

## 7:7-12

**What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, <sup>h</sup>I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known** Verse 5 leads us to believe that this **known** is an experiential **knowledge. covetousness unless the law had said, <sup>i</sup>“You shall not covet.”**

**9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.** There are, then, three actions in this verse that need to be discussed. It seems that number 1 preceded numbers 2 and 3; it seems that numbers 2 and 3 could have occurred in succession or simultaneously.

**Commandment came** As this is the only time this phrase occurs in the Greek New Testament, we are not able to solve this terminology by simply finding where else it is used. What’s more is that the word behind **commandment** is not found before this or after this but one time (in passing, Romans 13:9).<sup>1</sup> It seems, then, that this speaks of a personification of an inanimate object which poked into Paul’s existence at some point, and sparked—not life, not life—but depravity hidden latent within the nature of Paul’s fallenness passed down from his parents. We would call it **sin** that **revived**. At that moment—not an age, but a confrontation in the heart of Paul (presumably), **sin revived, and Paul died**.

So while we agree with the notion suggested by David that he—a righteous man—would go to see his infant son who had died [presumably where righteous people go when they die (2 Samuel 12:23)]; while we

...we would say that this provides a sneak at a doctrine not vastly discussed in Scripture. In other words, what is hinted at elsewhere is clearly seen here in Paul’s own words.

There are, it must be admitted, doctrinal concerns with this Scripture: It seems to be saying that we are born “alive” even though we are sinners and the wages of sin is death. Without handling how this could be so, it leads to the consideration that an infant could, hypothetically, pass the test in his or her own garden of eden moment and resist temptation and remain—at least for years—sinless.

This doesn’t even address the doctrinal issues found in Romans as a book: We are all in Adam and we are suggesting that a child is somehow placed into Christ without any decision of their own, and thereby allowed into Heaven (Romans 5:13-20) and that somehow the wages of their “sin in Adam” (Romans 5:12) is not death (Romans 6:23).<sup>2</sup> How about an infant being allowed into Heaven without faith (Romans 5:1)<sup>3</sup>—having a nature that does not desire God

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<sup>h</sup>Rom. 3:20

<sup>i</sup>Ex. 20:17

<sup>1</sup> "G1785 - entolē - Strong's Greek Lexicon (KJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 24 Apr, 2018. <<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1785&t=KJV>>.

<sup>2</sup> So here's where I struggle: The issue of spiritual death. All in Adam die (Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22). Adam sinned and died spiritually (Gen 2:17). We are conceived in sin (Psalm 51:4) and are also spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1). By what authority do we assume God makes those who "cannot believe" (babies, mentally retarded, etc...) "alive" so they can go to Heaven apart from "faith?" When you consider John 3:18, it leaves the "unbeliever" in a real fix.

<sup>3</sup>I am open to the idea that infants can indeed trust God (Psalm 22:9-10), acknowledge/recognize Christ (Luke 1), and know the Scriptural Gospel (2 Timothy 3:15). In such a case, they could "see" in the John 9:41 sense

(Romans 3:10-19)? And then, of course, the doctrinal things that come up later in Romans 9 where we have to assume that each child that goes to Heaven (which in our scenario is all of them) were a part of God's elect before the foundation of the world (Romans 9:24)? Then multiply this by all babies who have ever died *in utero* and all those who lived an entire lifetime without a moment of sanity or what we might call "moral accountability," and we see there may be more in Heaven who didn't even need to believe than those who are rightly called "believers?"<sup>4</sup>

So this causes the deepest and brightest to sit back and say..."thank God for Romans 7:9." Because if I immediately ran to the "interpret Scripture with Scripture" method, this verse wouldn't stand a chance to instruct us at all, and that is why we allow each Scripture to stand on its own to the very last if at all possible.

**11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.** It seems, then, that these "who cannot believe" are not under the law (Romans 5:13) because their conscience which is a law does not "accuse or excuse" them (Romans 2:15-16). Or to say it another way, though Adam's death has passed to all men (Romans 5:12), the spiritual ramifications of this death are not yet imputed if their conscience has not yet been awakened to this reality.<sup>5</sup>

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up until they die spiritually (Romans 7:9). This is pretty Appolinarian. It says that we are all born innocent judicially and have a garden of eden moment [referencing the "death" that occurred to Adam and Eve in answer to Genesis 2:17, some 800 years before his physical death (Genesis 5:3)]--each generation with a greater propensity to fall because of the sins of the fathers handed down to them. This means that we are on an infinite digress until somebody hits the restart (Ephesians 4:30).

<sup>4</sup>Possibly, we could explain our way out of this when we limit all of the above to one of the legal premises of the book: Romans 1:18-20...those who can and do reason.

<sup>5</sup>The flip side of this can be seen in a paragraph entitled "Age of Accountability" I co-authored at <http://www.bbcfnc.org/contemporary-issues/> [accessed 4/26/18].