

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 G3588	γὰρ G1063	ὑπανδρος G5220	γυνή G1135	τῷ G3588	ζῶντι G2198	
For		which hath an husband	the woman	so long as he liveth		
ἀνδρός G435	δέδεταί G1210	νόμου G3551	ἐάν G1437	δὲ G1161	ἀποθάνῃ G599	ὁ G3588
of her husband	is bound	by the law	if	but	be dead	
ἀνδρός G435	κατήργηται G2673	ἀπὸ G575	τοῦ G3588	νόμου G3551	τοῦ G3588	ἀνδρός G435
of her husband	she is loosed	from		by the law		of her husband

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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