



The Two Primary Interpretive Issues

1. To whom is Paul referring when using "ego" in Romans 7:7-25?

- (a) **Adamic view:** Paul is using "I" to refer to Adam's experience with the law of God.
- (b) **Israelite view:** Paul is using "I" to refer to Israel's experience under the Mosaic Law.
- (c) **Autobiographical view:** Paul is using "I" to refer to his own experience with the Mosaic Law.
- (d) **Paradigmatic view:** Paul is using "I" to refer to his own experience, but he does so as a "paradigm" of every Israelite's experience "under the Law."

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Paul as a "Paradigm"

Romans 7:7 "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."

Romans 7:9-10 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;

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Paul's Solidarity With Israelites

Romans 2:17-21 **But if you bear the name "Jew"** and rely upon the Law and boast in God, 18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness...21a you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?

Romans 2:23-24 **ESV You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.** 24 For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

The Two Primary Interpretive Issues

- 2. Is Paul depicting himself as a believer or non-believer in Romans 7:14-25?**
- (a) Paul's main point does not **focus** on this issue!
 - (b) Paul's main point does **imply** the life of a non-believer in Romans 7:14-25.
 - (c) Paul's main point centers on the law:
Thesis: The Law is not the cause of human sin, but it is not the remedy to human sin either.

Paul as an Unbeliever "Under Sin"

In Romans 7:14-25, Paul uses himself as an example of an unregenerate Jew "under the law."

1. There is no Spirit in Romans 7:14-25 – only Law, sin, flesh, and death. (The Holy Spirit is mentioned 19 times in Romans 8!)
2. The structure supports the unregenerate view:
 - A. Romans 7:5 Life under the Law – the unregenerate life
 - B. Romans 7:6 Life in the Spirit – the regenerate life
 - A' Romans 7:7-25 Life under the Law elaborated
 - B' Romans 8:1-17 Life under the Spirit elaborated
3. The "I" of Romans 7:14-25 is "sold under sin"

Paul as an Unbeliever "Under Sin"

Romans 7:14 ESV For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

Romans 3:9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.

Romans 6:2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin...

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Paul as an Unbeliever "Under Sin"

Romans 6:17-18 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Romans 6:20-22 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

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The Distinction Between Believer and Unbeliever

Romans 7:23 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.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

- A believer cannot be set free from the law of sin and be a prisoner of the law of sin at the same time.

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Paul's Bondage to Sin Shows

What about the references to Paul delighting in the Law and desiring to obey it in Romans 7:14-25?

1. Paul's will is in bondage.
2. Paul does not have the ability to obey.

Romans 7:18-19 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.

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The Jews "Approved" of the Law, But Couldn't Obey

Romans 2:17-18 But if you bear the name "Jew" and **rely upon the Law** and **boast in God,** 18 and **know His will** and **approve the things that are essential,** **being instructed out of the Law...**

Romans 9:31-32 but Israel, **pursuing a law of righteousness,** did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone...

Romans 10:2 For I testify about them that they have **a zeal for God,** but not in accordance with knowledge.

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The Bridge Verses

What about Paul's switch from past tense verbs to present tense verbs in 7:14-25?

Romans 7:13-14 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.**

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Conclusions

1. Paul uses "I" in Romans 7:7-25 to refer to himself before conversion, but he also represents "everyman" who is unaided by the Spirit of God.
 - Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God...
2. No form of the Mosaic Law, as a binding covenant, can make a person pleasing to God.
3. No man made law will fair any better!

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The New Testament and the Law

Repudiation:

Romans 3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Romans 5:20a The Law came in so that the transgression would increase...

Romans 7:6a But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound...

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The New Testament and the Law

Replacement:

1 Corinthians 9:21 ... to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

Hebrews 8:6-7 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

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The New Testament and the Law

Reappropriation:

Romans 4:23-24 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead...

1 Corinthians 9:9-10 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.

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