

Choose Eternity

Compiled/Formatted By Tom Stephens

(Note: all add-ons to scripture are by this writer)

I want to respond to an article entitled “Choose Eternity” concerning Romans 7:15-20. I read the entire article...and enjoyed it for the most part because we do fail occasionally, but we do not *practice sin*; and when we realize we have sinned, we immediately repent in our heart. But Jesus and all the Apostles taught, “Repent, Repent, Repent”. To consider sinning *at all* in our personal lives means we will be lax in our commitment to the Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus handed His Church all power and authority over the kingdom of satan. We do not have to sin, it’s in His Word, especially in Romans.

Before I go further, we should remember what Apostle John Said in First John 2:1-3, saying this:

“¹My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ²And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. ³And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”

In so many words at many different occasions, Apostle Paul made the following statement; “that if we walk in the Spirit of the Lord...” (see Galatians 5:15-18).

“...Satan cannot force you to do anything you do not want to do.”

Since the subject matter of the article suggests strongly that Paul, previously, Saul of Tarsus, actually stated that he, probably the greatest evangelist/missionary since Jesus Christ’s resurrection—remained such a sinner *after* his amazing salvation (Acts 9), that he actually confessed the *impossibility* of himself living a victorious life in Christ Jesus. I suggest you the writer re-read chapters 5-7 of Romans—and also Romans 8, to see what exactly Paul was really saying. If you, my reader believes Paul believed he was a wimpy Christian who felt the impossibility of living a righteous, overcoming life in Christ Jesus, then you have failed to “know” Apostle Paul; for ***All*** the previous and following chapters of all his books are in complete disagreement with the short statements he made Romans 7. Yet, Paul always walked in the Spirit and declared that all who sat under his ministry should *follow me as I follow Christ*. (1 Cor. 1:11).

Please stay with me here. I’m no “scholar-in-depth” on the scripture, but at I was given a gift of scriptural discernment on some of the simplest matters of the Word. Note I said, *simplest matters*.

Paul, from Romans 1 through 6, considered sin to be of the Law, and the Law is “flesh”. In other words, Paul uses “Law” and “flesh” the same way. If you are not walking in His Spirit, you are walking in the “flesh”; and you are considered to be “under the Law”. If you are sinning, you are “under the Law” “In the flesh”. These are the same in all of Paul’s writings. By the way, if you are under the Law, you may also be “out of the boat”, as you may not be qualified for the rapture of the church since Jesus has given conditions for participating in the rapture (Lk 21:36; Rev. 3:9, 10).

To continue in Romans 7: 5, and 6, let me add a very strong point made by Paul. In vs. 5, Paul begins his statement with, “***For when we were in the flesh***”, which introduces his desire to explain his previous sinful life in the flesh/law.

Then in the following vs. 6, Paul continued, “**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.” Paul made those two statements very, very clear, didn’t he? But he did not end the thought right away. Fact is, Paul, in verses 8-14, uses the word “*commandment*” in each of those verses in his explanation of his previous life—walking in the flesh...the law—and not in the Spirit of God.

The word commandment used as Paul used it will always take him, not to ralley around his “walk in the Spirit”, but did take him through his “old walk” in the law, or flesh. These Romans had absolutely no problems with the interpretation of Apostle Paul’s integrity. Paul wanted all his followers to follow him as he followed after Christ!

Note Paul’s quotation from Romans 7:15-20 (NIV), speaking of His Previous Life of Sin.

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, *in my sinful nature* (**note here** that Paul is speaking of his sinful nature previous to his salvation in Acts 9). For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it” (Romans 7:15-20, NIV).

It’s stronger in the KJV; but no matter how you see Paul’s statement here, the fact is that Paul is really saying “*It’s not possible that I live a complete, committed life in Christ Jesus.*” Why would Paul say that? Only because he was speaking of his previous, sinful life. So, Numerous times in his writings, Paul states otherwise. In one place he speaks of his crown of righteousness; in another, he teaches that any who taught “other” than what he and the other apostles taught, “Let that person be accursed!” ...and he repeated that statement for emphasis!

Here’s what Paul teaches in Galatians 5:16-18 (KJV):

“¹⁶This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: *and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* ¹⁸ *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.* ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: *of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” (Italics/underline are mine).

Paul finishes with a list of the “Fruits of the Spirit”, which brings forth life and healing, eternally.

In Romans 6, Paul begins by saying, “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? ²God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ³Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*”

Paul said, “³⁰*Lest I stand here in jeopardy, I die in Christ Jesus every single day*”. (1 Cor. 15:30, 31)

Now, in Romans 7:1-5, Paul compares the marriage of mankind to the wife the same way we are wed to Christ Jesus in His righteousness; and in verse 4, Paul states “*we are dead to the Law (flesh/sin) by the body of Christ; that we should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* ⁵**For when we were in the flesh (under the Law, previous**

to our salvation), the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto “death”- *denotes spiritual death.*

- **Continuing To Romans 7, vs. 6:**

Paul makes an amazing statement in Romans 7: He said this, beginning in verse 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. 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. (My italics).

COMMENT: (V. 6): When Paul writes, **But Now**¹: *But now* points us back to the foregoing argument concerning condemnation of the entire world, contrast with the present newness. Prior to this expression the Jew, Gentile...all were under sin. Every mouth is stopped and the world stands guilty before God. There is nothing man can say. God almighty, Creator of man and the universe, declares that all are under His Judgment because of mankind’s sin. “But God..But now” shows the fulfillment of Grace and life in the Spirit (See a partial list of references on Roman Seven Chart (attached)).

Paul specifically reminds us that we are no longer under the Law, but under His Grace, in the newness of the Spirit (the opposite of the Law/flesh—the law is not sin itself, but it is there to teach us *what sin really is*). In other words, Paul is stating that if we walk in His Spirit, we will no longer be under the Law/flesh; for the Law and the flesh continues to “battle against the Spirit”—and that’s the reason we fail to be victorious in our walk. It’s not because we cannot stop sinning (we can), but because we are not walking in His Spirit/Grace. Everyone makes mistakes and sometimes we call them sins; but when we realize we have sinned, it’s also the exact time we should repent from the heart, possibly on our knees.

- Paul, in the following verses through 13, Paul speaks of his pre-salvation experience. We can know by this constant mention of the Law (Commandment, or Law of sin & death).

⁸ But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought (before salvation) in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. ⁹ For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. ¹² Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 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. (My italics/bold).

- **Verses 14-24:** Paul continues speaking of his failures, *even confessing the impossibility of being an overcomer in Christ Jesus.* This is not the **Apostle** Paul!

¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. ¹⁶If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. ¹⁷Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

¹ *But God, **But Now**.* .Indicates a *brand new life* in the *Holy Spirit*; not in the letter of the law! (Rom. 7 Chart –Vs. 6).

¹⁸For 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.¹⁹For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ²⁰Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ²¹I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³But 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. ²⁴O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

COMMENT: In the above verses, note that Paul continues to speak of his past life of sin; and if we continue to use Paul as the anointed man he really is, we will turn to Galatians 5:16-25 to see exactly how he explains the situation he speaks of in Romans 7.

Galatians 5:16-25: ¹⁴For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ¹⁵But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. ¹⁶*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*¹⁷ For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. ¹⁸**But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.** ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. ²⁴And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (My Italics/bold/underline).

CONCLUSION: Romans 6:1 says “Should we continue in sin; or, should we remain in our sins? Also, You are not under law, but under grace (6:14), which raises the question, Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? (6:15). This question is different from that in (6:1). The former question is “Shall we go on sinning?” (or lit., “Shall we remain in sin?”). Now the question is, “Shall we sin [in any given circumstance, or sin at all]?”

Paul answers from the perspective of slavery. A human being is enslaved either to sin or to righteousness, with no other alternative. Before our salvation, all were *enslaved to sin*. But many became Christians and committed themselves to obey the moral teachings of the Word of God. In the early church there was a standard teaching regarding the Christian life (cf. Acts 2:42). The form of teaching to which you were entrusted (Rom. 6:17) refers to this.

We should always acknowledge that Apostle Paul was not a confused person, but was a most powerful man of God, saved under miraculous circumstances by the awesome power of the Holy Spirit. Paul taught the Word of God straightforward to all men without bowing to any man. He consistently walked by the precious Spirit of the Lord, while continually remaining in a position to capture all five crowns of righteousness! So, what then, did Apostle Paul teach about sin?

¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ¹³Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. ¹⁴*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* ¹⁵What

then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? *God forbid.* ¹⁶*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* ¹⁷But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.* ¹⁹I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; ***even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*** ²⁰For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. ²¹What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. ²²But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. ²³For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:12-23 – My Italics). Please also see attachments.

We may be held responsible for the wrong interpretation of God's Word.

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