Sept. 14, 2003 Northwest Bible Church

Worship Service Alan Conner

**Rom. 7:8-13**

How sin uses the law to deceive and kill

**INTRO**

“Is the law sin?” NO.

1) The law reveals sin (Rom. 7:7),

2) It is my sin nature, not the law, that produces sinful reactions to the law for the law is holy (Rom. 7:8-11).

3) Reacting to God’s holy law, my sin became alive and killed me (9-11).

**I. A HARD PASSAGE TO INTERPRET.**

What does it mean that “apart from the law sin is dead” (Rom. 7:8) and when the commandment came sin became alive (Rom. 7:9)?

What does it mean that “I was once alive apart from the law” (Rom. 7:8), but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died (Rom. 7:9)?

**II. SOME SUGGESTED INTERPRETATIONS**

A. Paul’s autobiographical sketch of coming to know sin experientially.

1) “I was once alive apart from the law” (Rom. 7:9) - Being alive apart from the law (Rom. 7:9a) means that even thought he was a sinner, he did not feel or believe himself to be a sinner. No conviction of sin. Cf. Phil 3:6; Gal. 1:14 . “Apart from the law” refers to not having the convicting power of the law.

IRONY: Paul was spiritually dead but thought himself spiritually alive.

2) “When the commandment came, sin became alive and I died” (Rom. 7:9) -

Conversely, when the law came and was applied by the HS, then Paul came to really see and feel his sin and he died, that is, he came under the condemnation of the law and the curse of the law so that he knew and felt the conviction of his sin.

Lk. 18:9-13

Mt. 19:16-20

David after his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah, cf. Ps. 32; 51.

3) Fits with v. 8 “for apart from the Law sin is dead.” This does not mean that there was no sin before the law for see Rom. 5:13. But sin is dead (7:8) when there is no law in the sense that for the most part it is more subdued, dormant, and less active, less aggravated, less stirred up. BUT WHEN THE LAW CAME, sin became alive (Rom. 7:9).

Summary:Alive and dead refers not to spiritual life or spiritual death, but to the lack of conviction of sin or the presence of the conviction of sin.

B. Paul’s experience reflects Adam’s spiritual condition in the garden of Eden.

1) v. 9 “I once was alive apart from the Law” - Adam was spiritually alive in the garden before the Law came. One can also add the above view too that they were unaware of any sin in their life.

2) v. 9 “when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died”- when Adam sinned they both died spiritually, but they also became aware of their sin and were ashamed and tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves.

3) Rom. 7:10-11 fits with their experience in the garden. The word “deceive” (Rom. 7:11) for the tactic of sin to bring about our death is used of the devil’s deception of Eve in both 2 Cor. 11:3 and 1 Tim. 2:14.

4) v. 8 “apart from the Law sin is dead” = sin did not exist in the human race at all before the giving of the commandment.

**CONCLUSION**

1) Thus, the first sign of spiritual life is to feel that you are dead.

2) The law can never justify a person because it is hijacked by our own sin nature to stir up our sin. The law can as a tutor lead us to Christ once we have died by its conviction.

3) Application to Christians.