Romans 7:1

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Simple Outline:

7:1-6 As Moses' Law lost its claims at death, saints being dead to the Law are free from its bondage.

7:7-13 Though the gospel of grace frees from Moses' Law, the Law is yet good and holy by its design.

7:14-23 Though the gospel of grace frees from Moses' Law, the Law is good and holy by experience.

7:24-25 Though Moses' Law is holy and good by design and experience, only Jesus Christ can save us.

Introduction:

1. The Holy Spirit's design and intent for Romans 7 can only be fully appreciated by understanding the thought processes of the Jews and proselytes in the church at Rome in their respect for Moses' Law.
   a. They had been raised all their lives (or since becoming proselytes) to value the Law for salvation.
   b. They had all the nationalist fervor for the Law we would expect for this gift of God to them, just as Moses had exalted it in glowing terms of their national identity (Deut 4:5-8; Ps 147:19-20).
   c. If you intensely read the Bible from Genesis, you would have a very similar view of the Law.
   d. Even after conversion, they had great admiration and devotion to Moses' Law (Acts 21:20-24).
   e. Thankfully, when the time of reformation ended, God shook temple worship from the earth.
2. This chapter is a commentary and lengthy explanation of what Paul introduced in Romans 6:14-15, which text should be read and studied in its context before commencing a full study of this chapter.
3. A danger in this chapter is the extreme view or heresy that Christians cannot live holy lives because Paul could not, which is caused by missing the chapter's design and taking its descriptions too far.
4. This chapter is Paul's defense against those who might accuse him of disparaging Moses' Law, so he gave a chapter to the explanation of the purpose of the Law and the believer's relationship to it.
5. He has and will prove by various arguments and analogies that saints under the gospel are not under the Law as a means of justification and/or condemning religious system of bondage.
6. He had earlier criticized the Jews' confidence in Moses' Law as being vain and hypocritical (2:17).
7. He had given an unusual description of the Law's purpose and put grace in Christ above it (5:20-21).
8. Entering the practical section of his epistle, Paul dealt with the issue of conduct for those under grace.
   a. He first pursued a lengthy baptism analogy, putting the saints under the gospel of grace (6:1-14).
   b. Demoting Moses' Law in this way furthered the question of appropriate conduct for saints (6:15).
   c. He exhorted to holiness by using an earthly analogy of servitude to opposing masters (6:16-23).
   d. He exhorted to holiness by using a legal analogy of death freeing one from legal bondage (7:1-6).
   e. By all three arguments … baptism, servitude, death … he asked, Know ye not (6:3,16; 7:1)?
9. The gospel, which declares these glad tidings, should be seen as our emancipation proclamation!

1 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?

Know ye not, brethren,

A. There is a basic body of knowledge that every believer ought to have to understand scripture.

B. Confusion and heresies often begins with ignorance of scripture leading to false doctrine.

C. Those who take up a Bible without knowledge of the Bible can get quite confused quickly.
   1. Starting with the Old Testament, new readers might easily become pacifists (Ex 20:13).
   2. Starting with the Old Testament, new readers often assume bondage to ceremonial law.
   3. Reading the O.T. prophets without N.T. knowledge confused the eunuch (Acts 8:30-34).
   4. Two important rules of interpretation require broad knowledge (II Pet 1:20; I Cor 2:13).
   5. God's design is for truth to be perpetuated from minister to minister, father to son, etc.
   6. Paul charged Timothy with finding other ministers to perpetuate his doctrine (II Tim 2:2).
   7. The Bible, and Paul's epistles, can be hard to understand and confusing (II Pet 3:15-16).

D. The knowledge required for the first part of this chapter was Moses' marital law (7:2-3).

E. Paul addressed the Law here, because he had recently put it aside for Christians (6:14-15).

(For I speak to them that know the law,)

A. Paul had to oppose Jewish legalists throughout his ministry who vainly adored Moses' Law.

B. Here he kindly addresses friend and foe as knowledgeable in the Law for his wise analogy, using Solomon's wisdom and our Lord's wisdom in reasoning (Prov 15:1; Matt 10:16).

C. As with his analogy of servitude, Paul used whatever arguments would help learning (6:19).

D. Paul also used Moses' Law for paying preachers and silent women (I Cor 9:8-10; 14:34-35).

E. Some wrest extraneous ideas about divorce from this section out of ignorance of the Law.

How that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

A. Paul has and will prove by various arguments and analogies that saints under the gospel are not under the Law as a means of justification and/or condemning religion of bondage.

B. Here is the argument for the first six verses of this chapter – death ends the Law's claims
   1. His argument is that Christian saints are legally dead to Moses' Law by Christ's death.
   2. He appeals to a basic aspect of the Law (actually any law) – it cannot reach beyond death.
   3. He expects those he is addressing – the Legalists or so inclined – to understand this point.

C. From the general proposition regarding death and legal claims, he will propose an example from Moses' Law about marital law, though marriage, divorce, and remarriage are ignored.

2 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.***

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth;

A. Paul's inspired example from Moses' Law is marital law as it applied to the women of Israel.

B. To maximize your understanding, you must put any thoughts of divorce and remarriage out of your mind, for Paul is ignoring all such considerations to focus on death only.

C. Marriage is a permanent relationship between a man and a woman for the duration of life.

D. Our society declares this fact with the words in most marriage vows, "To death do us part."

E. How and where does Moses' Law establish this legal fact about the duration of marriage?
   1. Paul appealed elsewhere to this same legal fact about marriage from Moses (I Cor 7:39).
   2. We appeal to the creation ordinance of marriage to learn its permanence (Gen 2:23-24).
   3. A wife is bone of man's bones and flesh of his flesh, for his body is intact until death.
   4. A man and a woman leave father and mother (temporary) for marriage (permanent).
   5. A husband and wife cleave together (bonded beyond sex), indicating the permanence.
   6. A husband and wife are thereafter one flesh (more than sex), also indicating permanence.
   7. Jesus, when confronted about divorce, quoted these verses as His evidence (Matt 19:3-6).

F. It is a travesty of Bible interpretation to even let divorce or remarriage enter your mind here.
   1. Divorce was the farthest thing from Paul's mind, especially in any New Testament sense.
   2. The larger context is the believer's relationship to the Law. Marriage doctrine is not here.
   3. The precise context and the only point here is how death ends bondage to Moses' Law.

But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

A. The marriage bond, or the legal bondage of marriage of duties and perpetuity, is lifted from a woman when her husband dies.

B. A widow freed from the bond of marriage by the death of her husband could remarry, and the Law for certain cases required her to do so (Gen 38:8; Deut 25:5-10; Matt 22:24).

C. The marital laws of Moses did not extend beyond death – death freed women from the Law

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an

adulteress:

A. Adultery is sexual intercourse or marriage to a person other than the one you are bound to.
B. God considers affairs of adultery a capital crime (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22-24; Num 5:11-31).
C. Paul for the sake of his doctrinal argument about death ignores all divorces and remarriage.
    1. Here is another example of the error of using a verse out of its context to build a doctrine.
    2. Many come to this text to invent an absolute rule against any divorce and remarriage.
    3. Many come to this text to teach that divorce leaves you strangely married to two men.
    4. Many come to this text to invent the impossible predicament of a state of adultery.
    5. Paul ignored all issues of divorce and remarriage to focus on death (*till death do us part*).
    6. Those addressed here, who knew the law (7:1), knew that Moses' Law allowed for divorce so that remarriage to another was not adultery (Ex 21:7-11; Deut 24:1-4).
    7. Paul also ignored the teaching of Jesus Christ allowing divorce and remarriage for unrepentant fornication (Matt 5:31-32; 19:3-9 cp 18:21-35).
    8. Paul also ignored his own teaching beyond that of Jesus about desertion (I Cor 7:12-16).
    9. We would further add the principles of mercy (Matt 12:1-8) and intent (Mark 2:23-28).

But if her husband be dead, she is free from that law;

A. Back to the last clause of 7:2, Paul restated that marriage law did not extend beyond death.
B. Ignoring issues of marriage, divorce, or remarriage, the fact that must be seen clearly and powerfully to appreciate Paul's argument is the freedom from Moses' marital law by death.

So that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

A. A widow that marries is not an adulteress, though she is intimate and bound to a second man.
B. She is completely free to enjoy the second man with all the love and zeal she did the first.
C. Paul addressed the issue of widows remarrying in three other places that should be grasped.
    1. A widow is free to remarry, but only in the Lord (I Cor 7:39 cp 11:11 cp II Cor 6:14-17).
    2. Widows at Corinth were advised to remain single for the reasons he advised others to remain single … simplicity (7:6-9,29), dedication (7:32), and present distress (7:26-28).
    3. Paul told Timothy for widows under 60 and without Corinth's distress to remarry, lest the church support those who could not contain and would profane their role (I Tim 5:11-14).
    4. Paul told Timothy widows deserving church support married but once (I Tim 5:9,11-12).
D. The interpretation and application of Paul's analogy is quite simple if you follow closely.
    1. Moses' Law bound a woman to serve her husband in all marital duties as long as he lived.
    2. If he died, the woman was freed from the marital obligations of Moses' Law for wives.
    3. Therefore, marriage to any other man while her husband yet lived was the sin of adultery.
    4. But if her husband died, she was free to marry another man without any hint of adultery.
    5. The analogy? The lesson? The Law loses its authority, power, and jurisdiction at death.

E. The misapplication of this analogy uses it for a false doctrine of divorce and remarriage.

F. The power of the analogy should not be missed or diluted by any other considerations here.
   1. A woman is legally obligated by Moses' marital law to serve her husband for 50+ years.
   2. Death entirely frees her from this obligation and bondage to marry any man she wishes.
   3. Therefore, Moses' Law declared a crucial fact – its jurisdiction entirely ends at death.

4 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.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.

A. Rather than declaring believers freed from Moses' Law by an independent line of reasoning, Paul wisely and powerfully reasoned from the marital implications of Moses' Law (7:2-3).

B. The *wherefore* here, drawing a conclusion from his analogy, states believers dead to the Law.

C. If you look closely, there are a few inconsistencies between the analogy and believing saints.
   1. The new husband we marry after the Law died to free us … rather than the Law husband!
   2. Rather than a husband dying and leaving a widow, we ourselves are dead to the Law.
   3. The inconsistencies are Holy Spirit approved, for the only point that counts is still true!

D. Jesus kept the Law perfectly and died fulfilling its penalty, thus freeing all in Jesus Christ.

E. This death to the law is not that we ignore, reject, or disobey God's moral laws still applying.
   1. As Paul will prove shortly about himself and confirm elsewhere for us, he and we are still obligated to not covet (7:7; 13:9; I Cor 5:11; 6:10; Eph 5:5; I Tim 3:3).
   2. This death to the Law is its loss of condemning jurisdiction to God's judgment over us.
   3. This death to the Law is to a lesser degree its end as religious system of worship to God.

F. The gospel, declaring these glad tidings, should be seen as our emancipation proclamation

That ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.

A. Rather than simply declaring an end to Law bondage over believers, Paul taught remarriage!

B. Though Jesus Christ died to free us from the Law, He has been raised to be a living Husband!

C. Have you buried the Law to be fully devoted to the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus (8:2)?

D. Paul was burdened to save God's elect among the Jews of their first marriage (Rom 10:1-5).

That we should bring forth fruit to God.

A. Believers enter marriage (in this analogy) with Jesus Christ for the purpose of pleasing God.

B. The effect or consequence of being under the Law was to magnify sinfulness and its death.

C. The effect or consequence of being under grace is to magnify spiritual power to fruitfulness.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

For when we were in the flesh.

A. What *flesh* had Paul's direct audience been in? An unregenerate state or under Moses' Law?

B. Is it proper to consider or call being under Moses' Law a condition of being *in the flesh?*
   1. Being *in the flesh* is an apt description of being under the Law of Moses (Gal 3:3; 6:12).
   2. Paul described his possible confidence *in the flesh* as being under the Law (Phil 3:1-6).
   3. The Law of Moses was worldly (Gal 4:3; Col 2:20-22), weak and beggarly (Gal 4:9), carnal (Heb 9:10), and devoid of grace for unprofitable meats (Heb 13:9).

C. What does the context indicate for us to properly identify the sense of being *in the flesh?*
   1. Paul here provided a lengthy exposition for no longer being *under the Law* (6:14).
   2. The opposite condition is described in the following verse … *delivered from the Law*.
   3. Regeneration is not part of the context, nor would it serve as useful of a purpose here.
   4. Whether regenerate or not, the Law has the same effect … brings forth fruit to death.
   5. Paul described them as servants under a tutor and schoolmaster before Christ (Gal 3-4).

The motions of sins.

A. The progress of sin is described as lusts, enticement, temptation, and then sin (Jas 1:14-15).

B. These steps all begin with a good, holy, and spiritual commandment from God exposing us.

Which were by the law.

A. Paul will elaborate on this effect of the Law in the coming context about the Law (7:7-23).

B. The Law, by its good, holy, and spiritual commandments aggravates and identifies our sins.

Did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

A. The bondage of the law was its constant ability and reminder of man's sinful proclivities.

B. As Paul will explain in much greater detail shortly, the law magnified our sins (5:19).

6 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.

But now we are delivered from the law.

A. Moses' Law condemns every single person to death, as Paul had just clearly described (7:5).

B. But the death of Christ has freed us from that law and its condemnation of us to death.

That being dead wherein we were held.

A. *That* here is a relative pronoun referring to the death of the damning Law of the first clause.
    1. The Law itself is the main subject of this clause, for it is that in which we were held.
    2. The *oldness of the letter* in context indicates further that here it is the Law that died.
B. Once captive by the Law and under its damning dominion, we have been freed by its death.
C. Paul's transfer of death from us to the Law itself introduces the next two clauses of change.

That we should serve in newness of spirit.

A. The time of reformation (Heb 9:10) changed worship from external to internal (Jn 4:20-24).
B. Paul will elaborate shortly on this new spiritual worship with the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:1-17).
C. For a fuller explanation of the inferiority of the Law, see Paul's comparison in II Cor 3:1-18.
D. The old worship – the Law's carnal letter – could not satisfy the conscience (Hebrews 9:14).
E. Furthermore, the new covenant had a much greater ministration of the Spirit (Gal 3:2-3).
F. Instead of fearful outward compliance without hope, we may now serve joyfully by grace.

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7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

What shall we say then?

A. Paul's descriptions of the Law, especially to Jews, raised questions about the Law's purpose.
    1. He had criticized the value of the Law for the Jews that lived contrary to it (2:17-27).
    2. He had declared unequivocally that no flesh could be justified by Moses' Law (3:19-20).
    3. He had declared that faith and his message of God's grace established the Law (3:31).
    4. He had taught that the Law works God's wrath by creating legal transgressors (4:15).
    5. He had stated that the Law entered to make sin abound, which grace covered (5:20).
    6. He had recently stated that God's grace had replaced the Law and its dominion (6:14-15).
    7. In the immediate context, he declared death to the Law and its sinful old letter (7:5-6).
B. Paul's inspired method of teaching was to head off questions by asking and answering them.

C. Some could argue from his previous statements about the Law that it was the cause of sin.
D. Much confusion arises from this chapter due to missing the design and scope of the chapter.
    1. Paul's design and scope through the rest of the chapter is the use and effect of the Law.
    2. This is not a description of an unregenerate man, for Paul described himself as renewed.
    3. This is not a description of an impossible conflict to comfort Christians living carnally.
    4. Paul proved in this section, 7-13, that the Law convicts of sin, agreeable to 3:20 and 5:20.
    5. Though the Law is good and spiritual, it cannot save, as Paul will summarize in 8:1-4.

Is the law sin?

A. We understand *the law* here to be the moral law, especially the Ten Commandments, for Paul immediately illustrated his argument by using the tenth commandment, Thou shalt not covet.
B. Did Paul's description of the Law and salvation from it indicate that the Law itself was bad?
    1. If the Law manifested sinfulness as described (7:5), was the Law itself a sinful thing?
    2. If the Law held us in a state of sinfulness and death (7:6), was the Law the cause of sin?
    3. Jewish legalists and those sympathetic still considered the Law in the loftiest of terms.
C. Remembering this question will help explain the rest of the chapter, for many interpret the chapter as if Paul had rhetorically asked, Can Christians live holy lives? And then denied it!
D. Identifying the concluding answer to this question will keep the chapter's design clear (7:12).

God forbid.

A. Paul's strong answer rejected any notion that the Law itself was bad, as he shall now explain.
B. He asserted himself forcefully against any that would slander him regarding Moses' Law.
C. When asking instructional or rhetorical questions, Paul quickly declared the answer to the issue at hand before giving the details and explanation that will explain his answer.
D. The Law is not sin and does not cause sin but incidentally, for it is from God who is holy, and the Law is holy, just, good, and spiritual; it reveals sin by declaring God's will.

Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law.

A. Contrary to the Law itself being bad or sinful, it was the Law that revealed Paul's sins to him.
B. The Law of Moses, and we understand the moral law, revealed or identified sin in Paul's life.
C. This is more than a mere conceptual notion of sin, but rather the personal experience of guilt.

For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

A. The Law considered here is not the ceremonial, but rather the moral, summarized by the Ten.
B. It is easy to justify oneself as righteous until you fully understand the Law's commandments.
C. Paul knew lust – he knew that he craved things that were not his – but not as sin against God.
D. Paul had to learn the tenth commandment and examine himself before he knew lust was sin.

E. Pharisees and other Jewish religious leaders had reduced adultery to the very act, which Jesus broadened to include lustful thinking and divorce abuse (Matt 5:27-32 cp Job 31:1; Pr 6:25).

F. Consider that the thought of foolishness, short of an act of foolishness, is sin (Proverbs 24:9).
   1. A prime purpose for preaching is to bring God's word to bear on men's lives to reveal sins.
   2. Until details of God's word are brought to bear, men can justify themselves before God.
   3. For example, consider forgotten sins … the Forgotten Sins sermon outline (PDF)
   4. Consider the blast of the trumpet that Isaiah described against men's sins (Isaiah 58:1).
   5. Paul described his ministry as warfare against the thoughts of his hearers (II Cor 10:4-6).
   6. Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount to correct religious compromise of various sins.
   7. This type of ministry is unpopular, so Christians today heap to themselves teachers that scratch their itching lusts with fables rather than rebuke them with truth (II Tim 4:3-4).
   8. Modern mega churches filled with so-called seekers would shrink drastically in a few weeks with real Bible preaching blasting against sins common among today's Christians.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

But sin, taking occasion by the commandment.

A. Paul's sin was external to the Law – but it was the commandment that exposed his sinfulness.

B. It was the commandment against lust and covetousness that created occasion for Paul's sin.

C. There would have no occasion for sin if Paul had continued on in ignorance about lust.

D. The Law is not sin, and it does not cause sin, except incidentally by Paul's sinful desires.

Wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.

A. **Concupiscence**. Eager or vehement desire, especially libidinous desire, sexual appetite, lust.

B. The commandment against desire, coveting, or lusting worked to show much of it in Paul.

C. As Paul will explain carefully, the commandment was not sinful, but his lusts that it exposed.

D. This phrase should provide miniscule comfort for those entertaining sexual fantasies and lusts, for comfort is not his intent at all, and Paul ruled such lustful thoughts (I Cor 9:24-27).

For without the law sin was dead.

A. This is true legally, where law does not exist or has lost jurisdiction, sin is dead, as in 4:15.

B. Paul referred to himself – sin was dead, a nonentity – before he knew the commandment.

C. He did not have a problem with lust before he saw and learned the commandment against it.

D. When sin is dead in the sense given here, then a person can think himself alive before God.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, ***sin revived, and I died.***

For I was alive without the law once.

A. Paul thought himself alive, in a justifying way, before he learned God condemned his lusts.
B. When sin is dead in the sense just given (7:8), then a person thinks himself alive before God.
C. Though Paul had Moses' Law from birth, he did not grasp the strict prohibition against lust.

But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

A. The commandment historically came at Sinai, but Paul described his understanding of it.
B. If lust was dead and Paul was alive before he understood, then sin came to life, and he died.
C. It is by hearing and understand the law that we come to see our sins as they are (Jas 1:21-25).

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

And the commandment, which was ordained to life.

A. God ordained the commandments as a religious system for justification, for the Law clearly declared that a man could live by keeping all its rules (Lev 18:5; Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12).
B. Of course, He knew no man could keep it, so it was a schoolmaster for Christ (Gal 3:19-25).

I found to be unto death.

A. Paul, like all other men, found the commandment with promised life to only condemn him.
B. As we sing, "Hail Sovereign Love," Sinai is no hiding place of safety for true self-examiners.
C. The Law proves condemnation and depravity and actually stirs up the lusts to further sins, and it cannot justify man, regenerate him, or sanctify him through the sinfulness of the flesh.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

For sin, taking occasion by the commandment.

A. Without a law, sin does not have occasion to show our sinfulness, for it has nothing to break.
B. But with a law, sin will quickly and thoroughly show our vile contrariness and wickedness.

Deceived me.

A. Paul had not known sin, but by learning the law (7:8), so this deception follows knowledge.
B. Further, sin's deception here is by the occasion of the commandment, thus after knowledge.
C. Even knowing God's commandment against a sin, that sin can and will deceive you to sin.

D. Even believing and expecting the commandment to be for life, it will be an occasion for sin.
E. Sin deceives in that men expect by the commandment to justify themselves before God.
F. Sin deceives in that man's corrupt nature offers every enticement against the commandment.
G. Sin deceives in that a holy commandment provokes our profane and vile natures to more sin.

And by it slew me.

A. This is the death as in 7:9, which is Paul's guilt and knowledge of death in light of the Law.
B. As Paul saw himself rightly in the light of the Law, he knew he was sentenced to death.

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Wherefore the law is holy.

A. The conclusion introduced by *wherefore* redirects to the question Paul was answering (7:7).
B. Paul had rhetorically asked, Is the law sin? But it was rather Paul that sinned by the Law.
C. The Law, so far as being sinful or despicable, is holy by reflecting the holiness of its Author.
D. The Law is unattainably holy, not by any fault in itself, but rather by man's weak flesh (8:3).
E. The Law is holy, just, and good, just like its Author, which by sin makes us totally ungodly!

And the commandment holy.

A. The specific commandment against coveting is holy, though exposing Paul's concupiscence.
B. Covetousness is called idolatry by the Spirit for making anything far too important (Col 3:5).
C. Covetousness is discontentment with God (Heb 13:5) and what He has given (I Tim 6:6-10).

And just.

A. There is every aspect of fairness in God prohibiting lust for things He has not given a man.
B. When speaking legally of a law, we demand it to be just (fair or righteous), and the Law is!

And good.

A. Laws against covetousness tend toward contentment, which brings enormous peace to men.
B. Laws against covetousness tend toward defeating stealing and adultery, for they address the root cause – a heart craving the things of another and devising the means to obtain them.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

Was then that which is good made death unto me?

A. The law against covetousness (7:7) was good, as Paul declared in the previous verse (7:12).

B. Was Paul's death by the commandment against lust due to the law or to his sin (7:9)?
   1. There is a conceptual sense in which law causes sin (4:15), but not in this context.
   2. The commandment did not condemn or kill Paul, but rather his lust that violated it.

God forbid.

A. The emphatic negative here is further evidence of Paul's primary or exclusive design, which is to defend the Law and himself against any slanderous charges against the Law.

B. God's law reflects God Himself, and He does not kill unjustly. Sin by the Law is what kills.

But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good.

A. Sin's violation of a good commandment does not condemn the commandment, but rather sin!

B. What evil inside! If a holy, just, and good commandment that we assume is for salvation and that we know is for our good results in condemning us to death – we are incredibly sinful!

C. How can something so noble and virtuous expose our sinfulness? By our depraved natures!

D. It was sin that condemned and killed Paul, not the Law revealing how sinful he actually was.

E. The Law, or any commandment, is only a statement of God's righteousness that sin violates.

F. The Law, by having life or death attached, exposed Paul's wickedness and condemned him.

G. The Law, for every individual, prepares us for needing and appreciating Jesus our Saviour.

H. Conviction for sin is essential to properly grasp and appreciate the gospel for faith in Christ.

That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

A. The design of Moses Law, and the tenth commandment, was to aggravate the evil of sin.

B. When something holy, just, and good brings condemnation and death, then sin is very bad.

C. The Law makes sin sinful, rather than making the Law sinful, to answer the question (7:7).

D. The exceeding sinfulness of sin is made clear by men breaking a holy rule they trust for life.

E. The exceeding sinfulness of sin is made clear by men breaking a holy rule they know is good.

F. The Law exposes our depraved wickedness by something holy, just, good, and spiritual.

G. Holiness leads to humility, for the more we grasp of God's holy law the more sinful we are.

H. The word of God declares His law for our lives and is useful in driving us to Christ, for until and unless we have the same conviction and guilt of Paul, how can we assume his salvation?

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

For we know that the law is spiritual.

A. This is one of the powerful statements showing Paul's design and intentions in this chapter.

1. It should be compared to 7:12, where Paul stated great and noble things about the Law.
2. Paul described the Law's goodness but his inability to keep it perfectly, thus proving it cannot justify or sanctify, so he desperately needed a Saviour (5:20-21; 7:24-25).
3. Paul's inability to keep the Law as intended proved that he consented it was good (7:16).
4. He delighted in the Law in his inward man, but found evil present to cause sin (7:21-23).

B. There is no reason to put another meaning on this clause than a repetition of 7:12.
1. Paul used the plural *we* to indicate he was talking about a general Jewish confidence.
2. The spirituality of the Law here is its divine design to reveal the will of God from heaven.
3. Paul and the Romans knew the Law to be spiritual blessing from God, but he further instructed them that the Law's failure to do anything was the sin-controlled old nature.

C. While the Law came from the infinite Spirit and is only appreciated and obeyed by those with the Spirit, the Bible declares it to be the killing letter of the O.T. (7:6; II Cor 3:6).

D. The exceeding sinfulness of sin and death by sin is not the Law's fault (7:13), for the Law is not wicked or unfair to men at all, for it is their sins that render it so odious and impossible.

But I am carnal, sold under sin.

A. Carnal here is the opposite of spiritual, or the sin principle yet inside every believer in Jesus.

B. Paul was not only carnal or mostly carnal, but his flesh had carnality as its exclusive goal.
1. Note carefully that Paul identified sin still dwelling in him as doing it against him (7:17).
2. Paul identified the evil leading to breaking the Law as evil present with him (7:21).

C. He was not a slave in any way to contradict the exhortation about slavery he had just given.
1. He had reasoned rather extensively in chapter 6 against being servants of sin (6:16-23).
2. His point is that the spiritual Law cannot help him, because he is an unwilling bond slave (sold under) of carnality in his flesh to the law of sin (7:25).

D. His great desire not to sin acknowledged that the Law was good, and that only he was bad.

E. A carnal Christian is a bad thing, but a common thing, as at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:2; 3:1).
1. It does not mean that true Christians give themselves over entirely to serve their flesh.
2. It means they fall into sin or sins and the consequence is a lessening of spiritual power.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

For that which I do I allow not.

A. Paul did not allow the things the Law prohibited, but he would at times end up doing them.

B. These statements do not teach or prove that the Christian life is hopeless and sin unavoidable, for Paul taught otherwise elsewhere (6:12-13,22; 8:12-13; I Cor 9:27; 15:34; II Cor 7:1; Eph 5:6-10; Col 3:5-10; II Tim 4:7; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 12:1; I John 2:1).

For what I would, that do I not.

A. Paul required the things of himself the Law required, but he could not at times do them.

B. These statements do not teach or prove that the Christian life is hopeless and sin unavoidable, for Paul taught otherwise elsewhere (6:12-13,22; 8:12-13; I Cor 9:27; 15:34; II Cor 7:1; Eph 5:6-10; Col 3:5-10; II Tim 4:7; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 12:1; I John 2:1).

But what I hate, that do I.

A. Paul chose to hate the things God hated in the Law, but he would at times do those things.

B. These statements do not teach or prove that the Christian life is hopeless and sin unavoidable, for Paul taught otherwise elsewhere (6:12-13,22; 8:12-13; I Cor 9:27; 15:34; II Cor 7:1; Eph 5:6-10; Col 3:5-10; II Tim 4:7; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 12:1; I John 2:1).

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

If then I do that which I would not.

A. Paul used this mode of speaking to show his mind toward the Law and his flesh against it.

B. In his respect for the Law, he intended not to break its precepts, but found himself doing so.

I consent unto the law that it is good.

A. If Paul wanted to keep the Law, but could not do so perfectly, then he admitted its goodness.

B. Since his intentions were to keep the Law out of respect to it, then he admitted its goodness.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Now then it is no more I that do it.

A. Paul's condemnation to death under the Law was not his choice, but his sin nature.

B. If Paul kept doing things he despised and rejected, then it must an enemy within him.

But sin that dwelleth in me.

A. This is the sin nature that dwells in every child of God, no matter saintly or sanctified.

B. Until we are in the presence of God made perfect – glorified – propensity to sin is in us.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,).

A. This is the old man, the part of our nature from our first birth, that still only loves sin.
B. If you can identify this man and analyze him, you know he loves sin and hates godliness.
C. This ugly and perverse part of each child of God will be left behind at the hour of death!

Dwelleth no good thing.

A. There is no good thing in our flesh, for even when it appears good, it has sinful motives!
B. Every action in the flesh is always tainted or dominated by sinful motives (Prov 21:4).
C. If a child of God relaxes and operates by desires or feelings, he will sin and only sin.

For to will is present with me.

A. Even the unregenerate have a conscience and will that limits sins civilly (Rom 2:13-15).
B. God works in us to will and do of His good pleasure (Phil 2:13).
C. A part of our nature is good, which the regenerate only, which wills to always serve God.
D. Note that here, as indicated in other places in this context, the implication of three entities.
    1. Paul identified both his flesh and a will to do right that were both present *with him*.
    2. In this sense, he taught elsewhere to put off the old man and put on the new. Who? You.
    3. Our two natures compete for our attention and decision-making, which is our conflict.

But how to perform that which is good I find not.

A. The power to perform good is greatly hindered by the flesh's addiction and preference to sin.
B. Therefore, we cannot perform the terms of the Law *perfectly*, for sin is always present in us.
C. Paul described this conflict as inability to do the things that we would, *perfectly* (Gal 5:17).

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

A. See verse 7:15 above, for this is a repetition or tautology of what Paul has been arguing.
B. He knows that the Law is good and he ought to keep it, but he breaks it against his consent.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it.

A. If we have fully purposed to keep the Law and not sin, then any sin is by another power.
B. Of course, we are still guilty of the offence, because we did it, but we are under that power

But sin that dwelleth in me.

A. My consent to the Law as good and desire to keep it means that breaking it is my sinful flesh.
B. Until we are in the presence of God made perfect – glorified – propensity to sin is in us.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

A. What is this law? This is the universal condition of two opposing natures in the child of God.
B. This is the schizophrenic nature of a child of God choosing between two principles / powers.
C. My consent to the Law as good and desire to keep it means that breaking it is my sinful flesh.
D. Until we are in the presence of God made perfect – glorified – propensity to sin is in us.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

For I delight in the law of God.

A. Paul described delight in God's Law to comfort and correct any misunderstanding of him.
B. Paul described delight in God's Law to comfort and exhort regenerate saints to continue.

After the inward man.

A. Only the regenerate elect have this inward man that delights in God's law to obey Him.
B. You can tell by observing a man's life and speech whether he truly delights in God's law.
C. Paul elsewhere called this inward man the new man (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). Praise God!
D. This new man is the result of regeneration by the Holy Spirit (John 3:6; Titus 3:5).

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

But I see another law in my members.

A. This other law is the law already stated in 7:21, the universal condition of natural depravity.
B. He has propensity within him to break the Law of God, though he mentally approves the law.

Warring against the law of my mind.

A. The important point here is that Christians are at war with the lusts of their flesh (I Pet 2:11).
B. Christians choose whether to love the lusts and give in to them or fight them (I Jn 2:15-17).
C. You either train yourself to fight against these lusts or forfeit the battle and let them win.
D. The flesh and Spirit and spirit lust against one another, so we cannot perform perfectly

And bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

A. The captivity here is not constant, perpetual, and hopeless captivity, but rather the captivity of being bound to bodies that will not let us free to serve God and His law without sin.

B. We are captive, against our wills (keep this always in mind), to sin at times, but not always.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

O wretched man that I am!

A. The death that Paul had described repeatedly regarding the Law was due to his sinful body.

B. It was not the Law that was wretched, for it was in fact holy, just, good, and spiritual (7:12).

C. It was Paul's fleshly members and old nature by his first birth that was wretchedly sinful.

D. It did not matter that Paul agreed with the Jews that the Law was holy, just, good, and spiritual (7:12,14), for it is only the keeping of the Law that mattered (2:13).

E. Regarding justification, our condition and situation are hopeless without a Saviour to save!

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

A. Paul's body, and our bodies as well, with a law of sin in them, allows no hope in the flesh.

B. We have bodily members and a principle of wickedness in our flesh that can only sin forever.

C. Therefore, we need a Saviour, because our flesh will not fulfill the Law for our justification.

D. Therefore, we need a Saviour, because our flesh will not fulfill the Law for our sanctification.

E. Jesus does not directly save us from the Law, for it is not Moses' Law that is the cause of our guilt and condemnation, but rather our sinful depravity and propensities that break the Law

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

I thank God.

A. As in 6:17 and II Thess 2:13, we are bound to give thanks to God alway for salvation.

B. Romans 8 will give great hope of deliverance through God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A. Jesus saved us from God's Law by doing what no man could do … keep its terms perfectly.

B. Jesus saved us from God's Law by doing what no man could do … bearing its penalty fully.

C. At this point we summarize our deliverance in the very same that chapter six closed (6:23)!

D. Though delivered – justified from the Law's condemnation – the Christian's war continues.

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God.

A. The regenerated new man delights in the Law of God and keeps it perfectly, though at times brought into undesired captivity to the law of sin in the flesh.

B. Far from ignoring or rejecting Moses' Law, Paul confessed that he kept its applicable parts.

But with the flesh the law of sin.

A. We cannot change the flesh principle and power within us, but we can refuse to feed it and obey it, though we will not do so perfectly.

B. Your bodily lusts crave sin and brings you into captivity at times yet not without remorse.