

## **“I Was Alive Apart From The Law”**

*“And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died” (Rom. 7:9).* Paul uses himself in these following verses to illustrate one who lived under the law. His reference to having been alive *“apart from the law once”* is an obvious reference to the age of innocence; that time in the lives of all who have not reached the point that we recognize the full impact of what is right and wrong. That age may come at different times to individuals: some earlier; for others, later. But to every normal person, that time comes. *“But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.”*

The *“commandment”* to which Paul alludes, is the command, *“Thou shalt not covet.”* In this section (which began with the first verse: *“Law has dominion over a man for so long as he liveth”*). The apostles uses the word *“law”* to identify the whole system which was revealed through Moses and the particular point of that law which he violated and thus sinned as the *“commandment”* (*“Thou shalt not covet”*). The word *“revive”* in the text is the word ANALAO and means *“to live again;”* to *“spring into activity.”* We are not to understand Paul as saying that in his life sin had once lived, then had been extinguished, then had come to life again at the revelation of the law. Paul clearly shows that prior to *“sin’s revival”* in his life, he was *“alive.”* He was in a safe condition; his soul was not imperiled because of sin. But, with Paul’s awakening to sin, sin wrought in him the same consequences it did in all others who came to the age of accountability.

*“And the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death” (Rom. 7:10).* The commandment (*“Thou shalt not covet”*) was designed to be unto life, regulating our behavior towards others brings benefit to us all. It is right that none covet the possession of others, that none covet our possession. Yet, the command led to death for Paul. How so? He explains it in the next verse, *“For sin, finding occasion through the commandment, beguiled me and through it slew me.”* It was not the commandment which *“beguiled”* Paul, it was sin. The commandment was an occasion which showed that desires which Paul already had were in essence *“covetousness.”* Sin is personified in this text. The different commandments of the law proved to be different ways man might be slain by sin: lying, adultery, stealing, killing.

The prohibition of all these things did not cause a man to do that which he had not done before; it identified the desires and deeds to be wrong. It did not cause a man to covet who had never coveted before nor did it cause a man to lie, who had not lied before.

So Paul asks: *"Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good, that through The commandment sin might become exceedingly sinful"* (Rom. 7:13). Sin is exceeding sinful. By coveting the possessions of another, I die. These consequences teach me that no matter how right it is to be happy for the good fortunes of others, it is exceeding wrong for me to covet other's possessions. The command did not cause coveting -- it just shows it to be what it is! NEXT: "I Am Carnal, Sold Under Sin."

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