

How Sin Hijacks God's Good Law
How a Law that promised Life produced my Death

Romans Series
PBC 2026

Text: Romans 7:7-13

Sometimes laws made with the best intentions to improve safety or quality of life can go badly wrong, leading to worse situations or even causing unintended catastrophic harm. Let me share two examples of how well-intentioned laws resulted in devastating consequences in the countries where they were enacted.

- **The Great Chinese Famine (1959-61).**
- **The 18th Amendment, also called Prohibition (1920-1933).**

A third and even more impactful example is in our text this morning, where Paul explains to us how God's good and righteous law was hijacked by sin and produced devastating death on the entire human race!

What Paul has been saying about the Law has raised serious questions about its character and the character of the One who gave it – God! ***This is what is behind the massive question being asked: Is the Law sin? This is a big, bold question that needs a clear answer! And Paul gives one – Absolutely Not!!***

Paul is going to spend the rest of the chapter explaining his answer and demonstrating how something God designed as holy, righteous, and good ended up leading those under its jurisdiction to such a horrific end – sin, condemnation, and death.

Paul's explanation is not simple, but it will be clear! And though it will lead through difficult places, it will end in a place of great hope! But for

his explanation to make sense, we need to make three important observations from the context and structure Paul uses to frame his explanation in Romans 7.

Observation 1: Tenses *Paul, why do you use different verb tenses?*

7:7-13 – *past tense verbs to explain life under sin*

7:14-25 – *present tense verbs to explain life after salvation*

Observation 2: Terms *Paul, why do you use two different terms for Law?*

1. **Law** – the spiritual and moral will of God for all Mankind written down in the conscience of everyone born under Adam and rewritten on the hearts of all who are born again under Christ, the 2nd Adam.
2. **Commandment** – His express, articulated will first to and through Adam for all humanity and later, to and through Moses for Israel – and ultimately reiterated and internalized by someone greater than Moses – Jesus Christ for us!

Observation 3: Moral and Theological Crisis *Paul, how can you continue to say the Law is good when it has produced such devastating results and led to such horrific consequences for people like me?*

I. The Nature of the Law (7:12)

So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

A. **Its Character** – holy and righteous

B. **Its Content** – God’s spiritual demands (ὁ νόμος) and moral requirements (ἡ ἐντολή) for His image-bearers

C. **Its Form** – *commandments, ceremonies, civic ordinances*

D. **Its intent** – *good* (ἀγαθός)

II. The Reason for the Law – because of transgression (7:7; Gal 3:19)

A. To Protect and Preserve God’s People from Sin and Death

- In the Garden
- In Israel

B. To Provide God’s People with an Opportunity to Express their Love and Validate their Loyalty to God. (Dt. 6:5, Mark 12:30)

- Adam
- Israel
- Jesus

C. To Provide a Means for ongoing Life and Fellowship with God in a Fallen, Sin-cursed, Death-tasting World.

- For Adam and his sons and daughters
- For Israel and his sons and daughters

And in the willing, diligent keeping of this Law from God, there is the promise of great reward (*Psalm 19:11 – “Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”*)

III. The Promise of the Law – Life! (7:10a)

The very commandment that promised life . . .

A. Implicit in God’s Word to Adam (Gen. 2:16-27).

B. Explicit in Moses’ Word to Israel – (Lev. 18:5; cf. Ezek. 20:11)

C. Fulfilled in Jesus’ Authoritative Word and Obedient Life – (Mat. 5:17-18)

Jesus obeyed it perfectly, embodied its true intent, fulfilled its promises, accomplished its purposes, satisfied its demands, and suffered its penalty – not for himself but for us!

IV. The Perversion of the Law – Death! (7:10, 13,)

The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me . . . Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good . . .

A. Sin used the Commandment to arouse and expose sinfulness in me through Covetousness. (7:7-9)

B. Sin used the Commandment first to deceive me and then to kill me! (7:10-11)

- Satan didn't deny the command – instead, he cast doubt on whether that command was holy, righteous, and good.

Is this really what God said?

Is this really the only right thing to do?

Will this really lead to the good you desire?

But God did not abandon His holy, righteous, and good law to the wicked purpose to which Satan hijacked it and now employs it. He built into the Law two surprising benefits that, when embraced, will lead us to the life He promised to give us by the Law!

V. The Surprising Benefit of the Law (7:13)

Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing 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.

A. The Law benefits me by exposing my deeds as sin
in order that sin might be shown to be sin

B. The Law benefits me by making my sin exceedingly sinful
and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

Conclusion: Why are these two functions of the Law beneficial to me?

1. They bring me to a place where I can no longer deny the reality or minimize the gravity of my sin. I admit I am a sinner.
2. They bring me to the end of myself and my ability to change my situation or remove my condemnation. I admit I am powerless.
3. They compel me to look for help and salvation outside of myself. I stop attempting to fix my situation on my own or making excuses for my sin.

And when I go to find help from Moses, he points me to another Law-giver greater than Himself – One Who was the center and goal of the Law he mediated to Israel – Jesus Christ! ***(7:25 – Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!)***

Jesus fulfilled the Law for us! He satisfied its demands and paid its penalty in our place! This is why Moses points to Jesus and urges us to look to Him alone for help, and hope, and life!

Jesus is not just a greater Lawgiver; He is the great Law-Keeper! And because He kept the Law for me by fulfilling its commands, satisfying its demands, and suffering its penalty – He can offer me three incredible benefits the Law could never provide:

- Forgiveness of sin
- Fullness and abundance of eternal life
- The astonishing privilege of full sonship through adoption

I CAN'T OBEY THE LAW, BUT I CAN OBEY THE GOSPEL!

And if I obey God's command to accept the gospel – to repent of my sin, turn to Jesus Christ, and place my full trust in His finished work alone for salvation – God will do what the Law could not: declare me righteous and make me His own!