

Romans 7:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

But now we are delivered from the law—Katērgēthēmen (κατηργήθημεν, "released/discharged") is the same verb as "loosed" in v. 2. Believers are freed from law's condemning jurisdiction through death. **That being dead wherein we were held**—Interpretations differ whether "that being dead" refers to the law dying or believers dying to law; context favors believers dying (v. 4). Katechō (κατέχω, "held") depicts law holding sinners in condemning custody.

That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter—Douleuō (δουλεύω, "serve") shows believers still serve, but under new management. Kainotēs pneumatos (καινότης πνεύματος, "newness of Spirit") contrasts with palaiotēs grammatos (παλαιότης γράμματος, "oldness of letter")—Spirit-empowered internal transformation versus external code-keeping. This anticipates chapter 8's Spirit-empowered life.

Historical Context

The contrast between 'Spirit' and 'letter' was central to Paul's explanation of new covenant superiority (2 Corinthians 3:6). Jewish believers struggled to transition from Torah-centered spirituality to Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered life. Paul insists the new covenant doesn't merely modify the old but represents a fundamentally different economy of grace.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What evidence of 'newness of spirit' versus 'oldness of letter' characterizes your Christian life?
2. How might you be attempting to serve God in the 'oldness of the letter' while claiming to live under grace?
3. In what ways does understanding your deliverance from law's jurisdiction free you to pursue holiness from love rather than obligation?

Interlinear Text

νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀποθανόντες ἐν
now But we are delivered from the law that being dead in
G3570 G1161 G2673 G575 G3588 G3551 G599 G1722

ἄντειχόμεθα ὅστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν καινότητι
we were held that should serve we in newness
G3739 G2722 G5620 G1398 G2248 G1722 G2538

πνεύματος καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος
of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter
G4151 G2532 G3756 G3821 G1121

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 3:6 (Spirit): Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Romans 7:4 (Word): Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Romans 6:4 (Parallel theme): Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Colossians 3:10 (Parallel theme): And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Romans 6:22 (Parallel theme): But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Romans 12:2 (Parallel theme): And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Galatians 3:13 (Word): Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Galatians 6:15 (Parallel theme): For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Romans 6:2 (Parallel theme): God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Romans 7:1 (Word): 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?