

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 7:12-13

Student Notes:

Review: When it comes to the power of sin, the Law has three devastating effects: 1. It exposes sin. 2. It provokes sin. 3. It condemns sin. (See: 1 Corinthians 15:56)

- **The Law Is Not The Problem:**

The law is not in itself sinful, nor is it responsible for sin. It is sin working thorough our human nature which is responsible for our inwardly deplorable circumstances.

The question in verse 7: "Is the law sin?". The answer in verse 12: "So then, the law is holy and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good."

Greek word here for "good" – Agathos. It designates the requirements of the Law as both holy and righteous in themselves. "Agathos": "beneficent in their intention".

God's intentions for the law were good – they were beneficent.

- **The New Question:** Verse 13: "*Did the law become death to me?*"

Verse 10 certainly seemed to implicate the law as responsible for death: The commandment which "was intended to bring life actually brought death".

A major question: "Was the law guilty of offering life with one hand and inflicting death with the other?" (John Stott)

Paul's question: "Did that which is good, (meaning the Mosaic Code) then, become death to me? He answers his own question by saying, "Me Genoito" – "May it never be".

"Me Genoito" – ("May it never be")

When Paul said in Scripture, "May it never be", he was using a very common Jewish expression from his day. In Hebrew the expression is "chalilah" (ka-li-lah).

Old Testament use: "Chalilah" – used 21 times, literally meaning, "to be profane, and thus forbidden". New Testament: "God forbid", "far be it", "Lord forbid", "by no means", "absolutely not", "let it not be", "certainly not", and "far be the thought".

First O.T. occurrence is in Genesis 18: "You could not possibly do such a thing: to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. You could not possibly do that! Won't the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" - Genesis 18:25

Last O.T. occurrence – Job 34: "Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding. It is impossible for God to do wrong, and for the Almighty to act unjustly."

Paul's use of "may it never be", leaves no room for discussion. "Me Genoito" is the most common response found throughout the Book of Romans. See: Romans 6:2, 15; 7:13;11:1

Current question: "Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful."

-- The law does not cause sin; it exposes and condemns it.

-- The law does not cause death; sin does.

What is the Law's purpose?

It functioned in such a way as to make sin be recognized as sin. This was God's intention – that the Law would expose sin as sin.

The other half of Paul's explanation: "It used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful."

The Mosaic Code reveals the sinfulness of sin. The problem is, the power of sin exploits the goodness of the Law for its own purposes and produces what Paul calls "death".

The Antinomians said, "The Mosaic Code is bad." Paul says, "No, the Law is good; it is humans who are bad. The Law, because it declares the standards by which we ought to live, is used by sin. Sin points to the Law because its perversity is both aroused and provoked.

Next time: Just as the Law cannot be blamed for our sin; it also cannot be responsible for our holiness.