

**ROMANS 7 TEACHES THERE IS NOTHING GOOD IN UNSAVED MAN**

Christian doctrine is that man without grace from God can do nothing that is really good and even his goodness is just a simulation.

Christ and his authorised apostles, particularly Paul, taught this warped doctrine. It is called total depravity which means God likes nothing in us.

Paul examined his heart and inside it he claimed that he found was nothing good in it. "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. [I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out]" (Romans 7:18). He knew what sin was and tried to refrain from it but always ended up doing that which he detested. "I find it to be a Law (a rule of action of my being) that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands" (Romans 7:21). This is not just saying that his evil urges are always with him because he makes a distinction between evil and its demands or urges. Evil here is sin. Sin cannot be always with you unless you are giving in to it all the time. This is a clear statement of the doctrine of total depravity. He may have acquired this pessimistic doctrine of human badness from Genesis where God complains that human beings were continually evil and their imaginations full of evil at the time of the flood (Genesis 6:5; 8:21).

This material is one of the main reasons why justification by faith despite sin as long as some good works were done because of faith and not to earn salvation was accepted by the reformers. It says we are too bad to be able to contribute anything to our salvation and so the work has to be all done by God for us.

The Catholic Church falsely claims that this was based on the mistaken assumption that Paul meant that the justified Christian who had been saved by faith was still entirely sinful and depraved and fit only for eternal seclusion from God so God has to pretend the sinner is righteous in order to be able to let him into Heaven (page 227, Reasons for Hope).

The Church lies because Paul uses the present tense all the time. The Church cannot admit that total depravity is taught in the Bible for the Church denies the Protestant doctrine that man is so bad that only if a saviour does all the work for him that he can get into Heaven. It is like somebody paying a fine for you which is credited to your account and you are made right with the law of the land though you did nothing for yourself.

The reformers interpretation followed that of none other than the great St Augustine himself (who adopted it in later life) proving that he must have believed in salvation by faith alone in the reformation sense (ibid, page 227). Read the chapter and you will see that Paul writes in it of himself as an example of what the rest of us are like in the present tense. The Catholic idea that he meant himself before conversion is false and is an attempt to avoid admitting that Paul did not believe that justification actually made you righteous but only declared you righteous.

Paul said that the Law provokes evil passions in us but now we are delivered from them (v5). This is supposed to support the Catholic view that he meant he was saved from them now and was saying he was depraved before that. But he only says that we are free to do good but he never said we would do much of it or any of it. We are delivered from our evil feelings and desires in the sense that we don't have to follow them anymore. But being a Christian doesn't mean we cannot sin.

Later he cries for somebody to deliver him from his body of death that leads him to inability to do good and then he thanks Jesus as if Jesus delivered him (v 24,25) which is supposed to prove that he was on about when he was unsaved before and wanted deliverance from the body of death.

He said that the sinner who is a slave of sin is not the sinner but the sin in him is because it makes the sinner sin when he or she doesn't want to (verse 20). Sin for Paul is not necessarily an free act of evil but a power that resides in the person and makes God consider the person unrighteous and unworthy of Heaven. This power makes all your good works bad too for they are not done in a state of purity. But if you are saved it puts good power in you so that your good works are really good. That was how Paul was able to describe the good works of unsaved people as bad but he would have still told them to carry them out. After all the sick still had to be looked after and so on even if in doing so you were preferring good as you want it not as God wants it. So after being saved the works are known as really good works good in their results and in the sight of God too. So the same work when done by an unsaved is bad but when done by a saved is good.

The two powers, the sin power and the genuine good works power, both co-exist in the saved person.

Elsewhere Paul says that Jesus saved us from sin and death meaning that though we will still sin and die Jesus has done

something about them that will not take effect until after they happen. He ends with saying he is a slave to God's Law but that his sinful nature is a slave to the Law of sin (v25). The Catholics say that this proves that he was talking in the chapter about his unsaved and pre-Christian life for he said he was not a slave to the Law or to sin anymore and that his sinful nature had been changed to a holy nature that makes him a slave to God.

He said he was a slave to the Law and to sin in his sinful nature and also a slave to God's law in his mind (verse 25).

Then immediately after, he says that because of this fact, he uses the word therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ immediately. So where does the therefore come in? It can only mean that because Paul is still a slave to the Law of sin and a slave to sin God cannot condemn him.

But you wouldn't say that because somebody is a sinner they are regarded as right with God?

True if you think people have to be really righteous to be saved. But if you believe that God just regards them as holy though they are not all because Jesus paid the price for their sins you would. Paul taught the reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone as understood by Luther and Calvin. No wonder Christianity took off with such a lazy doctrine. There is not a single hint that Paul meant what the Catholics say. He taught the Protestant doctrine that the only thing you can contribute towards your salvation is your sins and you give them to Jesus to atone them.

Only those who have been saved are real slaves to the Law in the sense that they obey it vicariously through Jesus (that is Jesus' obedience to it is paid to your account).

Paul said that he was sold to sin (Romans 7:14). Sin owned him and held him captive so he did not do any real good.

Christians may be happy to think they were evil and sinful and useless before they became Christian. That puts the bad in the past and they can say they are good now. It does not matter how offensive that is to anybody who is not Christian. It is argued that Paul was using the past tense in Romans 7 but this does not mean anything. We all talk about the present like it was a past event. "I go to the church to get married. And there is a horse crossing the road. It just stops and stands there. I panic. I ask if I will get to the Church on time." This is you talking about a past event like it is happening now. This is clearly not what is happening in the chapter. It is interesting how Christians want to be told they are not stuck in the habit of sinning but it is okay to say they were stuck in it before becoming Christian.

Romans 7 unmistakably teaches total depravity.