

# Romans 7 Notes

by John Nelson Darby

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*John Nelson Darby's sermon on Romans 7 explores the struggle with sin, the role of the law, and the transformative power of being in Christ.*

**Scripture:** Romans 7:7

**Topics:** "Freedom in Christ", "Understanding Sin and Forgiveness"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby discusses the struggle between the law and sin, emphasizing that the law reveals our inability to overcome sin on our own. He explains that true freedom comes from being 'in Christ Jesus,' where believers are no longer slaves to sin but are forgiven and justified through Christ's sacrifice. Darby highlights the distinction between imputation and forgiveness, asserting that believers can approach God boldly without the burden of guilt due to Christ's atonement. He also addresses the role of priesthood and advocacy, clarifying that while believers may sin, they have an advocate in Christ who intercedes for them. Ultimately, Darby encourages believers to understand their standing before God and the importance of confession and holiness in their walk of faith.

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## Transcript

The moment the law said, "Thou shalt not lust," why you might as well tell me not to be a man. Even if my will is right - the case supposed here - yet I am in such a state that I cannot succeed in mastering the flesh.

Then he learns that it is not he that does it, but the sin that dwells in him, and next he learns that it is too strong for him, and he cries, "Who shall deliver me?"

This is what a man must be brought to. Then he gets "in Christ Jesus," and that is a new place; the slave is free.

If I have a rogue in my house, and I trust him, he pilfers me at pleasure; but if I distrust him and lock things up, it may be unpleasant, but still, I am safe.

One word about forgiveness. There is what I should call an administrative forgiveness, but this was not known until Christ's coming.

They did spell out of old about eternal judgment. But the Lord says, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," etc., and He shews His competency to do it by saying, "Arise

and take up thy bed and walk, go thy way into thine house."

You get no spiritual knowledge of what sin is in the Old Testament. I do not speak of sins, but of sin.

The keys of the church were not given to Peter; that is all a blind delusion. People say the kingdom of heaven and the church are the same thing, but it is all wrong.

There is a building which Christ is carrying on now, and which grows to a holy temple.

When you speak of succession, I see there is one, but then it is, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

Remember nobody else is Simon Barjonas but Simon Barjonas.

Two or three in Christ's name is God's succession; and no other is; apostolic if you like to call it, but God owns it.

I shall not want a conscience in heaven; it is positive infinite enjoyment there.

Priesthood is that they may behave well.

Advocacy is when they have not behaved well.

Priesthood is for mercy and grace to help.

6 The Advocate is, if any man sin, we have one.

Advocacy is one fruit of propitiation. Priesthood keeps the heart in constant dependence. But in neither of these is there any question of imputation. You never find that we go to the priest; a Jew of old might. We go boldly to the throne of grace, because Christ is there in heaven for us; but that is not intercession. It is the priest now who is there, and the priest is connected with intercession, but intercession is not the exercise of priesthood, properly speaking.

Ques. When does the Lord act as advocate, is it when a saint sins?

It does not say, if any man repent, and confess; but, if any man sin, we have an advocate.

Ques. Then does nothing begin with us?

Nothing but sin that I know of.

And confession is the effect of advocacy; but, remember, imputation is not in question.

Ques. What do you mean by that?

I mean the charge of guilt upon a man's conscience. Hebrews gives you your standing before God, and there is no more conscience of sins. That is the scriptural doctrine; whereas, nowadays, nine-tenths of Christians could not tell you what that passage means.

We are not Jews under law, or there would be imputation. If Christ has not put away all our sins totally and for ever, and absolutely, it never can be done.

Ques. Does Hebrews contemplate failure?

Apostasy it does, not failure strictly.

Ques. What is the difference between infirmities and sins?

Christ can be touched with the feeling of my infirmities, but He never had any sins, or any sympathy with them. I can get help for my infirmities, and in a sense can glory in them, but I could not in my sins.

There are two kinds of temptations; one is from without, all the difficulties of Christian life; Christ went through them and He has gone through more than any of us; but the other kind of temptation is when a man is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Christ, of course, never had that.

You want the hatchet of Scripture for these latter; the word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, and so helps us in that way to go through the wilderness.

7 Ques. How far ought unconfessed sin to affect a man's conscience?

He never can get a good one until he has confessed all to God.

The existence of the flesh in me does not give me a bad conscience; but the moment I let it act, that does. If you mingle the question of imputation with the sins of a saint, then it is no longer to you simply a question of holiness, but of righteousness and justification, and therefore you never judge sin really and thoroughly until you have got the certainty that nothing is imputed to you. The sense of sins and imputation is all quite right until you are justified - the deeper you feel it the better.

But when I learn that Christ has borne all my sins in His own body on the tree, so that God must pass them over, and cannot impute them to me, for He sees the blood of Christ; then, if He were supposed to impute them to me, it would make Him disown that blood.

A person who raises the question of imputation does not know what it is to be justified.

Ques. What is the difference between non-imputation and forgiveness?

If nothing could be imputed to a sinner, then there is no need for forgiveness.

When guilty, you are justified; when you have offended, you are forgiven; and when you are defiled, you are washed. If I look at guilt, I want justification; at offence, forgiveness; at defilement, cleansing.

All is provided; God leaves no loophole for Satan.

There is no proper holy affection until a man is certain of his standing before God.

Ques. What is the difference between a bad conscience and "no more conscience of sins"?

I have no more conscience of sins in virtue of the blood of Christ, but then that gives me a conscience of sin in my failure of holiness. A person in a dirty condition generally would think little of another spot; but if he is spick and span clean, he would think a great deal of the first spot.

Ques. Is Numbers 19 connected with John's epistle?

In a particular case it may be, for there, taking death as the sign of sin, the man was defiled.

Ques. What of the third and seventh days?

8 The first effect is what I have just said, that after the sacrifice, or, rather, the bringing of the ashes, no question can be raised as to imputation, and when I get my soul fully right, then comes the sense of superiority of grace to sin, so that I get back into communion.

Only you must ever remember that ashes are not blood.

Ques. Is the third day resurrection?

I don't know.

Ques. Is it not rather abundant testimony?

Probably. He was not allowed to be sprinkled on the first day: there was no levity in dealing with sin. I think you lose the beauty of the truth, if you leave out the proper power of the seventh day.

Ques. What is the difference between imputation and substitution?

Substitution is that which takes away imputation.

Ques. In what way does confession come in with John 13?

John 13 produces uprightness of heart in the confession.

Ques. Is there any particular form for discipline to take?

No. All manner of forms, in your family circumstances, such as will meet the state of your heart. And it need not necessarily be for sins. It is God's wisdom to be able to unite what disciplines the new man with what also keeps the "old man" down.

Ques. What was Paul's thorn?

Something that kept the old man down.

At the same time, he was suffering for Christ, for if he had not gone and preached, he would not have had the trouble at all.

Ques. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood "what is that?

You are not killed yet; you must not be frightened. And so he says, too, don't you faint because God loves you; neither despise His chastening, for you need the rebuke.

Ques. What of the "holiness" in verse 10?\*

{\*See note in New Translation in loco.}

It shews what it is; it is God's nature, and a separation from evil that He is working out in us. We want some things checking that He may give us more light. It was the same in Job, before dispensations began, to "hide pride from man."

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