"The Sinful Passions Through The Law"

"*For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death ...*" (Rom. 7:5). "*For when we were in the flesh.*" It must be obvious the writer has something in mind other than to be in a flesh body: at the time of this writing both he and those whom he addressed were "*in the flesh.*" So, there was a sense in which neither he nor the Romans "*were in the flesh*" although they all dwelt in a tabernacle of clay.

Those "*in the flesh*" were those whose lives were directed and controlled by carnal fleshly desires. There was little or no restraint exercised to control their desires; the "*flesh*" held sway. And, while they lived in that state; the sinful passions which were through the law; brought about death to those "*in the flesh.*"

Some consider that the law "produces" the sinful passion. That is not true. Such would make God the author of sin, which it is not. The passions of sin, which were through the law, were not produced by the law -- but they were identified by the law!

Passions, desires are part of our nature. The body hungers and has sexual desires. Those desires are not wrong in themselves. They become sinful when their cravings are satisfied out of proper bounds. Anger is not sin. We are commanded, "*Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath*" (Eph. 4:26). Jesus was angry with His nation because of the hardness of their hearts (Mk. 3:5). But uncontrolled anger breeds hatred, and hatred breeds murder.

The law identified the sinful passions with its sinful fruit. Having asked, "*Is the law sin?*" he quickly responded, "*God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin except through the law, for I had not known coveting, except the law had said: 'Thou shalt not covet'*" (Rom. 7:7). Did the law produce coveting? No. The desire was there. What the law did was to identify what the sin was. Is it wrong to desire things, to desire money to buy clothes homes, food? No. The need to work for these things are part of man's make up. God commanded Adam from the first to "*tend the fields, the harvest the fruits.*" Why? To fill his needs. But, there is a difference in desiring things for self and in coveting the things of others. The desire for my needs may subtlety by Satan be turned into desiring the things of others. The commandment which said, "*Thou shalt not covet*" showed the wrong side of desire to be sin.

"*But sin, finding occasion, wrought in me all manner of coveting, for apart from the law, sin is dead*" (Rom.7:8f). The pig at the trough, eats his food and greedily roots out the other pigs. There is "no law" forbidding him to do what he does. After all, he is just a pig. But even though there is no law, do other pigs suffer injury? Evolution calls this action "the survival of the fit-test." Is not man more than a pig? The very acquiescence to this fact that acting like a pig is wrong for us, is strong argument that man is a special creation of God. Man must learn that it is right to eat, but wrong to "nose out" others from their food. Paul personifies sin when he says "*sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment, all manner of covet-ing.*" It is "*sin*," "*sinful passions*" and "*temptation*" that finds occasion by that which is now identified to be covetousness and I now recognize that the desires I have had all the while, are covetousness, are sin, are wrong! The law did not put the unlawful passions in my heart, it only identified those passions already there to be what they were: unlawful, sinful. Suppose there were no laws against murder, would killing cease? Would stealing cease? Lying? Of course not. Man would simply have lowered himself to the position of a pig!

"*Apart from the law, sin is dead.*" This is but another way to say what has already been said: "*Where there is no law, neither is there transgression*" (Rom. 4:15). The penalty for sin is not inflicted where there is no law. NEXT: "I Was Alive Apart From The Law Once."

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