

It is often asked, just who is speaking in these verses? Paul the apostle, certainly, but is he speaking as a saved person or remembering his state of mind before salvation?

Let's suppose we can divide Paul's religious experience into three phases:

First, he is the outwardly religious Jew, comfortable in his scrupulous observation of the law.

Then he meets the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. He believes and is saved. His new nature seeks to please God and his history tells him the best way to please God is to keep the law. He enters into all kinds of resolutions and efforts to perfect himself and bring himself up to the law's standard of holiness. But he

fails, over and over. This is the phase he recounts in Rom. 7:14-25. (This is conjectural, and may have occurred in Damascus or Arabia.)

But then Paul realizes his holiness is from Christ and his righteousness is from Christ and his own efforts in the flesh are fruitless. He becomes occupied with Christ and not himself. He finds liberty in the Spirit instead of enslavement in the law of sin and death. That triumphant new phase of Paul's spiritual life is the subject of Chapter 8. That's why we're continuing with a few verses of Chapter 8 in this study – how could we leave Paul in his wretched state for another week?

Questions:

1. Does any of verses 14-24 seem familiar to you?
2. What evidence do we have that the "I" in these verses is a saved person?
3. Does verse 20 excuse us from wrongdoing, because it's sin acting and not me?
4. Find each of these "laws" in the portion and, as best you can, explain what it is:

The law of Moses

The law of sin

The law of the mind

The law of the Spirit of life

(Extra credit: Find and explain the law of liberty in James)

5. Paul says that the members, or parts, of his body are subject to the law of sin. We saw in chapter 3 that our throats, tongues, mouths, feet, and eyes can be servants of sin. Is the answer to pluck out your eye or amputate your hand as in Matt. 5:29-30? (OK, the answer is no. But what is the solution?)
6. What is the body of death in verse 24?
7. What has changed in verse 8:1? What happened to condemnation?
8. What is the key to the victory expressed in 8:1-4?