

Romans 7:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

Analysis

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,)—Paul addresses those familiar with *nomos* (νόμος, "law"), likely Jewish converts who understood Torah principles. The Greek verb *ginōskō* (γινώσκω, "know") implies experiential knowledge, not mere intellectual awareness. Paul assumes his audience grasps legal binding principles.

How that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?—The verb *kyrieuō* (κυριεύω, "have dominion") denotes lordship or mastery. Death dissolves legal obligations, a principle foundational to the marriage analogy that follows. This introduces Paul's argument that believers have died to the law's jurisdiction through union with Christ's death (v. 4), enabling them to live under grace's reign rather than law's condemning authority.

Historical Context

Written around AD 57 from Corinth, Romans was Paul's systematic presentation of the gospel to a church he had not yet visited. Chapter 7 follows his discussion of sanctification (ch. 6) and addresses Jewish-Christian concerns about the law's role in salvation. The Roman church included both Jewish and Gentile believers navigating questions about Torah observance under the new covenant.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does understanding death's role in dissolving legal obligations help you grasp your freedom from law-based righteousness?
2. In what ways might you still be trying to establish dominion over your own spiritual life rather than surrendering to Christ's lordship?
3. What 'laws' or external religious standards might still hold illegitimate dominion over your conscience?

Interlinear Text

Ἡ	ἀγνοεῖτε	ἀδελφοί	γινώσκουσιν	γὰρ	νόμος	λαλῶ
G2228	Know ye not	brethren	to them that know	(for	the law	I speak
	G50	G80	G1097	G1063	G3551	G2980
ὅτι	ὁ	νόμος	κυριεύει	τοῦ	ἀνθρώπου	ἐφ'
how that	G3588	the law	hath dominion over	G3588	a man	as long as
G3754		G3551	G2961		G444	G1909
ὅσον	χρόνον	ζῇ				
G3745	G5550	he liveth				
		G2198				

Additional Cross-References

Romans 6:14 (Word): For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 7:6 (Word): But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Romans 6:3 (Parallel theme): Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Proverbs 6:23 (Word): For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

Romans 10:1 (Parallel theme): Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

Romans 9:3 (Parallel theme): For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

1 Corinthians 9:8 (Word): Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

Galatians 4:21 (Word): Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?