threat (3:10) which was attached to all the commands (Deuteronomy 27:26), and characterizes the "law" (3:17,23) plainly as the Mosaic Law and certainly the entire Mosaic Law. Righteousness and life come from this law under the service of doing, and certainly the doing itself is welcomed; therefore, it must surely be divinely good.

Now we add the following passages.

James 2:9: "But if you look at the person, you are sinning and are condemned by the law as a trespasser." This refers to "the kingly law" of neighborly love (v.8) and also to the entire law (v.10). The law condemns and convicts, therefore it is holy.

James 4:11: "Do not slander one another. Love your brother. Whoever slanders his brother, judges his brother; therefore he slanders and judges the law. If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of the law." Whoever slanders his brother and judges him acts contrary to the law (which prohibits such action) and judges the law as if it weren't good. But how good the law is!

I John 3:4: "Whoever sins is at fault, and sin is error." In Greek, "Unrecht", is "ανομια", lawlessness. Everything that is contrary to the law is sin. Indeed the law is the correct, appropriate thing. It is nothing but holiness.

As we have seen, the New Testament speaks about the entire law of God which was given through Moses to the Children of Israel. We have seen that it is holy, spiritual and good.

How can a law which the Holy God has given, also be holy to others? "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts" (Isaiah 6:3). "He is the rock. His works are unlimited. Everything he does is right. God is true and there is no evil in him. He is right and devout." (Deuteronomy 32:4) "To him be honor forever! Amen" (Romans 11:36).

The Effect of God's Law

Disposition II. E.

With great emphasis we say and note that we want to speak only about the effect of the divine law without noting the effect of the gospel that leads the way for it and, therefore, totally without regard to each and every previous, accompanying or following effect of the gospel. In this chapter we want to learn from the New Testament what the law effects completely by itself in and on the sinner. In and on the sinner we say. There are no other people on earth than sinners.

Therefore one bears in mind and always solidly sets it before his eyes. This will not always be truly noticed and held firmly before the eyes, the result is that there is nothing but confusion. In this way something will always be set out about what we say, something from the New Testament itself. For the New Testament also speaks on the effects of the law, which are no longer purely effects of the law but which were already named in the service of any form. We recall in chapter seven of this work treating Galatians 3:24 (pp. 67-68). We do not allow ourselves to get into these things here but we will treat them later.

Now we want to show first what the law does not effect. In this way the field of comparison will be clear, and the understanding of this prepares us for what the effect of God's Law truly is.

A. What the effect of God's Law is not.

We give the following passages according to the order of the New Testament writings in which we find them. We hold before ourselves therefore an ordered summary and the comments produced from them.

Acts 13:38-39: "Therefore it is now known to you, dear brothers, that the forgiveness of sins

through this one (Jesus) is made known to you. Through him, whoever believes this is justified from everything that was not able to make you righteous through the law of Moses." In a literal translation, this passage would read, "Therefore it is now known to you, dear brothers, that through this one (Jesus) forgiveness of sins is made known to you, and all that you did not know in the Law of Moses (or through the Mosaic Law) to be justified; everyone who believes this will be justified by this (or through this).

The Apostle Paul said this in Antioch to the Jews who were assembled in their synagogue on the Sabbath. He proclaimed Jesus Christ, who was crucified and raised again. He said that their forgiveness of sins is made known to them through Jesus Christ. He spoke from the Law of Moses which the Jews had been under until then. He also spoke clearly about the total, unbroken law of Moses: the Moral Law, the Ceremonial Law and the Civil Law. He said that through Jesus Christ each one is justified from all sins. They did not know how to be justified through the law of Moses. Therefore the Law of Moses does not have the power and effect that each one is justified from sins by keeping it. Let us understand this correctly.

The law of Moses first points to God's will, that is, how every human is and what he should do in order to be righteous before God. In this way you find no one to be righteous. Therefore you know that this law does not have the power and effect that each one is righteous before God. The law of Moses represents a shadow-work of Christ. Whoever knew about this shadow and representation of Christ and believed in him was surely justified, namely through Christ and faith in him. Again we stress that this law of Moses, namely the Ceremonial Law, did not have in itself the power and effect to justify from sin through a person's keeping of the law. It was only a shadow-work. How can a shadow, a mere shadow, have a holy power and effect if one is not able to point out the true way from it? The letter to the Hebrews speaks clearly about this, especially in 9:10 (we will examine other

specific passages about this later).

It is already understood that the Civil Law, by itself, cannot have the power and effect that each one will be justified by keeping the law themselves. Therefore the Mosaic Law, in all its parts does not have the effect that through it anyone is justified before God.

Romans 3:20-21,28: "Therefore, no flesh is able to be righteous through the works of the law before him (God); because recognition of sins comes through the law. But now the righteousness, which is worthy before God without the works of the law, is revealed and shown through the Law and the Prophets. Because of this we only hold that one becomes righteous without the works of the law, but only through faith."

Paul is speaking here of the total and undivided Mosaic Law which the Jews had. In this case, we can see how the chapter in which the quoted passages are contained speaks about the benefit that the Jews had. It also speaks of the "circumcision" (vv. 1,9) and accordingly about their being "under the law" (v. 19), namely under the law which had dealt with circumcision and about which the apostle says: "I point out once more to each person who allows himself to be circumcised, that he is bound to obey the whole law." (Galatians 5:3) This passage holds good in all these commands: that "no flesh is able to be righteous before God through works of the law, even through the Ceremonial Law (Hebrews 10:3); indeed only the recognition of sin comes."

"Without the doing of the law (or without the law), the righteousness of God, which is worthy before God, is revealed and shown through the Law and the Prophets. The man becomes righteous alone through faith without works of the law." Therefore the law does not have the power and effect that anyone is made righteous before God through his doing of something or refraining from something. This agrees with what was said in Acts 13:38-39.

Romans 4:13-14: "In that case, the promise that he would be the heir of the world has not

happened to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if the heirs are from works, then faith is nothing and the promise is worthless.”

The righteousness of God, the holy righteousness which God allows to be considered as valid for all sins and all the severe demands of his law, is not given through the law. In the same way, righteousness and eternal blessedness are not given to God's adopted seed through the law. Which law are these not given through? They were not given through the law which was given with circumcision (Romans 4:10-12); they were not given through the law which was under circumcision (Romans 4:16); therefore they were not given through the entire and unbroken Mosaic Law. This law does not give the promise of the seed. No one can do what the law orders him to do. The work of the Ceremonial Law is only shadow-work. This also agrees with what was said in Acts 13:38-39.

Romans 8:3-4,7: "Therefore what was impossible for the law to do since it was impaired by the flesh, God did by sending His Son into the sinful world. In doing so he condemned sin in sinful man so that the righteousness demanded in the law was fulfilled in us, so that we no longer walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. The fleshly mind is at enmity with God. It does not understand the law of God; nor does it have the power to do so."

We explained these verses in Chapter Seven (pp. 38-41). What we have to notice here is what is said about the inability of the law. The law is not capable to complete its right demands in us. The law cannot complete what it demands of us. Our sinful flesh hinders it.

We now treat verse seven. The sins of the flesh are at enmity with God. They do not regulate themselves under God's Law for this is not possible. There is no doubt that here is where the Moral Law steps into the foreground. All other laws are included in so far as love for God and neighbor is demanded.

In summary, we say that the law is not able to complete its right effect in us because our flesh

is not able to work under the law.

Romans 9:31-32: "But Israel has fallen short of the law of righteousness and has not attained the law of righteousness. Why is this so? It is because they do not seek it by faith, but rather from the works of the law."

We have discussed these verses in Chapter Two (pp. 7-8), but the following remarks lead us clearly ahead. As long as it was not absolutely godless, Israel has always striven to be righteous before God, but it has not been. Why not? It is because the righteousness which is worthy before God is not from themselves. Yes, it is also taught in the Old Testament and in the law of Moses that faith looks to Christ. It is not taught that righteousness is from works, from doing the outward letter of the commands of the Moral, Ceremonial and Civil Laws. Once more we say that the law with all its ordinances did not work righteousness. For the Spirit does not want anything to do with the flesh, especially from the demands of the law.

Galatians 2:16,21: "Because we know that a man is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. So we also believe in Jesus Christ so that we may be justified through faith in Christ and not through the works of the law. No one is justified through the works of the law. I do not throw away the grace of God; for if righteousness came through the works of the law, then Christ has died for nothing."

We must notice in this exceedingly clear passage that Paul makes this statement on the occasion of a perverted view of the passages of the Ceremonial Law. These passages apply to the entire and undivided Mosaic Law.

Galatians 3:2,5: "Have you received the Spirit through the works of the law or through the preaching about faith? Who now gives you the Spirit and works miracles among you? Does he do it through the works of the law or through the preaching of faith?"

It is clear what Paul wanted as an answer to these questions. The law and all its deeds and works do not possibly give the Holy Spirit or the power of God (cf. II Corinthians 3:6-11). That this is valid regarding the entire and undivided Mosaic Law becomes clear from the context. The entire letter to the Galatians points this out. One should read Galatians 3:23-5:12.

Galatians 3:11: "That no one is justified before God through the law is evident; therefore the righteous will live by faith." (Habakkuk 2:4)

Galatians 3:18-21: "If the inheritance is earned through the law, then it is not given through a promise. How? Is the law then against the promises of God? That is far from it! For if a law had been given that could make life, then righteousness would certainly have come from the law." (cf. above Romans 4:13-14)

We now come to the letter to the Hebrews which handles the Ceremonial Law in such a special way.

Hebrews 7:11-19: "For now if the perfection could have happened through the Levitical Priesthood (for on it the people had found the law), why then is it necessary that a priest come to the order of Melchizedek and not according to the order of Aaron? For where the priesthood is changed, there the law also must be changed. For the one whom such things are said is from a different order, from which no one has ever served the altar. Then it is certainly obvious that our Lord has come from Judah, to which tribe Moses has not spoken concerning the priesthood. It is also clear that according to the order of Melchizedek another priest comes out who is not made according to the command of the fleshly laws but according to the power of endless life. For it is attested: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' The former law is repealed because it was too weak and unnecessary (for the law could do nothing perfectly). A better hope is introduced, through which we approach God."

The law which the people found in the Levitical Priesthood, that is the entire Mosaic Law, cannot give perfection, can make nothing perfect and cannot make anyone righteous and blessed before God. Therefore the entire Mosaic Law and especially the law concerning the priesthood is changed. Christ, the true High Priest, is not made according to the law of the flesh, from fleshly origin, from outward orders, things and dead office holders who stretch out the commands. The Levitical Priests, orders and rules are repealed because they were too weak and unnecessary to give us perfection. We find this perfection in Christ alone.

Hebrews 7:28: "For the law makes men to be high priests who have weaknesses; but this word of oath, which was added to the law later, appointed the Son eternal and perfect."

Hebrews 9:19-23: "When Moses had spoken out about all the commands according to the law for all people, he took the blood of a calf and a ram with water, purple wool and hyssop, and sprinkled the book and all the people. Then he said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.' In the same way he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the instruments used for serving God with blood. In this way almost everything was purified with blood according to the law. Without bloodshed there is no forgiveness of sins. In this way the patterns of the heavenly things must now become purified with such sacrifices; but the heavenly things must have a better sacrifice than these.

Moses had written all the commands of the divine law in a book (Exodus 24:4,7) and read them before the people. There was the Moral Law, with its commands of ordering and damning. There was the Ceremonial Law which patterned and sketched out forgiveness and salvation in Christ. There was the Civil Law which gave threats. In this law stands the covenant which God made with the people of Israel. This covenant could not stand without forgiveness, and "without bloodshed there is no forgiveness." Because of this Moses truly sprinkled the holy book of the law and the sinful people with the blood of the sacrifice. From this time on in Israel, the Holy Place and all the instruments used

for serving God as well as the people were purified with "the blood of the covenant" (Exodus 24:8; 29:12,16; Leviticus 8:15,19; 16:14).

The Old Testament Holy Place and the instruments used for serving God were only "a pattern of the heavenly things", only "a shadow concerning the future good" (Hebrews 10:1) in Christ. This "blood of the covenant" was only a pattern and it only foreshadowed Christ's "blood of the New Covenant" (Matthew 26:28) which "is given for many for the forgiveness of sins" (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-32). What here is called "many" the following passages show us: II Corinthians 5:15,19; Romans 5:18-19, I Timothy 2:6. Therefore the entire Mosaic Law, even if it is strictly followed, cannot work forgiveness nor purify by itself.

Hebrews 10:1-10: "For the law was a shadow concerning the future good things, not the good things themselves. All year a person always had to make the same sacrifice and he cannot make what he sacrifices perfect. Otherwise the ones who had been serving God in this way would have been repealed. They had no more knowledge of their sins when they were once again purified. The sacrifices were a reminder of the sins throughout the year. For it is impossible to take away sins through the blood of oxen and rams. Therefore when Christ came into the world he said, 'Sacrifice and offering you have not desired; but you have prepared a body for me. Burnt offerings and sin offerings are not pleasing to you. Then I said, "Look. I am coming. In the book it is written exactly that I should do your will O God." ' First he said, 'Sacrifice and gifts, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not want. They are not pleasing to you (which were sacrificed according to the law)'. Then he said, 'Look. I am coming to do your will O God.' There he set aside the first in order to establish the second. By it we are sanctified through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ which happened once."

What do we learn about the law from this passage? Here the law, especially the Ceremonial Law, was only a shadow concerning the future perfection of Christ but not the way of perfection itself.

It could not make perfect or purify the conscience concerning sins nor could it take away sins. God had not given the law for this. God was not pleased when someone wanted to be made worthy by it. Because of the evil acts which were committed, one was not justified before God. What did the Apostle Paul say? "But before faith came", before the way of future perfection of that time in Christ through the New Testament Gospel became fully recognizable by faith, "we were kept secure under the law and locked up from faith until it should be revealed. So the law has been our disciplinarian from Christ so that we might become righteous through faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the disciplinarian" (Galatians 3:23-25).

In the Old Testament there was also faith in Christ (cf. Romans 4 and Hebrews 11). "But before faith came" the Old Testament believers in Christ also were "kept secure and locked up under the law". Through this law they were always driven toward Christ. This law was always a constant disciplinarian which led them toward Christ so that they would become and remain righteous through faith in him. This law indeed had the shadow concerning the future perfection in Christ, if not also the way of perfection itself. Therefore they saw the promise in the law. This promise was given to them concerning a distant thing and comforted them in faith (Hebrews 11:13) over against the Moral Law which ordered, threatened, swore and demanded complete holiness and all the terrors of death. Indeed in the shadow of Christ, in the Ceremonial Law and in the glimmer of the Messianic promises, the Moral Law which orders, swears and demands holiness became and was a constant disciplinarian toward Christ for them. They drove in faith toward the Christ and Savior who was seen from a distance. In this way they were righteous and became blessed (even though they were kept secure and locked up under the law) through faith in Christ, but not through the shadow-work of the Ceremonial Law. Romans 4: "But now faith has come" in the New Testament, since the way itself, which was looked for in the Old Testament, promised, foreshadowed by the law and typified perfection has

become completely through faith, through the Gospel, since the believers are "no longer under the disciplinarian". The faithful Jews are no longer under the disciplinarian: the law has completed its office of disciplinarian for Israel. The Gentiles who are faithful are also no longer placed under the disciplinarian as it happened in the Old Testament (Genesis 17:12; Exodus 12:48-49; Numbers 15:15-16). This is because the "mystery which has been hidden from the world and the times" and "the Lord's richness of this mystery" have now been given notice in the New Testament from the Holy Spirit through the Holy Apostles and New Testament prophets that Christ is directly among the Gentiles (Colossians 1:26-27; Ephesians 3:1-6; Romans 16:25-26) so that the Gentiles are children of God with the Jews through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26).

Our passage speaks the following about the appearing Messiah, "Therefore he set aside the first in order to establish the second." Through his coming and doing God's divine will, Christ set aside the shadow-work and placed the true way in its place.

Now let us give the promised, ordered overview about what the law does not do according to the respective passages. The effect of God's law which was given through Moses to the Children of Israel is *not*:

1. Forgiveness of sins and righteousness, which is worthy before God and thus purity, cleansing of the conscience from sin and taking away sins. Acts 13:38-39; Romans 3:20-21, 28; 9:31-32; Galatians 2:16,21; 3:11; Hebrews 9:19-23; 10:1-10.
2. Fulfillment of the righteous decrees of the law or the sanctification of the Spirit. Romans 8:1-4,7.
3. The receiving of the Holy Spirit and the power of God. Galatians 3:2,5.
4. Inheritance of the adoption of God, of life and of blessedness. Romans 4:13-14; Galatians 3:18,21.
5. In short: completeness, which endures in forgiveness of sins or righteousness worthy before God, in true holiness or God pleasing fulfillment of the righteous decrees of the commands, in the sharing of the Holy Spirit and the power of God and in the adoption of God and the inheritance of the eternal blessedness. Hebrews 7:11-19, 28; 10:1-10.

All that is mentioned is not an effect of the law and cannot be attained through the doing of the

works commanded in the law. Concerning that the law is "too weak and unnecessary" (Hebrews 10:1-10). It was "changed" or "set aside" when Christ came (Hebrews 7:11-19; 10:1-10). Lastly, it is valid in the interpretation of the Ceremonial Law.

We will now show what the effect of the law is.

B. What this effect is.

Here also we will give the proper passages according to their order in the New Testament writings and finally we will give an orderly overview with the results obtained from these passages.

Romans 2:12: "The ones who have sinned without the law will perish without the law. The ones who sin under the law will be condemned by the law."

Each time "the law" is used in this passage, the Mosaic Law is meant. The Gentiles are without the Mosaic Law, the Jews have it. Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin (Romans 3:9). Both Jews and Gentiles are lost and condemned. The Gentiles have sinned without the Mosaic Law and they will also perish without the Mosaic Law. Even though they do not have the Mosaic Law it is written in their hearts what they should do and allow according to God's will. They know it with their consciences and their thoughts which accuse them or even make them feel guilty (vv. 14-15). The Jews who indeed have the Mosaic Law have sinned and they will be condemned through this Mosaic Law. Therefore both Jews and Gentiles, all men, are damned through the law, because they have trespasses and sinned. The effect of the divine law is the damning of the sinner no matter if this law is only written on their hearts or if it stands and is shown also in writing.

Romans 3:19-29: "We know that what the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law so that every mouth is stopped up and all the world is guilty before God. Therefore, no flesh may be righteous through the work of the law, rather through the law comes recognition of sin."

"What the law says", that means what the holy writing of the Old Testament says. Paul had

quoted Old Testament passages in verses 10-18. He himself refers to this.

With the words "who are under the law" he refers back to the first passage we examined (Romans 2:12), "the ones who sin under the law", especially to the portion connected to this verse (2:17-3:8). It is good if this portion is read carefully. In this section the "law" is mentioned ten times. Each time it is mentioned as the Mosaic Law which is given to the Jews, under which law is circumcision as it says in 2:12. With the words, "to those who are under the law" he mentions the Jews who are under the Mosaic Law.

Now the Apostle says, "we know that what the law says, it says to those who are under the law". Verses 10-18 which quote the Old Testament passages confirm what the Apostle Paul says in verse 9, "that both Jews and Gentiles, all men are under sin", In this way the Jews, although they have the Mosaic Law with circumcision, also have an advantage over the Gentiles and have trusted what God has spoken (vv. 1-2). Yet in truth there is no actual advantage, no advantage at all to make themselves worthy or to give an excuse because they are like the Gentiles and all men who are under sin (v. 9). That which the law, particularly the Old Testament Law says, it says directly to those who are under that which the Old Testament manager of God regulates, that is the Mosaic Law.

"So that every mouth is stopped up and all the world is guilty before God." These mouths are stopped up and they are also guilty before God. These people are the ones who are under the Mosaic Law, the Jews. Why? "So that no flesh may be made righteous through the work of the law." This is neither through the work of the Moral Law, nor through the work of the Ceremonial Law, circumcision, sacrifice and the like, nor through the work of the Civil Law.

"For through the law comes recognition of sin." We understand these words correctly! This is the main point of this passage. This is the passage concerning the law which is important to us here. This shows us what the law does effect.

In light of this context we must understand this passage. Any flesh, that is any man, is not justified through the work of the law before God: neither a Gentile, nor a Gentile writing through the work of the law written for him on the heart; nor a Jew, nor a Jewish writing through a work of the Mosaic Law given to him in the Old Testament, that is the work of the Moral, Ceremonial or Civil Law. The law may order what it wants: through the work it demands, no one is justified before God. The work demanded by the Ceremonial Law is superficial, shadow-work. The work demanded by the Civil Law is only civil work. No righteousness comes before God through the law, but rather the recognition of sin. Recognition comes through the Moral Law because God gives publicly in his holy will what man is like and what he should and shouldn't do. The Moral Law also shows that no one can hold to it. Recognition of sin also comes through the Ceremonial Law because its intended designation appears "only a thought of sin" (Hebrews 10:3). Recognition of sin also comes through the Civil Law, because sin is sin only on account of this law. We should know above all "that no law is given to the righteous but to the unrighteous and disobedient, to the godless and sinners, to the unholy and unspiritual" (I Timothy 1:9).

"Recognition of sin comes through the law." This recognition of sin which comes through the law (when we say, "the law", we refer to what we said so emphatically about the law at the beginning of the chapter) cannot be accomplished by anything in man and man cannot make spiritual recognition of sin. This is impossible. We have already noted that the law does not give the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:2,5). Recognition of sin comes through the law, albeit a "spiritual" (Romans 7:14) law. This can only be a natural or fleshly recognition of sin. Mankind who sins naturally, fleshly and carnally, recognizes sin through the law. He does not recognize it without the law, but remains the same as before, a naturally, fleshly and carnally sinful man. He is one who is spiritually blind, spiritually dead and God's enemy.

If this man recognizes his sin through the law, then he "understands nothing from the Spirit because it is foolishness to him. He cannot recognize it because it is brought about spiritually" (I Corinthians 2:14). Even if the man recognizes his sin through the law, he still remains "dead in transgressions and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). Even if the man recognizes his sin through the law, he still remains sinful in the flesh and since "flesh is sinful it is at enmity with God, because it is not subjected to God's commands for it is impossible to do so" (Romans 8:7). Even if the man recognizes his sin through the law, he cannot see the kingdom of God, not to mention enter it himself, for no one is reborn who is not born "from water and the Spirit" (John 3:3,5). It is completely perverted and contrary to Scripture when certain theologians teach that because recognition of sin comes through the law, the law also has the following effects: a beneficial terror of sin and the anger of God and a proper lament of grief:

*Where shall I flee to,
because I am burdened
with great and many sins?
Where can I find deliverance?
When all the world comes here
my anguish is not taken away.*

These theologians go on to say that since recognition comes through the law, the law still has the further effects: a fearful stopping and walking away from sin; standing a distance away from sin; a will not to lift ones eyes up to heaven; a beating on the breast and saying just like the publican, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13); a divine sorrow which works repentance towards blessedness, which no one repents of (II Corinthians 7:10); being not far from the kingdom of God (Mark 12:34); a worthiness and receptiveness for grace which is revealed and offered in the gospel; even the "first part of conversion" before there is faith.

We say that the preceding statements (as well as similar statements) are totally perverted and contrary to Scripture. The theologian who writes about such effects of the law, does not know or does

not want to know what the Scriptures teach about the law. They do not know what the Scriptures teach about sin. Finally, they do not know what the Scriptures teach about the gospel. They make themselves guilty of the sin which is the foremost sin of a theologian, they mix law and gospel, flesh and spirit. The law works for itself in a natural and fleshly recognition of sin. It does not work anything else, neither spiritual nor "near-spiritual".

This is certainly true: if the effect of the gospel and the effect of the Holy Spirit living and working in the gospel on men were to go before the effect of the law, or if it were to stand as an escort at the side of the law or even follow the law; if also the effect of the gospel is almost sucked out of the effect of the law, became involved in it and took its service, then one can say that the law indeed effects everything previously mentioned. The recognition of sin through the law includes all we have rejected as being perverted and contrary to Scripture.

In no situation is one permitted to speak about "a first part of conversion" since conversion is either complete or completely not. In truth when the gospel and Holy Spirit (who lives in and works in the gospel) work through such a law, then recognition of sin results. It was clearly this way for the publican (Luke 18:13,14) and therefore it was to be the same for all the troubled sinners of the Old Testament who recognized Christ in the dim light of the Messianic prophesies of the shadows of Christ in the Ceremonial Law. It is still this way in our congregations today. It does us well to notice that correctly believing churches speak in this way about the effect of the law and the recognition of sin coming through the law. We have rejected this as false and in this way they speak not about the effect of the law itself but they speak about the effect which the Spirit's word of the Gospel creates through the law and the recognition of sin coming through the law.

What the law itself works on we will see later. We will see what kind of recognition of sin there is when it comes through the law. We now could speak of many different things, but we will

draw our attention only to what the New Testament says. This is the most careful and surest way. This way makes the results certain and indisputable. Let us advise everyone to be satisfied with this. There is nothing necessary for understanding that goes beyond what the New Testament says.

Romans 4:15: "Since the law leads only to wrath. Where there is no law, there is also no transgression."

This passage make it completely clear that the law effects wrath, namely God's wrath. This passage is backed up ever so clearly with the words, "for where there is no law, there is also no transgression". God's law is there and trespassing itself is there. In this way, what does the law effect? God's wrath.

This passage is essential just as the first passage (Romans 2:12) we studied is essential. The only difference is that in the former passage the consequence of God's anger is mentioned, that is the condemnation or damnation.

Romans 4:15 limits itself narrowly to what was mentioned in part A, verses 13,14, "For the promise that he should be heir of the world has not happened to Abraham or his seed through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For where the heirs from the law are, there faith is nothing and the promise is worthless". We fully understood the explanation of this verse which was given in part A. The promise of God's adoption and the eternal blessedness was given to Abraham and his spiritual seed. This is not through the work of circumcision (vv. 10-12) which followed him and was done concerning him and much less through the work of the Mosaic laws which were given first over 430 years later (Galatians 3:16-17). No, the promise of the heir of the adoption of God was given to Abraham and his seed through the righteousness of faith, "which he had in the sign of circumcision" (Romans 4:11). "For where the ones from the law (in Greek: the one from the law, the one who thinks to attain righteousness before God from the works of the Mosaic Law) are heirs, there faith is nothing

and the promise is worthless." There faith in substance is clearly depleted and the promise is weakened. How does the law work, namely the law which was given from God through Moses? It does not work God's adoption and blessedness, but it works God's anger and damnation. The essence of the Mosaic Law (the Moral Law) and the summary of all the Mosaic Law (the command to love God and neighbor) has indeed trespassing as a consequence. How can there be heirs who think that they can attain righteousness before God through the works of the Mosaic Law? One again thinks to what the Apostle does not so freely state here, namely that the work commanded in the Ceremonial Law was public shadow-work and the work commanded in the Civil Law was only civil ordinances. How should such work contain the anger of God which is effected through the breaking of the true commands of the law?

Romans 5:20: "But the law was added (to the Gospel) so that the trespass might become greater."

"But the law was added." The Hirschberger Bible states this correctly in the following words. "Here Paul comes to a previous objection which one had been able to make to him: if all depends on Christ, what is the need for the Ceremonial Law which was given through Moses (Romans 5:13,14; Galatians 3:19,21)? Or could it be as the Jews believe that it pointed them closer to the way of righteousness as other men knew? He wants nothing less than this: that this is God's purpose (Galatians 3:21-24).

"So that the trespass might become greater." In Greek: "that the sin grows more." God has given the Mosaic Law for the purpose that sin grows more and swells as a flood that submerges all and goes over our heads. It is clearly said here that sin grows more, swells and becomes greater through the Mosaic Law. It is also clearly said that God's will happens this way. God has given and put the Mosaic Law into effect for this purpose.

How sin becomes greater with the law we will see in the next passage. Here we note only the fact that the New Testament teaches that sin becomes greater through the law and that the law works a growing and swelling of sin. We also call attention to how this passage disputes against what we pointed out many theologians read into the passage, "recognition of sin comes through the law" (Romans 3:20).

We truly want to explain why God wills that sin become greater through the law. God does not want it on this account: that he wretchedly allows sin to grow, swell and become greater, namely that he wants to work and produce sin. This cannot be thought about the holiness of God (Romans 3:6). On the contrary, God wants to show us how terrible sin makes us concerning his holy and good will: instead of allowing himself to detain them, they will become stronger and grow and swell according to their godless and devilish types (I John 3:4). This should become a holy recognition and should create a divine sadness through the power of the gospel and grace. This should work to the blessedness or repentance which no one will be sorry about (II Corinthians 7:10). The law itself works only a "sadness of the world", a fleshly, desolate, despairing sadness which works death (II Corinthians 7:10). When someone recognizes through the power of the gospel and grace what God wants to give through the law, (namely that our sin is so terrifying and that sin is even more terrifying and greater through the law) then he will realize: "But where sin has become greater, there grace has become much greater, so that just as sin has lorded over death so also grace is lord through righteousness toward eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Romans 5:20-21).

Romans 7:5-13: "For when we were in the flesh, then there was sinful coveting which exposed itself through the law. This was powerful in our bodies so that we brought fruit for death. Now we are free from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we might serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the letter. What should we now say? Is the law sin? This is absurd!

For I did not recognize sin except through the law. For I knew nothing about coveting except where the law said: you shall not covet. But there sin took occasion from the command and all kinds of desires were stirred up in me. For without the law, sin was dead. Once I lived apart from the law; then, when the law came, sin was alive again. Then I died and it stood that the command which presented death to me was also to give me life. Sin took occasion from the law, deceived me and killed me through the law itself. The law is indeed holy and the command is holy, righteous and good. Then is that which is here good become death to me? That is absurd! But in order that sin is recognized as sin it has worked death in me through what was good so that through the command, sin becomes totally sinful."

We see in the Greek text which passage is included over the effect of the law in verses five and six.

"Then we were in flesh", says the Apostle. He speaks about a Christian before his circumcision and also about all unregenerate men who are locked up in their old, corruptible nature. In these men the inherited sin has full lordship. "Then we were in flesh" is the assumption not only in verses 5-6 but also in verses 7-13.

"Then we were in flesh", what is "then"? "Then the passion of sin which worked in our bodies through the law to bring fruit for death." "The passion of sin", which is evil passion and lust living in the sinful human nature, wants to naturally work itself out in sin and sinful actions. This passion of sin now does exactly what it wants to do according to its nature. It is actually in our bodies. It takes the parts of our body for its service. It does this in order to bring "fruit for death" (in order to produce fruits which finally work death and corruption). This is totally according to its nature because it can produce no other fruits nor does it want to do so (Ephesians 2:5). It only wants to lead to death.

It is well to observe the following question, "How does the passion of sin which lives in our

corrupt nature become so alert so as to actually be in our bodies in order to produce fruit for death?"

Let it be heard, "It is moved through the law".

We are not going to explain any further. All necessary explanation is given in the later verses. Here the simple testimony is this: the Law of God effects unregenerate men so that the evil passions and lusts living in their corrupt nature become alive and work themselves in their bodies to bring fruit of corruption. In short: the law effects sinful deeds and death in fleshly men.

We will not come back to verse six again. Verse six brings the antithesis to verse five and shows how it is now with the regenerate Christian: "But now we are free from the law, dead to which held us captive so that we may serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the letter." This belongs in the next chapter.

Furthermore, according to the Greek text the Apostle had told the Christians that the law had formerly worked sinful acts and death in their unregenerate circumstances. But they are now free from these laws and had become new men. He continues, "What should we now say? Is the law sin?" Is the law in itself something terrible and therefore something so destructive? This indeed appears to be the logical conclusion from the previous sentence. The Apostle answers, "That is absurd!" He throws away such a conclusion with disgust. In order to further explain the case he uses the pronoun "I". With "I" he means every man to whom the law applies. He points to his own example which applies to every man.

He says three things in order to explain this seemingly fearful passage about the effect of the law toward the unregenerate man.

The first is in the second half of verse seven, "For I did not recognize sin except through the law. For I knew nothing about coveting except where the law said: you shall not covet!"

The Apostle had rejected the idea that since the law works sinful deeds and death in the sinful

man it is in itself something terrible and destructive. He continues, "but (Greek "αλλα") I did not recognize sin except through the law". This passage and what the Apostle placed before us in Romans 3:20 is completely enough as the universal truth: "recognition of sin comes through the law", as we have treated on pages 91-94. Occasionally some have commented on this expression, "I did not recognize sin except through the law". Stoeckhardt says, "Man errs and sins from birth and sees what he perverts and the evil he does. He sees a natural weakness and an easily excusable mistake. First, if the law approaches him, he recognizes sin correctly as it is, as behavior contrary to God, a contradiction against the will of God" (Romerbrief p. 318).

The formula of Concord says, "Everything that punishes sin belongs to the law, whose only office is to punish sin and lead one to recognition of sin" (cf. Romans 3 and 7). This, "I did not recognize sin except through the law", the Apostle makes clear in an especially enlightening illustration. This illustration is, "for I knew (Greek "τε") nothing about coveting except where the law said: you shall not covet!" The "coveting" is the evil desire which he had named in v.5, "the passion of sin". Stoeckhardt says, "from childhood on, all sorts of lusts and greed rule in the hearts of men. The natural man considers this covetousness as an impulse of nature and thinks that it is totally natural to give room for such impulses. If the law is known to him and says to him, "do not allow yourself to covet", then the law prohibits and prevents him from doing it. After he desires it, he recognizes that the lust is sin and that it is behavior contrary to God. In this way he knows that the wishes, cravings, thoughts and aims of his heart go against God and his will."

In this way man recognizes sin through the law as it actually is, as behavior contrary to God and a contradiction against his will.

What happens then? This is the second thing he shows. The Apostle tells us this in verses eight and nine, "but there sin took occasion from the command and all kinds of lusts were stirred up in

me. For without the law sin was dead. Once I lived apart from the law. Then when the law came, sin was alive again."

These words of the Apostle definitely answer our question, "What happens then?" It is this, as soon as the law works recognition of sin and as soon as it works also the evil coveting, then sin commands and increases.

It is therefore the same as what we found to be true in Romans 5:20, "so the law was added so that the trespass might become greater". What the Apostle had said in verse five, he now wants to place into correct light, "for when we were in the sinful flesh there was sinful lust which exposed itself through the law, which was so powerful in our bodies so that we produced fruit for death." Luther comments on the related passage (Galatians 3:19), "When sin, death, the wrath and judgment of God and hell are revealed to a man through the law, it is impossible that he not become impatient, grumbling and despising God's will. Therefore the law produces hatred toward God and not only recognition of sin but also through this recognition of sin, sin multiplies and is fanned into flame."

The Apostle here wants to explain the passage concerning the effect of the law on the unregenerate man, which he does in verse five. He speaks here about himself and therefore others. He explains as he speaks. He pushes if we ought to express ourselves in this way, the aforementioned evil effect of the law on the unregenerate men. He shows that sin, the sin living in men is thereby the occasion that the law has such an evil effect on men. He says, "but sin took occasion from the command (you shall not covet!), it worked lust in me in every way". The law, which recognizes and prohibits sin, has brought it about (even with the men captive in sin and being totally lorded over by it) so that in this way it is actually sin that brings about the evil effect of the law in men. The law itself brings out this effect as it is spelled out for us in Romans 5:20 and 7:5. But how so and why? Because (please forgive the expression) it wallows in the filth. Because it is addressed to the men who are

lorded over by sin. The law says to the men who are lorded over by sin, "you shall not covet!" Do this! Allow that! Then sin takes occasion from the command and stirs up covetousness in men in every act and prohibition. Once again, please forgive the expression. Through the law sin spurts forward prohibitions and points out commands against God and over the abilities of man.

"But there sin took occasion from the law and all kinds of desires were stirred up in me."

What sin does the Apostle refer to here? It is sin itself which he speaks about in verses 17 and 20. It is original sin, the oldest corruption of all human nature, the source and root of all evil. It is just as our favorite author says it is when he writes, "the natural, perverted, most vile of the senses and will of men contrary to God." Again we say with Stoeckhardt, "this breeds evil thoughts, wishes, desires and finally evil actions. The law is about which our verse speaks that sin gives occasion and opportunity to work all evil coveting. It shows itself here as a practical experience, pointed to from the old and well known to each one that inclines men toward the forbidden fruit. The forbidding has the effect to fix the subject firmly in the imagination and to grant a new enticement along with that. The heart is fascinated with that, and the slumbering yearning transforms itself into an intensive desire. In this way every word of the commands has the so-called characteristic that it rouses a new lust in the heart. It is well to note that it happens only because of sin, the self-subsisting impetus already exists in the heart. The command itself does not bring about this effect, but sin brings the commands to this end."

The Apostle now explains further how sin takes occasion from the command and works evil lust in men in every way. He says, "For sin is dead without the law. Once I lived without the law but when the law came, sin was made alive."

"Sin is dead without the law." Before the law was known to men and brought them to the recognition that sin was contrary to God and his will, sin was dead. What does this mean? It means

that their actual nerve of life slumbered as if it were inactive, the contradiction known against God and his will. This is the nerve of life for sin, as learned from the first sin of Adam and Eve. Without the law it is dead, slumbering as if inactive. While man is "without the law", he sins. May we be so bold to say that he sins bona fide. He does what is desirous to him without thinking about it. He does not want to know if he sits in contradiction with God and his will. God's will has already come to him (albeit not entirely sharp) through the written Mosaic Law. That law rules only here and there for a time in his conscience if he would happen to behave too badly. "Sin is dead without the law."

"Once I lived without the law." Each man has a time when he lives without the law. When? Now, in his childhood. There is also a time in the life of every man when he does not know of the learned law or of the law written in his heart. In such a time a man lives "without the law". He sins perpetually but sin is "dead".

"But when the command came", as the law with its individual commandments is learned by man, it comes to be known by him. What then? Then sin revives and the known contradiction against God and His will becomes the "wanted to be known" opposition against God in desire, thought, word and deed.

So we are again closer to the explained words, "but when sin took occasion from the command, it worked every kind of lust in me."

This, then, is the second way Paul places this passage in the right light with the passage in verse five, namely that the law effects evil action and death in evil men.

He joins together his third point in verses 10-13, "but I died and it stood that the command which presented death to me was also to give me life. Sin took occasion from the law, deceived me and killed me through the law itself. The law is indeed holy and the command is holy, righteous and good. Then has that, which is here good, become death to me? That is absurd! But in order that sin is

recognized as sin, the law has worked death in me through what was good so that sin becomes totally sinful through the command."

Yes, the law works with men. There is not only recognition of sin, and through that evil lust, the completion of the sin, but there is also death. In verse five the Apostle has indeed said, "for when we were in the flesh there was sinful lust which exposed itself through the law. This lust was so powerful in our bodies that we brought forward fruit for death."

We now want to see how the Apostle states this in the words leading up to this. He says, "but I died". That means that man dies or at least he understands that he must be in death and with that either in righteousness or damnation.

Why then? The Apostle says, "it is that command which leads toward life". We break the sentence short here for awhile. "The command" is the law, the governing law. This command or law is given by God to lead to eternal life. "Therefore you should keep my decrees and righteous laws. For whoever does these things will live by them" (Leviticus 18:5). "Do this and you will live" (Luke 10:28). But what does the Apostle say? "And it is that command which is to give me life even though it directs me to death." The law which is given toward life, brings about death. It works death in man.

Why then? How so then? The Apostle says, "Sin took occasion from the law, deceived me and killed me through the law itself." Here we have again the "sin" just as we saw it in verse eight. This sin is the natural, perverted, inclination of the senses and will in man. This sin takes occasion from the law and works in men every kind of evil lust and also every kind of forbidden acts and allowances through the law. We recognized this in verse eight. Therefore sin deceives men and kills them through the law which gives life. Sin, the sin which deceives men, works death in men. This death is in the full sense of the words: the anger of God (Romans 4:15). This is the timely and eternal death with damnation and hell which comes through the law.

Therefore an essential ingredient of the law is this: "Cursed is the one who does not uphold all the words of this law by doing them" (Deuteronomy 27:26). The end of this sinful act is death (Romans 6:21). Therefore the law works death on men.

The Apostle wants this to be understood correctly. There ought to be no misunderstanding. He says again, "In this way the law is now holy and the command is holy, righteous and good". We treated this previously where we saw and fully recognized what the quality of the law was. The circumstances (that the law works death on the sinner) do not stand in contradiction, but in full agreement.

The Apostle goes on, "then has that, which is here good, become death to me?" He means: has the thing which is holy, righteous and good in itself, namely the law, been death for men? Has this law made and worked death upon mankind? He interjects, "that is absurd!"

The Apostle continues, "but the sin". This sin has brought death upon him and upon all men through the law. This must then be true: where there is sin (and there is sin), it is there for God's will. By this statement, God has a speck in each eye. The Apostle names these specks. He says first, "but in order that sin is recognized as sin, it has worked death in me through what was good." Sin misuses the goodness (the law) by working death in men in using the goodness which was given for life. Sin shows itself in this dreadful, nasty and evil way. This is the first reason why God has specks in His eyes.

Then the Apostle goes on, "so that through the command, sin becomes totally sinful". He means: through that sin (which takes the holy law of God and uses it to breed more sin and lead men to a curse for their devilish ways) it will show and reveal itself to be totally sinful, contrary to God and sacrilegious. This is the second reason that God has specks in His eyes.

"Thereby God has it in the eye", we say. God wants to use everything that is said to the end of a final reign of grace.

From this point Paul says nothing more of this. We know the purpose of this from our study on Romans 5:20 (pp.96-97).

We have now seen how the Apostle has explained verse five which tells us what the effect of the law is. He explains this by using three points in verses 7-13. He uses these three points so as not to pervert the unintelligent and thoughtless to their own damnation since this point might appear frightful and difficult to understand.

This portion of Scripture, Romans 7:5-13, is so rich in content and so important that we want to review for ourselves once again the meaning of these verses in a short summary.

The main thought of these verses is contained in verse five: The law of God has the effect on human beings that the evil lusts and passions, which live in the sinful nature, rule and work themselves out in the body, and bring forth fruit for death. This concept is explained thoroughly in verses 7-13.

The explanation of this point begins and ends with the statement that this evil effect of the law on men is not the fault of the law but it is sin. Sin works this by misusing the holy and righteous law of God (vv. 7a, 12-13). This thought is interwoven throughout Paul's entire explanation.

The first point of the explanation of the evil effect of the law on men is that men recognize sin as that which it truly is through the law alone. This sin is namely a contradiction against God's will (7b).

The second point of the explanation of the evil effect of the law on men is that as soon as the law effects a recognition of sin (which is dead until that point), evil lust rules and sin increases (v.8-9).

The third point Paul makes is that after what was said in the last two points takes place, the law effects eternal death and ruin (v.10-11).

In closing the Apostle shows that the law should have noted and explained the evil effect on men according to God's will so that the law may reveal sin which devilishly misuses the holy, righteous

and good law (vv.12-13). Romans 7:5-13 is the most important portion of Scripture in dealing with the effect of the law.

I Corinthians 15:56: "The sting of death is sin." This passage states that the sting of temporal and eternal death is sin. Where does sin have such power? "But the power of sin is the law." Man has fallen under the curse of the law through sin. It is in this way that the law works death on man through sin. This conclusion reminds us of what we said on Romans 7:5.

Galatians 3:10: "The ones who are encircled by the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: 'cursed is everyone who does not keep everything as it is written in the Book of the Law.'"

"The ones who are encircled" is literally translated as "as many as are of the works of the law". That includes all who think that they are the true children of Abraham because they do the works that are commanded in the law (Galatians 3:7). They believe that they are justified before God through these works; however, these ones do not truly believe as Abraham believed (Romans 4:1-3,13-22). All the ones who belong to the "law group" are not the true children of Abraham. They are not justified before God but they are under the curse of the law. It is written in the law, "cursed is everyone who does not keep everything as it is written in the Book of the Law". We know that no one does everything that is written in the Book of the Law. What good is it if someone outwardly keeps the Ceremonial and Civil Laws if he has broken the Moral Law? A pure fulfillment of the Moral Law would actually be nothing. No one could possibly do this. Love toward God and neighbor must be forthcoming in the work of the Ceremonial and Civil Laws. We know that the Ceremonial Law "can make nothing complete" (Hebrews 10:3). What about the Civil Law? It was indeed only given to the unrighteous. We also know that, "the law was not given for the righteous but for the unrighteous and disobedient, the godless and sinners, the unholy and profane, the ones who kill fathers and mothers, the murderers, fornicators, homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, perjurers and for whatever else is against holy

doctrine" (I Timothy 1:9-10). In conclusion, the law damns all who rely on it because no one keeps it.

Galatians 3:19a,23-24: "What, then should the law do? It came because of sin. However before faith came, we were held captive under the law, locked up until faith was revealed. Therefore the law has been our disciplinarian (which leads us to Christ) so that we might be justified by faith."

This passage fits nicely with its context which states that those who rely on the works of the law are under a curse. This the question now, "what, then should the law do?" The first answer to this question is given in verse 19, "it was given for this purpose", to fulfill the promise given to Abraham concerning the Messiah (Galatians 3:15-18). This is the same as what was said in Romans 5:20, "the law was added so that the trespass might become greater". Here we refer to what was said on this point on pp. 96-97.

Another answer to the question, "what, then should the law do?" is given in Galatians 3:23-24. Israel was "under the Mosaic Law, held captive and locked up". According to the Greek text this would read, "held captive under the law as subject to it". It was "trapped under the outward ordinances" of the Mosaic Law (Galatians 4:3). The Mosaic Law was like a "disciplinarian", a chief disciplinarian of children (Galatians 4:3) who were immature. This "disciplinarian" conducted all his dealings with the children in the strictest and narrowest degree. He guarded them and limited what they could do. In this captivity, locking up, binding and subjection, the Mosaic Law became a disciplinarian. The natural result is that sin became greater according to God's design (Romans 5:20). By God's design, all of this aimed at "faith, until it was revealed". The Mosaic Law came before faith. It was through the promise of the coming Messiah, who lived in the hearts of the true Israelites, that light was thrown to the shadows of the Ceremonial Law. It was through the recognized figure of Christ himself that these promises and all the shadows and examples were fulfilled. The Mosaic Law, by itself, effects ever-increasing sin.

In Chapter Seven of this book (which dealt with the character of the law) we considered Galatians 3:23-4:12 (pp.64-68). There we spoke at length about verses 23-24. We refer the reader to those favorable gleanings which are found on pages 66-68.

Galatians 4:5: "so that the ones under the law might be redeemed, and we might receive the adoption as sons." The ones "under the law" points back to Galatians 3:19ff. The law works such a captivity on those who are under it that they require redemption. Such slavery could only be turned over through the adoption that comes from Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:1: "Do not let yourselves be under the burdening yoke anymore." The entire Mosaic law is referred to with the words, "the burdening yoke". To the one who gets entangled in it, the law works damnation.

Galatians 5:4: "You who want to be justified by the law have lost Christ. You have fallen from grace." Whoever tries to be justified by his own works has lost the grace of God.

James 2:9: "You sin and you are convicted by the law as a lawbreaker." The law convicts sinners for their trespasses.

In summary we will give an ordered list of what the law effects according to the passages we cited.

The effect of God's law which was given through Moses to the Children of Israel is:

1. Recognition of sin. Recognition that sin is against the will of God. Recognition that the sin lives in the body and leads toward death and damnation. The following is a list of passages about the effect of the law on the unregenerate man: James 2:9; Romans 3:19-20; 7:5-13.
In conclusion we give these particular passages:
2. Sin becomes great and prevails. This is through the captivity and discipline of the law. Romans 5:20; Galatians 3:19, 23-24; 4:5.
3. The loss of the grace of God. Galatians 5:4.
4. God's anger. Romans 4:15.
5. God's curse. Galatians 3:10.
6. Death. I Corinthians 15:56.
7. Damnation. Romans 2:12; Galatians 5:1.

All these are the effects of the law on men who are not inwardly moved by the Gospel. This is especially true of the ones who want to be justified and blessed before God through their own works.

All of these effects are not the fault of the holy, righteous and upright law, but the fault of sin which misuses the law. Ultimately the responsibility falls on sinful mankind. This all changes with the Christian who is born again. This will be the subject of the next chapter.