



Sunday School Lesson
Rom. 7:7-25
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Indwelling Sin



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In this fourth of five lessons in the Smyth-Helwys Formations Sunday School lessons under the theme "Challenges of the Christian Life" the scripture passage moves to Romans chapter seven. In order to get a clear, natural perspective on the biblical text we will take a look at verses 7-25, rather than the artificially carved out verses 14-25.

The main point of verses 7-25 is the problem of sin in the individual's life. How to handle it? What impact it has? etc. As such it stands as a real challenge to faithful living in Christ. That's about the only connection of these verses to the lesson theme. Also, how does the Law of God come into this picture?

I. Context

As always a glance at both the historical and literary settings of our scripture passage is important for correct understanding of the content of the biblical text under consideration.

a. Historical

The **external** history of Romans is similar to that of Galatians, along with 1-2 Corinthians, if not easier to establish. Virtually no serious scholar of the New Testament has challenged the Pauline authorship of Romans ever. It stands as a part of the "big four" (above mentioned books) in the era of critical scholarship since the so-called German Tübingen Schule days of F.C. Baur beginning in the early 1800s. Romans historically has been generally considered the most important of these four Pauline documents. This for a variety of reasons. Mostly because of the heavy doctrinal emphasis of this letter. It comes closer to laying out the basics of Paul's Christian belief in a relatively organized pattern than any other of his writings. It's status was enhanced when the Reformer Martin Luther used it and Galatians to lay out his agenda for reforming the Catholic Church at first, and then later for establishing the alternative Lutheran church in central and northern Germany during the 1500s. These two documents historically have functioned as the two primary documents of the New Testament for Lutherans to establish their interpretation of the entire New Testament.

From another, more complex perspective Romans has played a leading role in the Pauline section of the New Testament. To be sure, it is the longest single writing of Paul. But underneath the English translations lie the most literary, carefully crafted writing of the Pauline documents. Ancient Greek tended to be written in one of two basic styles. Either a loose running sentence pattern, or a compact carefully composed pattern. Virtually all of the letters of Paul fall into the first pattern, but not Romans. The practical significance of this is that twenty words in Romans will contain twice to three times the amount of idea content as the other letters do. At least a couple of factors contributed to this. First, Romans was composed as a letter of introduction to a church that Paul had not previously visited nor established. As chapter fifteen clearly asserts, Paul's hope was that the Christian community in Rome might serve as the launch pad for an anticipated ministry in the western part of the Mediterranean world much as Antioch had up to

this point for the eastern part of the Mediterranean during the three missionary journeys described by Luke in Acts 13-28. [Rom 15:17-33](#) serves as an important source of insight for several external history matters:

17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ. 20 Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else's foundation, 21 but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him shall see, and those who have never heard of him shall understand."

22 This is the reason that I have so often been hindered from coming to you. 23 But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you 24 when I go to Spain. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while. 25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; 26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things. 28 So, when I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; 29 and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

30 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, 31 that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. 33 The God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

In this projected ministry, he writes Romans from Corinth in the mid-50s at the turning around point of the third missionary journey to introduce himself to this congregation with this hope of their support in mind. To be sure, he knew several people in the church as [chapter 16](#) makes clear. But his acquaintance with them took place in other places, not in Rome. Thus, the contents of Romans lay out in summary form his understanding of the Christian gospel. Therefore, the letter was more carefully crafted than the other letters which were composed largely in response to problems and urgent needs by the letter recipients. The other factor that played an important role in the style of this letter is that Tertius did the actual writing of this document, rather than Paul, who dictated the contents and left the writing up to this writing secretary. We know this by Tertius' statement in [16:22](#): "I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord." Although we don't know a lot about this individual, much of the compact writing style of Romans is probably due to his writing skill with Koine Greek.



The first century court historian/philosopher [Dionysius of Halicarnassensis](#) in his writings on style and rhetoric insisted on careful balancing of style along with compacted word structure for maximum expression of ideas with the smallest number of words. Individuals, well trained in writing style of that period, would certainly have the skills to write along the lines of Tertius in his writing of Romans. To see what I'm talking about, compare the [block diagram](#) of this passage with [that](#) of the previous study from 1 Corinthians in the larger internet version of these studies. Even for the one not knowing Greek, the visual difference between the two schematizations of the Greek texts of these passages is dramatic. The block diagrams of most of Paul's letters will resemble the one in 1 Corinthians, rather than that in Romans.

To be sure all these plans of Paul were changed by his arrest in Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey. But by that time, the letter to the church at Rome had been written and sent on to Rome to be read in the various house-churches located around this large ancient city.

Because of the dominant theological tone -- thus abstract idea content -- of 7:7-25 no significant **internal history** issues emerge that need to be treated as a part of the background.

b. Literary

In terms of the **literary form** of [Romans](#) (=genre), the document is clearly an ancient letter, with the standard segments of ancient letters: [Praescriptio](#) (1:1-7); [Proem](#) (1:8-15); [Body](#) (1:16-15:13); and [Conclusio](#) (16:1-27).

In regard to **literary setting**, our [passage](#), 7:7-25, comes almost in the middle of the body section of this letter, as this outline that I published many years ago illustrates:

- I. **Redemption needed 1:18-3:20**
- II. **Redemption provided 3:21-8:39**
 - A. Justification of the sinner (3:21-5:21)
 - B. Sanctification of the believer (6:1-8:39)
 - 1. The believer and sin (6:1-23)
 - 2. *The believer and the law (7:1-25)*
 - 3. The believer and the Holy Spirit (8 1-39)
- III. **Redemption and a problem 9:1-11:36**
- IV. **Redemption applied 12:1-15:13**

The first three segments (I., II., III.) are largely doctrinal in their emphasis, while segment IV is paraenetical, that is, moral exhortation. The subsection B of segment II. (3:21-8:39) has mostly to do with issue of spiritual growth and development. And the dominant emphasis of Romans chapter seven pertains to how the believer comes to grips with the law of God, especially that found in the legal code of the Old Testament. The matter of sin for the believer, first surfacing in chapter six, remains a major emphasis in chapter seven as well. Chapter eight brings the matter to a climax with a strong emphasis upon the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life as the source of spiritual power and leadership. This chapter somewhat resembles the Galatians [chapter five](#) emphasis upon the Holy Spirit that we studied a few weeks ago.

[7:1-6](#) begins this emphasis with the declaration in verse one: "Do you not know, brothers and sisters —for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime?" After illustrating this principle with the analogy of marriage, vv. 2-3, Paul stresses the primary point in vv. 4-6: "4 In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit." Some important points surface in these verses. (1) Paul is speaking to readers whom he considers to be familiar with the OT Law. (2) The Torah of God has authority over a person only during that person's lifetime, not before nor afterwards. (3) For the believer a death to the authority of the OT Law has taken place in conversion. In this he raises several serious issues for Jewish Christians living in his day. And many of these issues have continued to puzzle believers through the centuries into our time. What does it mean that believers are "discharged from the law"? The purpose clause "so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit" sets the stage for the rest of chapter seven and for chapter eight. The first part ("so that we are slaves not under the old written code") will be explored in greater detail in 7:7-25, while the second part ("so that we are slaves...in the new life of the Spirit") will come under the spotlight in chapter eight.

Our passage, vv. 7-25, grows out of this foundational point in vv. 1-6. The "then" (οὐν) in 7:7a is very significant. This inferential conjunction in Greek seeks to make clear what is considered implicit in the previous section. The repetition of "then" in verse 13 accomplishes the same point and signals a shift in emphasis for verses 13-25. For more details see the [semantic diagram](#) of the Greek text in the larger internet version of this study.

II. Message

As described above the internal structure of the passage naturally falls into two sections: (1) "Defining Sin as Sin", vv. 7-12, and (2) "The flesh as sin's launch pad", vv. 13-25. This structure will serve as our way to get into a rather complicated passage of scripture.

a. Defining Sin as Sin, vv. 7-12

GNT

7·7 Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνωμεν εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου· τὴν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ᾔδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν, Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις. 7·8 ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν· χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά. 7·9 ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ, ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν, 7·10 ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον καὶ εὗρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωὴν, αὕτη εἰς θάνατον· 7·11 ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐξηπάτησέν με καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν. 7·12 ὥστε ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος καὶ ἡ ἐντολὴ ἀγία καὶ δίκαια καὶ ἀγαθή.

NASB

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." 8 But sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

NRSV

7 What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

NLT

7 Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is evil? Of course not! The law is not sinful, but it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin took advantage of this law and aroused all kinds of forbidden desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power. 9 I felt fine when I did not understand what the law demanded. But when I learned the truth, I realized I had broken the law and was a sinner, doomed to die. 10 So the good law, which was supposed to show me the way of life, instead gave me the death penalty. 11 Sin took advantage of the law and fooled me; it took the good law and used it to make me guilty of death. 12 But still, the law itself is holy and right and good.

Notes:

For Jewish Christians and for proselyte Christians (Gentiles who had converted to Judaism before becoming Christians), one very important issue with Christian commitment was the role of the Jewish Law to Christian faith. For other Gentiles who had not yet come into serious contact with Judaism their Christian faith did not raise this issue nearly as seriously, although with the discussions about the Law from the other groups in the Christian meetings I suspect their interest was pricked.

Paul's statements in 7:1-7 set his position on this matter very firmly, especially in verse 6: "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit." Earlier in his letter to the Galatians he had also set forth his position in [2:19-22](#): "19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; 20 and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing." From such strong statements one could conclude that Paul had come to a very negative view of the Jewish Law, especially that found in the Old Testament code.

This becomes the opening question of verse 7: "What then should we say? That the law is sin?" Realizing that some might conclude this from his declarations about the Law, Paul met the concern head on by

raising the question that many were thinking in their minds. He answers his own rhetorical question with an emphatic denial, which is difficult to translate precisely into English. The $\mu\eta\ \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$ of the Greek is not translated with its full force in any of the three translations that we're using: "May it never be!" NASB; "By no means!" (NRSV); "Of course not!" (NLT). The King James Version is closer with its "God forbid!" But Clarence Jordan in his Cotton Patch Translation is the closest to what Paul said with his "Hell no!" rendering.

Paul's answer is not just with an emphatic denial that the Law of the OT can be called sinful. He goes on to specify a specific role for the OT Code (vv. 8-12): to define sin as sin. Thus we come to know that a specific action is sinful largely because God's Law has labeled it as sinful. His illustration in 7b is the tenth commandment against covetousness found in [Exodus 20:17](#) and [Deut. 5:21](#). Exod. 20:17 says, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." And Deut. 5:21 says, "Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife. Neither shall you desire your neighbor's house, or field, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Paul summarizes this commandment with the simple statement, "You shall not covet." Because the Law prohibited coveting, we recognize this action as wrong.

What then is the problem? Verse 8 introduces something new in Paul's day and still largely misunderstood even in our day. Sin is described not merely as a wrong action. Much more seriously, sin functions as a dynamical power and presence in human life. Sin can seize an opportunity (vv. 8, 11). Sin produces covetousness (v. 8). Sin can deceive (v. 11). Sin can kill (v. 11). Sin is so skilled that it can use what is good, God's law, to achieve its deadly goals (vv. 8, 9, 11). Daniel Doriani's biblical theology article on "Sin" in the online [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#) can provide some helpful background to what Paul is discussing here. To grasp the concept of sin as something far deeper than mere wrong action is essential to Paul's discussion here.

Thus, this powerful evil dynamic needs the divine Law of God in order to exert its presence and power. Paul captures this several times: "apart from law sin is dead" (v. 8b); "when the commandment came, sin revived" (v. 9b); "the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me" (v. 10). Thus for Paul sin stands in dependency upon the Law of God as its launch pad for exerting its deadly effects upon human life. Paul also states it from the opposite view: "apart from law sin is dead" (v. 8b) and "I was once alive apart from the law" (v. 9a). This second statement of Paul is the really difficult one to understand with certainty. When was this time when Paul was (1) alive (2) apart from law? James G.D. Dunn in the [Word Biblical Commentary](#) has a helpful survey of the various understandings. Some understand this as the preteenage Paul before his Bar Mitzvah at thirteen years of age, which noted his formal entry into the covenant people of Israel. A popular Southern Baptist view is that this period reaches back earlier to a period of time before Paul became conscious of sinful actions, i.e., the age of accountability. The criticism of both these views is the assumption of both that "was alive once" is predicated on an autobiographical line in Paul's own life. Other more recent scholarship has been very critical of this assumption. Paul has previously discussed the role of Adam and our identification with his sinfulness (chapter 5). It may well be that this is what he has in mind here. In union with Adam we were alive with him before sin came into human existence. The sequence is the same: alive, commandment, sinful action, death. This latter view, as advocated by Dunn and many others, has much to commend itself. But again, the precise meaning remains uncertain. Thus no one can legitimately take a dogmatic stand on an understanding of this biblical statement. The major point in context is to assert sin's need of the Law of God in order to function in an individual's life.

The skill of sin is to be noted in its ability to use the holy Law of God to achieve its deadly goal: to cause spiritual death. This Paul declares with eloquence. But Paul's initial question about the Law as sin remains his primary issue. If sin can manipulate the divine Law so thoroughly, does that make the Law of God unholy? Paul's answer throughout is absolutely not. This began with his $\mu\eta\ \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$ in v. 7b and comes to a climax in verse 12: "So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good." The problem is not with a holy Law of God. It resides with the power of sin to work its deadly elixir on people using the law as its stirring spoon. Thus for anyone to conclude from Paul's teaching that the Law is sinful would be to grossly misunderstand Paul.

One side note that has come out of this discussion. Since the Protestant Reformation and the struggles

of Martin Luther, this issue of Christian faith and the Law has often been expanded to become the question of what is the role of the Old Testament for Christians. Roman Catholicism has made extensive use of the Old Testament in a variety of ways. Most importantly the sacrificial system for the temple in the legal code has become the basis for the Eucharist tradition. Jesus and the apostles mostly used the OT at two points: (1) the holiness code in the legal system as a basis of affirming moral standards, and (2) the prophetic materials as prophesying the coming of the Messiah. Often these two emphases have been drawn from the Psalms and from the other wisdom literature of the Old Testament. Since Luther the struggle between faith and law, as understood largely from Romans and Galatians, has frequently been framed around whether statements like Rom. 7:6 and Gal. 2:19-21 imply the irrelevancy of the entire Old Testament to Christian life. Most Christian groups will not go so far as to reject the Old Testament itself. But the history of the Christian use of the OT is littered with the junk of a shallow spiritualizing through allegory of large portions of the Old Testament in order to make it appear to be relevant and useful. I have no final answer to this quest. But I do believe the Old Testament stands binding upon Christians and that, in an assumption of progressive revelation, it must be interpreted through the perspectives established by the revelation of God in the New Testament. For some helpful background information on the larger issue of divine revelation, see my article "Revelation" published in the two volume *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* in 1996 and also available on Cranfordville.com under [Articles](#).

What lessons can we learn from these verses? Probably the most important is about the nature of sin. Way too often Christians today view sin merely as wrong actions that the Bible tells us not to commit. Such a view of sin is woefully inadequate. To be sure, sin is wrong actions. But Paul's discussion here makes it clear that sin is a deadly power and presence in our lives. The Law of God defines which actions are wrong, but that's all it does. Sin as a dynamic power uses that defining role of God's law to deceive us and to ultimately kill us spiritually. In no way does that make God's law bad or sinful. To the contrary it serves an essential role of defining what God disapproves of. Our problem is not then with God's law. Instead, it is with sin in its death dealing presence and power. Such an understanding is critical to understanding what God has accomplished on Calvary, and what God can accomplish in our faith response to Christ.

b. The flesh as sin's launch pad, vv. 13-25

GNT

7-13 Τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο θάνατος; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον, ἵνα γένηται καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς. 7-14 οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστιν, ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. 7-15 ὁ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω· οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ' ὁ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ. 7-16 εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ, σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός. 7-17 νυνὶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι

NASB

13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful. 14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree

NRSV

13 Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. 15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is

NLT

13 But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my doom? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God's good commandment for its own evil purposes. 14 The law is good, then. The trouble is not with the law but with me, because I am sold into slavery, with sin as my master. 15 I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. 16 I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad

αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀμαρτία. 7·18 οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν· τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειται μοι, τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ· 7·19 οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ ὁ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω. 7·20 εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω ἐγὼ τοῦτο ποιῶ, οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀμαρτία. 7·21 Εὕρισκω ἄρα τὸν νόμον, τῷ θέλοντι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλὸν, ὅτι ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται· 7·22 συνήδομαι γὰρ τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, 7·23 βλέπω δὲ ἕτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου ἀντιστρατευόμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μου καὶ ἀιχμαλωτίζοντά με ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἀμαρτίας τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου. 7·24 ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; 7·25 χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. ἄρα οὖν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοί δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ τῇ δὲ σαρκί νόμῳ ἀμαρτίας.

with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

conscience shows that I agree that the law is good. 17 But I can't help myself, because it is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things. 18 I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. 19 When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. 20 But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. 21 It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God's law with all my heart. 23 But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? F24 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Notes:

Verse 13 both brings to a powerful climax the previous section, vv. 7-12, and sets the stage for the ideas in the following verses, vv. 14-25. The introductory structure in 13a, which is exactly parallel to that in 7a, is the basis for the pericope division at verse 13 rather than at verse 14.

The first part of verse 13 summarizes the discussion of verses 7-12: “Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good,...” The new aspect is the purpose clause at the end of verse 13: “in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.” (ἡ ἀμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἀμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον, ἵνα γένηται καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἀμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἀμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.) In parallel fashion to verse 17, Paul

raises an issue through a rhetorical question. Then he answers it first with one of his *μὴ γένοιτο*. Next he proceeds to provide a substantive answer: “It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.” Not only does the Law of God define sin as sin, it also exposes the depth of sin’s sinfulness. Ironically, sin’s use of the Law to activate itself in human existence to produce its deadly work also becomes the Law’s opportunity to expose sin’s true nature. How then can the Law achieve this exposing of sin?

The “for” (*γὰρ*) in verse 14 begins a discussion in large part that will elaborate on the declaration in 13. The weak link in the issue of sin is not the Law of God, since it is spiritual. Rather the weak link is our human nature, *our flesh* (v. 14b). Paul here introduces another idea that is somewhat new to the New Testament. The Greek word *σάρξ* (flesh) or *σαρκικός* (fleshly) are extensively used in Paul’s writings, not to refer to literal human flesh -- as is the case most elsewhere in the New Testament -- but to get at the idea of *corrupt human nature*. In chapter five Paul linked our corrupt flesh to Adam and his sin in the Garden of Eden. Thus we are corrupt via our connection to Adam. But also we are corrupt through our human actions. Worse still, our corrupt nature provides the lodging place for the dynamic of sin in our lives, as Paul declares in v. 14b: “I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin” (*ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*). Through my corrupt flesh sin has taken control of my life.

What is the consequence of this predicament? A battle of wills breaks out within my life to see who will control what I do. What I do often makes no sense to me, Paul declares in 15a. Actions represent not what I desire and want. Rather they often express the very things I despise and hate (v. 15b).

Why is this? Verses 16-20 answer this. First, when my actions don’t match my desires, this reflects my positive feeling about the goodness of God’s law, since the Law has not only defined what is sinful but also what is good (v. 16). My desires are shaped by the goodness of God’s law, not by slavery to sin that controls my actions. Thus, my sinful actions are a reflection of the controlling presence of sin in my corrupt nature (v. 17). My corrupt nature (my flesh) is completely bad and sin reigns supremely over my life preventing me from doing the good that I desire (v. 18). The consequence: I don’t do good; instead I do the evil that I want to avoid (v. 19). What does that mean? When I do evil, it doesn’t represent me desiring to do it; rather it is a reflection of the control that sin has over my life (v. 20).

Thus Paul recognizes two dynamics at work inside him. (1) The desire to do good arouses the inclination to do evil (v. 21). (2) Although in his will (=mind) he delights in the good defined by God’s law, sin’s power is waging war against his flesh (here described as “his members”). The corrupt human nature is closely identified with the physical aspects of his existence. The warfare here is for dominance over Paul’s life. Will he do what he really desires? Or, will he wind up doing what sin dictates? Mostly the latter!

He needs to be rescued from this war? Verses 24-25 bring this out. His plea for deliverance brings a word of praise to God who has delivered him. This, not through the Law. It stands helpless to overpower sin. Instead, sin has skillfully used the Law to deal death to the individual. Rather, deliverance comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verse 24b brings this discussion to a climax: “So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.” The dilemma is the tension between the inward side (the mind, the will) and the outward physical (the corrupt flesh). Inwardly, Paul, especially as a pre-Christian Jew, was committed to doing God’s will as defined in His law. Outwardly, his corrupted flesh enabled sin to take him captive and dictate his actions. Now the deliverance mentioned in 25b anticipates the marvelous discussion in Romans eight, which John Bunyan in his *Pilgrim’s Progress* described as “golden stepping stones out of the slough of despondency.”

What can we learn from these verses? For one thing, we need to realize the corruptness of our human nature. The fleshly side of us has been corrupted by our link to Adam. Our evil actions have worsened this situation greatly. We have been weakened so that the powerful dynamic called sin has taken control of our lives. This has created a constant warfare inside us, because our desire is to do God’s will but our actions reflect just the opposite. This stands as a serious problem. Apart from solution in Christ, we are dead spiritually. God’s Law is helpless to enable us to overcome this problem. Only the more powerful redemption in Christ Jesus can provide victory over sin in our life. In Christ we have been set free from the principle of sin and death ([Rom. 8:2](#)). Praise be to God!

GNT

7·7 Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου· τὴν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ᾔδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν, Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις. 7·8 ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν· χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά. 7·9 ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ, ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν, 7·10 ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον καὶ εὐρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολή ἢ εἰς ζωὴν, αὕτη εἰς θάνατον· 7·11 ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐξηπάτησέν με καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν. 7·12 ὥστε ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος καὶ ἡ ἐντολή ἀγία καὶ δικαία καὶ ἀγαθή.

7·13 Τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο θάνατος; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία, διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον, ἵνα γένηται καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς. 7·14 οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστιν, ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. 7·15 ὁ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω· οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ' ὁ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ. 7·16 εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ, σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός. 7·17 νυνὶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία. 7·18 οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν· τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειται μοι, τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ· 7·19 οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ ὁ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω. 7·20 εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω ἐγὼ τοῦτο ποιῶ, οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία. 7·21 Εὕρισκω ἄρα τὸν νόμον, τῷ θέλοντι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλόν, ὅτι ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται· 7·22 συνήδομαι γὰρ τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, 7·23 βλέπω δὲ ἕτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου ἀντιστρατευόμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μου καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου. 7·24 ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; 7·25 χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. ἄρα οὖν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοί δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ τῇ δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας.

NASB

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." 8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful. 14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

NRSV

7 What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

8 But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived 10 and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

13 Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. 15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

NLT

7 Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is evil? Of course not! The law is not sinful, but it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin took advantage of this law and aroused all kinds of forbidden desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power. 9 I felt fine when I did not understand what the law demanded. But when I learned the truth, I realized I had broken the law and was a sinner, doomed to die. 10 So the good law, which was supposed to show me the way of life, instead gave me the death penalty. 11 Sin took advantage of the law and fooled me; it took the good law and used it to make me guilty of death. 12 But still, the law itself is holy and right and good.

13 But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my doom? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God's good commandment for its own evil purposes. 14 The law is good, then. The trouble is not with the law but with me, because I am sold into slavery, with sin as my master. 15 I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. 16 I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience shows that I agree that the law is good. 17 But I can't help myself, because it is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things. 18 I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. 19 When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. 20 But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. 21 It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God's law with all my heart. 23 But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

GNT Diagram

- 7-7 οὖν
1 **Τί ἐροῦμεν;**
2 **ὁ νόμος (ἐστὶν) ἁμαρτία;**
3 **μὴ γένοιτο·**
 ἀλλὰ
4 **τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνω**
 εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου·
 γὰρ
5 **τὴν τε ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἤδειν**
 εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν,
 οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις.
- 7-8 δὲ
6 **ἡ ἁμαρτία...κατειργάσατο...πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν·**
 ἐν ἐμοὶ
 γὰρ
 χωρὶς νόμου
7 **ἁμαρτία (ἐστὶν) νεκρά.**
- 7-9 δὲ
8 **ἐγὼ ἔζων**
 χωρὶς νόμου
 ποτέ,
 δὲ
 ἐλθούσης τῆς ἐντολῆς
9 **ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν,**
- 7-10 δὲ
10 **ἐγὼ ἀπέθανον**
 καὶ
11 **εὐρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολή**
 ἡ εἰς ζωὴν,
 αὕτη εἰς θάνατον·
- 7-11 γὰρ
12 **ἡ ἁμαρτία...ἐξηπάτησέν με**
 καὶ
 δι' αὐτῆς
13 **ἀπέκτεινεν.**
- 7-12 ὥστε
14 **ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος (ἐστὶν)**
 καὶ
15 **ἡ ἐντολή (ἐστὶν) ἁγία**

καὶ
δικαία
καὶ
ἀγαθή.

7:13 οὖν
16 **Τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο θάνατος;**

17 **μὴ γένοιτο·**
ἀλλὰ

ἵνα φανῇ **ἁμαρτία**,
διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ
18 **ἡ ἁμαρτία... (ἐστὶν) κατεργαζομένη θάνατον,**
μοι

καθ' ὑπερβολὴν
ἵνα γένηται... ἁμαρτωλὸς **ἡ ἁμαρτία**
διὰ **τῆς ἐντολῆς.**

7:14 γὰρ
19 **οἶδαμεν**
ὅτι **ὁ νόμος** πνευματικὸς ἐστίν,

δὲ
20 **ἐγὼ σάρκινός εἰμι**
πεπραμένος
ὑπὸ **τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.**

7:15 γὰρ
21 ὁ κατεργάζομαι
οὐ γινώσκω·

γὰρ
22 οὐ ὃ θέλω
τοῦτο πράσσω,
ἀλλ'

23 ὃ μισῶ
τοῦτο ποιῶ.

7:16 δὲ
24 ὃ οὐ θέλω
εἰ... τοῦτο ποιῶ,
σύμφημι
τῷ νόμῳ
ὅτι (αὐτὸς ἐστίν) καλός.

7:17 δὲ
25 οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ
ἀλλὰ
οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ

26 **ἢ...ἀμαρτία** (κατεργάζεται αὐτό) .

7-18 γάρ

27 **οἶδα**
ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί... ἀγαθόν·
τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου,

γάρ

28 **τὸ θέλειν παράκειταιί μοι,**

δὲ

29 **τὸ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ·**

7-19 γάρ

30 **οὐ ὃ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν,**

ἀλλὰ

ὃ οὐ θέλω κακὸν

31 **τοῦτο πράσσω.**

7-20 δὲ

ὃ οὐ θέλω

εἰ...ἐγὼ τοῦτο ποιῶ,

32 **οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτό**

ἀλλὰ

οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοί

33 **ἢ...ἀμαρτία** (κατεργάζομαι αὐτό) .

7-21 ἄρα

34 **Εὐρίσκω τὸν νόμον,**

τῷ θέλοντι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλόν,

ὅτι ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται·

7-22 γάρ

35 **συνήδομαι**

τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ

κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον,

7-23 δὲ

36 **βλέπω ἕτερον νόμον**

ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου

ἀντιστρατευόμενον

τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μου

καὶ

αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με

ἐν **τῷ νόμῳ** τῆς ἀμαρτίας

τῷ ὄντι

ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου.

37 7-24 **ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος·**

38 **τίς με ρύσεται**

ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου;

7-25 δὲ

39 **χάρις** (ἔστω)

τῷ θεῷ
διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

ἄρα οὖν

40 τῷ μὲν νοῦ
αὐτὸς ἐγὼ...δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ
δὲ

41 τῇ σαρκὶ
(αὐτὸς ἐγὼ...δουλεύω) νόμῳ ἁμαρτίας.



	a.	-----	25	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	ἐγώ
	1.	-----							ἀλλά
	b.	-----	26	Dec	Pres	Ind	3	S	ἡ ἁμαρτία
B.		-----							γάρ
	a.	-----	27	Dec	Pres/P	Ind	1	S	(ἐγώ)
	2.	-----							γάρ
	1)	-----	28	Dec	Pres	Ind	3	S	τὸ θέλειν
	b.	-----							δὲ
	a)	-----	29	Dec	Pres	Ind	3	S	τὸ κατεργάζεσθαι
	2)	-----							γάρ
II.		-----	30	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	(ἐγώ)
	b_	-----							ἀλλά
	ii.	-----	31	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	(ἐγώ)
		-----							δὲ
	a.	-----	32	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	ἐγώ
	1.	-----							ἀλλά
	b.	-----	33	Dec	Pres	Ind	3	S	ἡ ἁμαρτία
C.		-----							ἄρα
	a.	-----	34	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	(ἐγώ)
	2.	-----							γάρ
	1)	-----	35	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	(ἐγώ)
	b.	-----							δὲ
	2)	-----	36	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	(ἐγώ)
		-----							---
	a.	-----	37	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	ἐγώ
	1.	-----							---
	b.	-----	38	Inter	Pres	Ind	3	S	τίς
D.		-----							δὲ
	a.	-----	39	Imp	Pres	Imp	3	S	χάρις
		-----							ἄρα οὖν
	2.	-----	40	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	ἐγώ
	1)	-----							δὲ
	b.	-----							
	2)	-----	41	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	S	(ἐγώ)

Exegetical Outline

- I. (1-15) The holy, divine law serves to define certain actions as sinful.
 - A. (1-13) The Law becomes the source of sinfulness.
 - 1. (1-5) Paul declared that instead of being sinful itself the Torah is the source of knowing actions as sinful.
 - a. (1-3) Paul strongly rejected any assertion that the Torah is sinful
 - 1) (1) Paul raised the issue of the Torah's value in light of vv. 1-7
 - 2) (2-3) Paul strongly denied the question of the Torah as sin
 - a) (2) Paul raised the question of whether the Torah equals sin
 - b) (3) Paul answered his question with absolute denial
 - b. (4-5) Paul declared that the Torah is the source of knowing sinful actions.
 - 1) (4) Paul asserted that his knowledge of sin came through the Torah
 - 2) (5) For Paul knowledge of coveteousness as sin came only through the Torah
 - 2. (6-13) Sin arises through the defining nature of God's Law.
 - a. (6-7) Sin must use the Torah to produce the sinful action of coveteousness.
 - 1) (6) Sin used the law to produce coveteousness through the Torah's command against it.
 - 2) (7) Sin has no life apart from the Torah
 - b. (8-13) Paul, though living before the Torah, suffered spiritual death with the coming of the commandment against coveteousness.
 - 1) (8-9) Paul declare he was alive until the commandment of the Torah awakened sin
 - a) (8) Paul declared that he used to be alive outside of law
 - b) (9) After the commandment came sin came alive
 - 2) (10-13) Sin manipulated the command to kill Paul spiritually
 - a) (10-11) God's Torah while promising life brought death for Paul
 - i. (10) Paul died spiritually
 - ii. (11) The life promising commandment brought death for Paul
 - b) (12-13) Sin seized the opportunity through the commandment to kill Paul
 - i. (12) Sin using the commandment deceived Paul with the opportunity to sin
 - ii. (13) It killed Paul spiritually
 - B. (14-15) The consequence is that both the Torah and the commandment are holy
 - 1. (14) The Torah is holy
 - 2. (15) The commandment is holy
 - II. (16-41) The flesh is the launch pad for sin from which rescue comes only through Christ
 - A. (16-24) God's Law stands as holy, even though used to produce sin.
 - 1. (16-23) Death comes from the flesh committing sin, not from God's Law
 - a. (16-19) The good and spiritual Torah did not produce death, rather sin did while using the Torah.
 - 1) (16-17) That which is good did not become the means of death in Paul
 - a) (16) Did that which is good became death in Paul?
 - b) (17) Absolutely not was Paul's answer.
 - 2) (18-19) Instead, the spiritual Torah became the instrument of sin to produce death in Paul
 - a) (18) Sin produced death in Paul using the good to show the sinfulness of sin
 - b) (19) Paul recognized that the Torah is spiritual
 - b. (20-23) Thus Paul ended up doing unknowingly what he didn't desire out of his carnality.
 - 1) (20) Paul realized his fleshliness standing in captivity to sin
 - 2) (21-23) Therefore Paul in his ignorance did what he didn't want to do
 - a) (21) Paul did not understand what he was doing
 - b) (22-23) Paul did what he did not desire to do

- i. (22) What he did not desire, that he did
 - ii. (23) What he hated, that he did
 - 2. (24) Out of this insight Paul affirmed that the Torah is good
 - B. (25-41) The fleshly enslaved self is controlled by sin that is solved only through Christ Jesus
 - 1. (25-26) Sin had enslaved Paul and led him to sinful actions against his true commitments
 - a. (25) Paul affirmed that his sinful actions did not represent his true commitment
 - b. (26) Rather the indwelling sin was driving him to sinful actions
 - 2. (27-31) This was based upon the reality of Paul's evil nature.
 - a. (27) Paul understood that his fleshly nature possessed no good.
 - b. (28-31) This was based upon Paul's evil actions inspite of his desire to do good
 - 1) (28) The desire to do good was present in Paul
 - 2) (29-31) But it was hindered by Paul's pattern of doing evil
 - a) (29) The ability to do good was not in Paul
 - b) (30-31) The basis for this inability was Paul's pattern of doing evil
 - i. (30) He was not able to do what he desired
 - ii. (31) Doing evil which he didn't desire was what he did
 - c. (32-36) The outward evil actions manifest the presence of a hostile controlling sin
 - 1) (32-33) Evil actions represented the control of indwelling sin over Paul's desires
 - a) (32) Paul's evil deeds did not represent his true self
 - b) (33) Rather they represented the dominance of sin in his life
 - 2) (34-36) The implication of the above is the discovery of a controlling evil in Paul's life
 - a) (34) Thus came the discovery of the presence of evil in Paul
 - b) (35-36) This is based upon the discovery of the hostile principle of controlling sin
 - i. (35) Paul concurred with the Law of God about the outward self
 - ii. (36) Paul saw another principle fighting to take him captive to sin.
 - d. (37-41) The climax was Paul's predicament of conflict between the flesh and the will.
 - 1) (37-38) Paul bemoaned his sinful state with a plea for deliverance
 - a) (37) Paul deplored his wretchedness
 - b) (38) His plea was for deliverance from his death filled body
 - 2) (39-41)
 - a) (39) Praise was lifted to God for deliverance through Christ Jesus
 - b) (40-41) This deliverance implied the conflict between the outward and the inward
 - i. (40) In Paul's mind he was serving the principles of God
 - ii. (41) In his flesh he was serving the principle of sin