

Romans 7:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

Analysis

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law—The verb *deō* (δέω, "bind") describes legal obligation, used throughout Scripture for binding oaths and covenants. Paul illustrates v. 1's principle with marriage law, universally understood across cultures. **So long as he liveth** establishes the temporal limitation of legal jurisdiction.

But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband—The verb *katargeō* (καταργέω, "loosed/released") means to nullify, abolish, or render inoperative. This same verb describes believers being "delivered from the law" (v. 6). Death doesn't modify the law; it removes the person from the law's jurisdiction. The woman isn't less married; she's no longer under marriage's binding authority because death dissolved the relationship. This parallels how Christ's death dissolved believers' relationship to law-condemnation.

Historical Context

Roman marriage law, like Jewish law, recognized death as the definitive termination of marital obligations. Both cultures understood that remarriage after a spouse's death involved no legal or moral impropriety. Paul uses this universal legal principle to explain the radical transition from law to grace accomplished through believers' union with Christ's death.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that death—not law modification—brings freedom change your understanding of your relationship to God's commands?
2. What aspects of 'law-marriage' might you unconsciously treat as still binding despite your union with Christ in His death?
3. How does this analogy help you understand the finality of Christ's work in liberating you from law-condemnation?

Interlinear Text

ἡ γὰρ ὅπανδρος γυνὴ τῷ ζῶντι
G3588 For which hath an husband the woman G3588 so long as he liveth
G1063 G5220 G1135 G2198

ἀνδρός δέδεται νόμου ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ
of her husband is bound by the law if but be dead G3588
G435 G1210 G3551 G1437 G1161 G599 G3588

ἀνδρός κατέργηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός
of her husband she is loosed from by the law G3588 of her husband
G435 G2673 G575 G3551 G3588 G435

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 7:39 (Word): The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7:4 (Parallel theme): The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

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