

Who Will Deliver Me?

Romans 7

- Controversial passage for hundreds of years.
- Romans 7 shows how vain it is to seek salvation apart from God's plan.
- It eliminates *do it yourselfers*.

I. What do we know?

7:

- Paul is not blaming the Law.
- Its purpose was not to make sinners, but...
 1. To reveal law
 2. To expose sin
- Ex.20¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Some think 7:7-22 is Paul's experience as a Christian

Passages do not fit the
description of a Christian.

8: sin personified: seized opportunity – base
for military operations.

- Sin used the Law to do its work.
- Gn.3: satan used opportunity afforded by
the command to lead Eve into sin.

9: alive once (before he was accountable)

- The order:

- 1) Alive (innocent)

- 2) Command came (age of accountability)

- 3) Sinned (sin sprang to life)

- 4) He died

10: He died (v.9), therefore the command intended for life, brought death.

▶ Ex.16:...19-20 . . . 27 . . . 28

11: For sin deceived me...slew me

- 2 Co.11³ But I fear, lest somehow, **as** the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, **so** your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ

12: Law is holy, command is holy, just, good

- Problem is sin, not Law

13: Law showed sin in its true colors

- Purpose: protect you
- But if you murder, it will destroy you
- Exceedingly sinful –
 - Puts purity of law against darkness of sin: shows it for what it is
 - Defend ‘white lies’; euphemisms ... then see them condemned in Scripture

7:14-25 resembles funeral dirge

- Three stanzas
- Each repeats parts of previous stanza

14-17, first stanza

14: ...*I am carnal sold under sin*

- Hard to see how this could describe a Christian
- “Under sin” = those without Christ (3:9) –
 1. Sold: bond-slave.
 2. Under sin: ‘Sin has closed the mortgage and owns the slave’ (ATR).
- Ahab, 1 K.21:20, 25

**A Jew is still held as a slave
without the Egypt of sin and death.**

14-17, first stanza

15: ...*I do not understand*...

- Blind obedience (sounds like a slave).
- 1 Tim.1:13, Saul

16: conclusion from 15 – do not blame Law.

17: ...dwell

- One who dwells in house, controls it.
- Sin personified as evil power: takes up residence in human nature...controls people.

Prepares way for dwelling of Spirit, 8:9-11

18-20, second stanza

Problem is not law, nor I, nor sin itself

18: cf. 17, sin dwells... In me no good dwells

19: good intentions, but practice is out of reach

20: conclusion: 16-17, I am not my own master. A stranger in my house (*body*) holds me captive.

21-25, third stanza

“This is what I discover about the law”

21: Law # 1: Old Testament.

22: explains 21 – I applaud law of God.

- Cf. 14, 18, will for good, but not power.

23: Law # 2: Law in my members (7-8, 17)

- Begins to follow Law of God...armed enemy advances against him...
- Principle: God's law claims a man; sin, acting through his members, influences...
- The 'rattler' strikes... Law of sin (14, 18)

21-25, third stanza

24: a groan! Wretch!

- Epictetus: “What am I? Just a miserable particle of humanity” –BDAG.
- Who will rescue (save, deliver) from the enemy?
- *This body of death* – v.9, *I died*. Cf. 6:6.
- This law offers no hope of rescue...

21-25, third stanza

24: a groan! Wretch!

25: I thank God...

- Without Christ: would remain wretched.
- Christian: mind dominates flesh (cf. v.22)
- Sinner: flesh dominates mind (7:5, 18, 25)

8:1-2: Law # 3: Law of Spirit of life in Christ

Romans 8: Paul turns to life
as a Christian; blessings of Spirit.

I. What do we know?

II. Who does chapter 7 discuss?

Does Ro.7 describe Christian or unbeliever?

Objections –

1. “Paul uses the present tense”

- Common. Ro.13:11-13.

2. “Paul says ‘I’; he is a Christian”

- Paul often impersonated others.
13:11-13.

3. “But Christians do experience a conflict between sin and righteousness.”

- Conflicts, yes, but not of this description.
Gal.5:16-18

Does Ro.7 describe Christian or unbeliever?

Objections –

4. “Only a Christian could struggle so strongly against sin.” [Not!]

Gentiles – Ro.2:14-15

- **Ovid:** Desire counsels me in one direction, reason in another.
- **Ovid:** I see the better part, and approve it; but I follow the worse.
- **Plautus:** I knew what I ought to be, but, unhappy that I am, I could not do it.
- **Seneca:** What then is it that, when we would go in one direction, drags us in the other?
- **Epictetus:** He who sins does not what he would, and does what he would not.

Jesus: Mt.5:46-47; 7:11

Cornelius: Acts 10

Jews – Ro.7:7-13

Jew trained under Law had firm grasp of sin;
but Law could not deliver him from it.

- Job 42⁶ I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes
- Is.6⁵ So I said: Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...
- Lk.5⁸ When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord! [...18¹³]

Does Ro.7 describe Christian or unbeliever?

Objections –

5. “Why insist Romans 7 does not describe a Christian?”

Does this describe a Christian?

14: sold under sin	6:1-2, 9-11
17, 20: sin dwells in me	6:12, 14
18: in me no good thing	8:4, 9-11, 12-14
18-19: do not good but evil	6:4
23: captive to law of sin in members	6:13, 19; 7:5; 8:2
24: wretched	6:6
24: who will rescue me?	7:25; 8:1-3
24: body of death	8:1-2
25: slave to law of sin	6:6, 17-18, 20, 22

If those in Christ are in state of 'wretchedness...'

...where is the advantage in the gospel of Christ that Paul urges upon them?

- 7:23, man in captivity to law of sin... BUT –
- 8:2, made free from law of sin and death.
- 2 Pt.2:19, While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.

Are Christians 'set free from sin' and 'sold as slaves to sin' at the same time??

The Great Contrast

What the law (ch.7) could not do,
Christ did (ch.8)

“I thank God through Jesus Christ
our Lord” (7:25)

I. What do we know?

II. What does ch.7 discuss?

III. *Way to win*
(Romans 13)

1. Wear armor, Ro.13:12
2. Avoid temptations, Ro.13:13-14 ... 2 Tim.2:22
3. Fill life with Christ, Ro.13:14

Christians walk according to the Spirit

Christians maintain their walk by wearing their armor, thus avoiding temptations, and by following Christ