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Application to Believers in Yeshua 7: 7-13

Application to believers in Yeshua DIG: What is the significance of the shift in pronouns in this section? Why does the Torah arouse sin? How does the Torah reveal sin? How is sin dead apart from the Torah? How does the Torah, which is supposed to lead to spiritual blessing actually lead to spiritual death? Where is the real battle going on?

REFLECT: In light of your own struggles with sin, how do you feel reading about Paul's conflict? Does it encourage you, or discourage you? Why? How is this a model for a healthy, realistic self-image? When have you experienced the sense of Yeshua rescuing you from sin or situations that were too big for you to handle? How does Messiah help you right now?

The Torah is like a mirror being held up to reveal our own sin.



Therefore, what are we to say? That the Torah is sinful? Using the strongest Greek negative, **Paul** declares: **Heaven forbid** (Hebrew: *chalilah*, meaning *that's a contradiction, it makes no sense*)**!** Not only is **Torah** not **sinful**, but it continues to have great value for the believer by convincing him of **sin (Romans 3:19-20, 5:20, 7:7a).** After reading **the Torah** no one could claim to be without **sin**. **Paul** gives **four elements** of the convicting work of **Torah**.

It is significant that, beginning with **verse 7**, and continuing to **verse 25**, **Paul** turned to the first person singular, presenting **his** own personal experience. Up to

this point **he** had used the third person, the second person, and even the first person plural. But now **he** describes **his** own experience, allowing **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** to apply the truth to **his** readers.[179]

The Torah reveals sin (7:7b): Rather, the function of the Torah was that without it, I would not have known what sin is. Apart from **the Torah** we would have no way of accurately judging our **sinfulness**. **Paul** is not speaking about mankind's general awareness of right and wrong. Even pagan Gentiles who had never heard of **the Torah**, nevertheless, have **God's Torah written on their hearts, their consciences bearing witness to this, for their conflicting thoughts sometimes accuse them and other times defend them (2:15).** In the present passage, **Paul** is speaking about knowledge of the full extent and depravity of man's **sin**. **For example, I would not have become conscious of what greed is if the Torah had not said, "Do not covet" (7:7b).** This example shows that **the Torah** cannot be seen as a set of behavior rules to be followed legalistically. The real battle is internal, in the heart and mind. **The Torah** makes a person aware of his **sin** and of his need for divine forgiveness and redemption and to set the standard of acceptable morality.

The central theme of the Sermon on the Mount (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Cz – Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount**), is that **YHVH** demands perfect **righteousness** of the heart, a **righteousness** that far exceeds the external, hypocritical **righteousness** of Pharisaic Judaism. **Yeshua** said : **You have heard that it was said to the people long ago** through Moses **My** servant: **You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment (Mattityahu 5:21).** The Pharisees said that people were not guilty of **murder** until they actually murdered someone. They reduced this commandment to something merely external. As long as you weren't killing people, you were innocent of any wrongdoing. The difference throughout is between the letter of the commandment in **the Torah** and the spirit of the commandment.

But **the Master** struck at the heart of the issue when **He** said: **But I tell you that anyone who is** even **angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment (Matthew 5:22). Jesus** said that **righteousness** could be broken *even before* the act is committed. It was not enough to merely fulfill the mitzvah of not murdering, but we are called to a higher standard of not even being **angry with a brother or sister**. The principles of the Kingdom go beyond external obedience to the motivations and thoughts of the heart, all based on **the Torah**.

The Torah arouses sin (7:8): Once again, **Paul** makes it clear that **the Torah** itself is not **sinful** and is not responsible for **sin**. Here, **Paul's** meaning for **sin** comes very close to **the rabbinic notion of the yetzer ra' or the evil inclination, which desires only that which is forbidden**. Unlike the rabbis, however, **he** pictures **sin** here, and on through **7:25**, as being beyond mankind's ability to control **it**. **But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, worked in me all kinds of evil desires – for apart from Torah, sin is dead (Romans 7:8; Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21).** There is something in human nature that wants to rebel whenever a boundary is set. When people notice a sign that reads, "Keep off the grass," or "Don't pick the flowers," for instance, there is often a simple impulse to do the very thing the sign forbids.

In his rich allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan paints a vivid word picture of **sin's** arousal by **the Torah**. A large, dust-covered room in the Interpreter's house symbolizes the human heart. When a man with a broom, representing **the Torah**, begins to sweep, the dust swirls up and all but suffocates Christian. That is what **Torah** does to **sin**. It so agitates **sin** that it becomes stifling. And just as a broom cannot clean a room of dust, but merely stirs it up, so **the Torah** cannot clean the heart of **sin**, but only make **sin** more evident and unpleasant.

The basis of **Paul's** argument here is that **for apart from Torah, sin is dead.** It is not true that **sin** has no existence apart from **the Torah**, because that's obviously not true. **Paul** had already stated that, long before **the Torah** was revealed, **sin** entered **the world** through **Adam** and then spread to all of **his** descendants **(5:12)**. **Sin was indeed present in the world before Torah was given, but sin is not counted as such when there is no Torah (5:13). Paul** makes the point that **sin is dead** in the sense that **it** is somewhat dormant and not fully active, until **confronted** with the truth of **the Torah**. Then **sin** is aroused.

The Torah brings spiritual death to the sinner (7:9-11): The Torah not only reveals and arouses **sin**, but it also brings **death** to the sinner. **Torah** cannot give spiritual **life**. **It** can only show the sinner that he is guilty and condemned. **I was once alive outside the framework of Torah. But when the commandment really confronted me, sin sprang to life, and I died (7:9-10a).** As a highly trained and zealous Pharisee, **he** was an expert on **the Torah** and considered **himself** to be blameless in regard to **it**, thus thinking **he** lived a **life** that pleased **God (Philippians 3:6)**. But when the truth of **the commandment confronted him, he** began to see **himself** as **he** really was and began to understand how far

short **he** came to **the Torah's righteous** standards. Thus, on the one hand, the **sin** within **him sprang to life**. But on the other hand, **he died** in the sense of **his** realizing that all **his** religious accomplishments were mere spiritual **garbage (Philippians 3:7-9)**. **His** self-esteem, self-satisfaction, and pride were devastated and in ruins. **Paul died.** That is, for the first time, **he** realized **he** was spiritually **dead**. **The commandment that was intended to bring** spiritual blessing into my **life was found to be bringing me** spiritual **death (7:10b)!**[180]

Paul was not unique among Jewish writers in pointing out that **the Torah** produces **death** when rejected or misused. **Timothy** said: **We know that the Torah is good, provided one uses it in the way the Torah itself intends,** as our blueprint for living**. We are aware that Torah is not for the person who is righteous, but for those who are heedless of Torah and rebellious, ungodly and sinful, wicked and worldly, for people who kill their fathers and mothers, and for murderers (First Timothy 1:8-9). And Rabbi Y'hoshua ben-L'vi said, "What is the meaning of the verse: And this is the Torah which Moses set before the children of Isra'el (Deuteronomy 4:44)? It means that if a person is admirable, it becomes for him a medicine that gives life; but if not, it becomes a deadly poison" (Yoma 72b).**[181]

Paul also said that **sin deceived him**. **For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me; and through the commandment, sin killed me (Romans 7:11; Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 30:19). Deceit** is one of **sin's** most subtle and disastrous **evils**. A person who is **deceived** into thinking **he** is acceptable to **God** because of **his** own merit and good deeds will see no need for salvation and no reason for trusting **Messiah**. It is doubtless for that reason that all false religions – including those who claim the name of **Messiah** (see the commentary on **Galatians Ak – The Hebrew Roots Movement: A Different Gospel**), in one way or another are built on a **deceptive** foundation of self-trust and self-effort. Self-**righteousness** is not **righteousness** at all but is the worst of **sins**.[182]

The Torah reflects the wickedness of sin (7:12-13): So, the Torah is not cancelled (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Dg – The Completion of the Torah**). **It is holy; that is, the commandment is holy, just and good (Romans 7:12; Genesis 3:13).** It is our blueprint for living (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Bk – The Ten Words**). The fact that **sin** reveals, arouses, and brings spiritual **death** to the sinner does not make **it** wicked in **itself**. If **an**

Israelite sacrificed one of his children to Molech and was therefore stoned to **death (Leviticus 20:2)**, **the Torah** was blameless. The fault was in the one who violated **the Torah**.

Then did something good become for me the source of death? Heaven forbid! It is not **the Torah** that causes spiritual **death, rather, it was sin working death in me through something good, so that sin might be clearly exposed as sin, so that sin through the commandment might come to be experienced as sinful beyond measure (7:13). Sin's** deadly character is exposed under the pure light of **God's Torah**. **The Torah** isn't the problem. We're the problem. It's not **the Torah** that causes spiritual **death**, it's our **sinfulness** of not obeying **the Torah**. **Paul's** point here is that **sin** is so utterly **sinful** that it can even pervert and undermine **God's** holy **Torah**. **Sin** can twist and distort **the Torah** so that instead of bringing spiritual blessing, as **ADONAI** intended, **it** brings spiritual **death**. It can manipulate the pure **Torah** of **God** to deceive and damn people to hell. Such is the awful wickedness of **sin**.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that though **sin** is powerful, **You** are **Almighty** and have made it possible for us to conquer **sin** thru **Your** power.* ***No temptation has taken hold of you except what is common to mankind. But God is faithful – He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can handle. But with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape, so you will be able to endure it (First Corinthians 10:13).***

*Praise **You** that as I keep my eyes on **You**, I can win over any **temptation** for **Your Almighty Ruach** lives within each of those who love and will help them be victorious over any temptation.* ***I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper so He may be with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him. You know Him, because He abides with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17).*** *When **temptation** or trial comes, I will remember that these problems will soon be over.* ***For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).*** *I will spend eternity with my Awesome **Father** whom I love. It is so much more peaceful when a stressful situation comes to – not complain but to rest the problem in **Your** hands asking for **You** to guide in each detail. **You** are Wonderful! I look forward to worshipping and praising **You** for all eternity! In **Your Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*